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(HANSARD)

Wednesday, December 13, 2017

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 13, 2017

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

● (1400)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of *O Canada* led by the hon. member for Edmonton Centre.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, all the snow we just got is a sure sign that the holidays are just around the corner. On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to express our best wishes to you, the clerks, the pages, the security guards, who do not yet have a contract, and to everyone else who works for the House of Commons. Best wishes also to my colleagues from all the other parties.

I hope that next year will see us working together to make things better for Quebec. I also want to acknowledge our political staff who work tirelessly in the background on behalf of our constituents.

Lastly, I would like to extend my very best wishes to the people of Quebec. You are the reason we are here tenaciously defending your interests and our distinct society. We wish you happy times with your loved ones complete with celebration, good food, and rest. Let us come back reinvigorated because 2018 will be a memorable year. Merry Christmas and happy new year.

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[*English*]

BEACHES—EAST YORK

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the holidays are a time to spend with family and with our community.

We have been lucky to celebrate the holidays in Beaches—East York with many local bazaars, our Santa Claus parade along Kingston Road, DECA's festival of lights in East Lynn Park, and the Beaches Lions Tree Lighting in Kew Gardens.

However, the holidays are not only for celebrating. They are also a time to give back to our community and to Canadians in need. That is why my constituency office team and our youth council will be joining hundreds of our neighbours to volunteer packing and delivering hampers of toys, food, and necessities to families in need across our riding. I encourage everyone across our community to chip in if they can.

On December 20, people can join us at Secord Elementary to support a holiday hamper program run by the Neighbourhood Centre/Access Alliance. Between December 18 and 22, we can be joined at Community Centre 55's share a Christmas program. Together, we will pack and deliver packages of food and gifts to over 1,000 local families in need. That is the holiday spirit.

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CHRISTMAS

Mr. Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a little Christmas song to sing, even though I am losing my voice:

Pipelines to the east,
Not happening today
$10 million dollar cheques,
Our veterans have to pay.
Small businesses are hit,
More tax Grits spend away
Oh what pain it is,
To sing this Liberal song today.
Hey....
Jingle bells,
Something smells
Deficits run away
How sad it is to ruin
The middle class today.
Hey!
Jingle bells,
Cash for Access sells,
Your wallet paves the way
You can have a minister
If only you can pay.
Hey
Aussies sell us jets,
They can't give away
And let's not forget
Phoenix doesn't pay.
Hey.
Jingle bells, jingle bells,
Tories will save the day,
Oh what fun...
It sure will be...
Seeing Liberals go away.

* * *

AGA KHAN

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, December 13 marks the 81st birthday of His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan.

Since 1957, the Aga Khan has been deeply engaged in enhancing the quality of life of the most vulnerable populations, while emphasizing the need to promote the rights of women and girls, respect the environment, and encourage peace, prosperity, and tolerance.

The Aga Khan has invested over $500 million in Canada, including in the Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa, the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, lsmaili Centres in Vancouver and Toronto, the Aga Khan Park in Toronto, and the Aga Khan Garden in Edmonton.

Canada is grateful for these contributions that enhance its ethos of pluralism. As we travel to different countries, we hear the resounding thanks to His Highness for making the lives of people better, safer, more just, and sustainable

Happy Christmas, happy Hanukkah, and a happy new year to all.

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HANUKKAH

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with my wife, Catherine and our family in wishing *Chag Hanukkah sameach* to all those lighting menorahs this week in honour of the eight-day Jewish festival of Hanukkah.

● (1405)

[*Translation*]

As a festival of light, Hanukkah reminds us of our ability as humans to cast light into the darkness, and be a spark for change for a more compassionate world where we have a right to practise our religion.

[*English*]

In the immortal words of beloved Canadian poet Leonard Cohen:

Forget your perfect offering; There is a crack in everything; That's how the light gets in.

* * *

AGA KHAN

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is the 81st birthday of the Aga Khan, the spiritual leader of Ismaili Muslims worldwide.

In 1972, the Aga Khan was pivotal in securing the safe arrival in Canada of thousands of Ugandan Asian refugees fleeing the dictatorship of Idi Amin, including my family.

Over the decades, His Highness has greatly contributed to Canada's cultural fabric, opening Ottawa's Global Centre for Pluralism and the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, the only Islamic art museum in North America.

Internationally, his philanthropy through the Aga Khan Development Network has lifted thousands out of poverty and promoted critical issues like environmental protection and educating girls.

In recognition of his lifetime achievements, in 2010 the Aga Khan received our country's highest recognition, honorary citizenship.

It is with great pride that I stand as only the third Ismaili Canadian ever elected to this chamber. I wish all Ismailis celebrating today *Khushali Mubarak*, and convey best wishes to His Highness on his 81st birthday. I wish a happy birthday to the Hazar Imam.

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ENERGY SECTOR

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, each day, eastern Canada imports over 750,000 barrels of oil. After the U.S., the top source countries are Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and Nigeria. The oil arrives via large tankers and rail, and represents tens of millions of dollars taken out of the Canadian economy every single day.

The math is very simple. Oil is already being used by Canadians, just not Canadian oil. Billions of dollars are simply forfeited each year, dollars that could fund health care and education, fuel employment, and help foster real environmental innovation in every region of our country.

Canada's energy sector is undeniably one of the world's most accountable and transparent, yet the Liberal government has incomprehensibly stacked the deck against it, as in the case of energy east, by requiring our own industry to play by vague and ever-changing rules that do not apply to foreign competitors.

This purely political strategy is both infuriating and incredibly divisive, and it is time the Prime Minister put an end to it for the good of all Canadians.

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PARLIAMENTARY POET LAUREATE

Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I call on the House to applaud Mr. George Elliott Clarke, our current Parliamentary Poet Laureate. While his tenure is coming to an end this year, his work as a poet, a playwright, and an activist will continue to live on. Indeed, he has written over 50 poems during his time, including one about my dear mother.

Mr. Clarke, who comes from the black community of Nova Scotia, has dedicated his life to combatting racism, to raising awareness of the plight of African Canadians. He has done so through his literary works. He has decried injustice and has championed equality.

I thank Mr. Clarke for promoting the importance of literature and for combatting racism in Canada. To quote one of his poems, being "Canadian means bundling up With loved ones, and not letting go." I say to him, "Never let go George, keep up the good fight."

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[*Translation*]

MARC-AURÈLE-FORTIN

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here we are in December, the last month of this magnificent year during which we celebrated Canada's 150th anniversary.

The end of the year is a good time to look back and take stock, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Marc-Aurèle-Fortin for their interest and support throughout the year. I wish everyone the very best for the holiday season.

Personally, I will be taking part in various seasonal activities in Laval, including an event at Manoir Thérèse-Casgrain on December 17. This has been a pivotal year for the people of Laval, thanks to federal investments to support our families as well as other investments in jobs and public transit.

In closing, I wish everyone peace, good health, and prosperity for the coming year, and I look forward to seeing you all again in 2018.

* * *

● (1410)

[*English*]

ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last Saturday in Vancouver, pro-Palestinian demonstrators, in a disgusting display of hate, burned Israeli flags, made anti-Semitic slurs, and called for violence. Sadly, what happened in Vancouver is not an isolated incident. Indeed, recently there has been an uptick in anti-Israel demonstrations as well as acts of hate directed toward Jewish Canadians. This hate is being fuelled on campus, online, and by the racist and anti-Semitic BDS movement.

In light of what happened in Vancouver, the Prime Minister has a responsibility to speak out and send a clear message that acts of anti-Israel sentiment and acts of hate directed toward Jewish Canadians are completely unacceptable and have no place in an inclusive Canada.

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HEALTH

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have some of the best and brightest health researchers and health care professionals in Canada. One such visionary is Dr. Arjun Sahgal, a radiation oncologist and researcher at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. I was proud to meet this wonderful doctor, and discover these technologies during many visits to the facility over the past year.

Dr. Sahgal and his team have championed new radiation technologies that include the first gamma knife icon in Canada, and the novel linac MRI, which is the seventh in the world and the only device installed in Canada. These new technologies will change the way spinal and brain tumours are treated, in addition to multiple other cancer types.

With emerging technologies and important research changing the way medicine is done, I could not be more proud of our health care system, and all who make it work. I thank Dr. Arjun Sahgal and his hard-working team.

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[*Translation*]

THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

Mr. Jean Rioux (Saint-Jean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the holiday season is a special time for many people, but a difficult one for some.

As citizens, we should join the ranks of volunteers who provide many families with well-deserved comfort. This time of year awakens in us a sense of selflessness and compassion towards our fellow citizens. Canadians know what it means to give of themselves.

What would celebrations be without Operation Red Nose, an organization that ensures that people return home safely? Its mission is to promote responsible behaviour through non-judgmental service provided by the community for the community. I encourage my colleagues to join all the volunteers who exemplify generosity, compassion, and goodness. These are fundamental values that unite us as Canadians.

Merry Christmas to everyone and especially to the members of the Canadian Armed Forces, who serve our country with great dedication.

● (1415)

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 40 years ago, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau launched a modernization project for the Canadian Armed Forces to acquire a new fighter jet, the F-18. Forty years later, the son of that prime minister, this week, says he is modernizing the Canadian Armed Forces with what? The F-18.

Not only are these F-18s used, they have been used in more operational theatres and flying over low-level oceans more than Canada. Therefore, Australia has used its jets harder than we have.

This is a Liberal pattern. We saw this with used submarines where billions were spent, and there is virtually no operational capability of the Victoria-class submarine. We saw this on my aircraft, the Sea King helicopter, which we are only replacing now because of politics.

I am hoping for Christmas that the veterans in the Liberal caucus will start standing up to the Prime Minister because at Christmas nothing says merry Christmas to the troops more than used kit.

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SEASON'S GREETINGS

Ms. Mary Ng (Markham—Thornhill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish everyone in Markham—Thornhill a happy holidays. This is a special time of year. Tonight is the second night of Hanukkah, and in less than two weeks it will be Christmas.

Whether we light a menorah or a Christmas tree, what unites us at this time of the year is family. Many of us spend far too much time apart from our families, and I hope that members and staff take time over the holidays to be with their loved ones.

As we all come together with those who are dear to us, our friends, and those in our communities, we should recognize and appreciate the critical role that families play in allowing us to do our work.

In the spirit of family, I would like to take a moment to recognize Mr. Jeff Connor, whose son Alec is on my team. They are sharing a special father-son moment here on Parliament Hill. To both of them and to all the families in Markham—Thornhill and across Canada, happy Hanukkah, merry Christmas, and a happy new year.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST SEX WORKERS

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the call to mark December 17 as the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers began in 2003 as a memorial for the victims of the Green River killer in Seattle.

This annual day of remembrance serves to raise awareness about the high level of violence sex workers face on a regular basis. The fact is sex workers face assault, battery, rape, and murder on a regular basis, and yet, there is this general attitude that violence against sex workers is somehow expected and therefore accepted.

Surely, we must agree that violence against anyone is not acceptable. Our current laws put sex workers at great risk of violence, and deny them equal access to justice and police protection when they are the victims of crime.

As we honour and remember the victims, we must also renew our commitment to end the violence by taking action to end the perpetuation of the stigmas associated with sex workers.

* * *

CHRISTMAS

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker,

'Twas 12 days before Christmas, almost time to head home
But first we'll endure that Cape Bretoner's poem
But before he gets up and makes fun of us Tories
We get to stand up and tell our Christmas story.

The Liberals have had quite a fall, it's been swell
To see all their plans go to Morneau Shep-Hell.
They went after our farmers and small business owners
While protecting their ass-ets, and their wealthy friend donors

And they sometimes forget, 'cause it's easy to do
When you're counting your villas - was it 1, 3, or 2?

There've been some big changes for us around here.
We have a new leader, and for us it is clear
That he's younger, and taller, more virile and sharper
Than the current PM, and he smiles more than Harper.

He works hard for our party, starts each day before dawn
And the best part of all is he keeps his shirt on
He has no Mercedes, no fortune, no nannies
But he's such a nice man, he connects with the grannies.

Yes, in 2019 it will be quite a fight.
But till then, merry Christmas, and to all, a safe flight.

* * *

CHRISTMAS

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker,

'Twas the week before Christmas and not much was new;
But I'll just take a moment to offer my view.

The new Tory leader picked a political spat;
But it's hard to take him serious with dimples like that;

But even those dimples cannot hide the shock;
Of what happened Monday evening in South Surrey—White Rock.

The Dippers believe their Saviour's been sent;
He's bumped up their polling to 16%.

To the new leader, here's a challenge to meet;
It would be sweet to compete with Jagmeet for a seat.

The Bloc were once strong, but find themselves in a quandary;
Break up the country? They couldn't separate their own laundry.

While opposition parties were sitting back and relaxing;
We did the hard work, which some say was quite taxing.

Housing and poverty, so much progress has been made;
Take, for example, international trade.

Cuz as much as we love trade with North Carolina;
Opportunities abound in places like China.

And if the current view of NAFTA is forced to be dealt;
I'll hang mistletoe off the back of my belt.

There's the far left, the alt right, and the smart in between;
I'd still bet on our boy in 2019!

● (1420)

The Speaker: While the House is in such a good mood, let me add my own best wishes for a merry Christmas, a happy Hanukkah, and a safe, healthy, and happy new year.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

TAXATION

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for months, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance have tried to minimize the devastating impact that their tax changes will have on our local businesses. Once again today, the government has made an announcement that does not address the serious concerns of the business owners who create jobs in our communities.

How can the Prime Minister allow this incompetence and this farce to carry on, when January 1st is fast approaching?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on January 1st, every single one of our small businesses will see their taxes cut. This is good news for the middle class and for those who are working hard to join it.

However, we have made changes to ensure that the wealthiest Canadians cannot find ways to bring their taxes down to a lower rate than that paid by middle-class Canadians. This simplification will not only help many people continue to do what they are doing to help their families, but it will also ensure that the wealthiest Canadians do not benefit even more.

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this whole file since July 18 has been a complete disaster, and here we are almost six months later and the government still

does not have simple answers to very worried small business owners across the country.

Everyone knows that the Prime Minister is raising taxes so he can keep spending on his personal priorities and the priorities of his wealthy friends: hundreds of millions of dollars for his friends at Bombardier; half a billion dollars for his rich friends who run a bank in Asia; and $10 million for a convicted terrorist who murdered an allied solider.

Canadians do not want to pay his bills, so will the PM finally end his attack on small business owners?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, only the Conservatives could see lowering taxes on small businesses as an attack on small businesses. That is how partisan they have become.

The fact is the first thing we did was to lower taxes for the middle class and raise them on the wealthiest 1%. Everything we have done since then, including the Canada child benefit, increasing the GIS for seniors, and now lowering taxes for all small businesses across this country, is helping the middle class and helping to grow our booming economy.

● (1425)

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the very first thing the Prime Minister did was to cancel the tax cut for small business owners. It was Conservatives who forced him to bring it back.

That is not all. He has tried to raise taxes on health and dental benefits. He has gone after employee benefits, the waitresses and waiters and retail workers. He has tried to raise taxes on our brave women and men in the armed forces, and he has even had to apologize for raising taxes on Canadians living with diabetes.

Why does the Prime Minister not just come clean and admit that all of these tax hikes are the consequences of his out of control spending and massive deficits?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our approach has focused on growing the middle class and making sure that Canadians have a real and fair opportunity to succeed, and across the country we are seeing the benefits of that happening.

This year we created 441,000 new jobs, which is the top number for job creation in 18 years in this country. This is the kind of result that our leadership on the economy has delivered, and those members cannot say anything about it.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we can say a lot about the fact that local business owners across the country have been under assault by the Liberal government's out-of-touch attack on their ability to create jobs.

We can say a lot about the fact that the top 1% is actually paying less under the government's changes than before.

We can say a heck of a lot about the damage the government is doing to the economy with its erratic behaviour on the trade front. Indeed, recently, the Prime Minister insulted Japan and Australia when he skipped a meeting that would have allowed Canada to sign onto the world's largest trading block.

Could the Prime Minister tell us what he is doing to repair the damage caused by his erratic behaviour?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what Stephen Harper did not understand, what those Conservatives over there continue not to understand, is that it is not just about signing any deal; it is about signing a good deal for Canadians. We saw time and time again that they are just in a rush to try to sign anything to get along, but we know that no deal is better than a bad deal.

We will always stand up for Canadian interests, unlike those Conservatives.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not only Australia and Japan who are upset with the Prime Minister for his bizarre actions in Asia.

Can the Prime Minister assure us that with his recent behaviour in China, his begging for a free trade agreement at all costs, he has not compromised our position at the NAFTA negotiating table and the millions of jobs today that depend on free trade between Canada, the United States, and Mexico?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Conservatives demonstrate that they still do not understand anything about getting a good trade deal for Canadians. Wherever we go around the world, we will be demanding a good deal for Canada. We are not going to follow the Conservative Harper doctrine of "any deal", and capitulation, as a trade strategy.

We are going to demand good outcomes for Canadians, on the environment, on labour issues, on a broad range of issues, because that is what Canadians elected us to do.

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GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when Parliament chooses a new Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner all parties must be consulted. It is a legal obligation. However, we were not consulted. We only received one letter and one name. We know nothing about the other candidates, and the nominee was rushed through committee within one hour.

Instead of a merit-based process, all we have are the Liberals' assurances that they are doing the right thing, but that is not enough. How can they tell us that their nomination was merit-based, and if they want to pursue that line, why do they not release the names of the finalists to the other parties?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the issue of the Lobbying Commissioner and the Official Languages Commissioner, we actually consulted opposition parties last June to see what criteria they were looking for, what their perspective was, and what stakeholders we should be consulting with. We have engaged them in a robust process that will determine, and end up with, the right kinds of officers of Parliament.

Once again, if they do not have confidence in the officers of Parliament we have put forward, let them stand up and say so.

● (1430)

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, asking us to put forward a few names back in June is not consultation. It is not the commissioner that we do not trust; it is the government's process.

[*Translation*]

Why is that? Because the selection committee for the new Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner had five members, including the chief of staff of the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, the chief of staff of the President of the Treasury Board, and two assistant secretaries of the Liberal cabinet.

How can we have any faith that the selection process for the future commissioner was open, transparent, merit-based, and especially impartial, when the selection committee was dominated by Liberal cabinet employees?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I completely disagree with my hon. colleague across the way.

The reality is that seeking suggestions and names for months is part of the consultation process. Asking opposition members for criteria, possible implications, and concerns is precisely how we were able to choose the right officers of Parliament. That is precisely the process we followed, and we will have excellent officers of Parliament as a result.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the new Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner has just barely been nominated and he is already in hot water.

First, we learned that the work that he did on two case files when he held a similar position in the past was criticized, but even more importantly, he is refusing to confirm whether he will pursue the investigations into the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister himself that are currently under way.

I thought we usually hired an investigator to get to the bottom of a crime, not to cover the offender's tracks.

Is wiping the slate clean and starting fresh the Liberals' new way of dealing with crises?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that everything is always about partisanship for the members of the opposition. However, we expect any conflict of interest and ethics commissioner and any officer of Parliament to fulfill their duties with care and integrity. We have immense respect for the approach of relying on evidence and examining all the facts before making a decision.

* * *

[*English*]

ETHICS

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us try to sum up the Liberal ethical violations of just this past year.

The Prime Minister breaks the law by taking a private helicopter to a billionaire's island, but who has not done that too? The finance minister secretly holds on to millions of dollars in shares in a numbered company, but I say, "Let ye cast the first stone". Now the Liberal House leader, whose job it has been to defend the ethical violations of the finance minister and the Prime Minister, was put in charge of hiring a new ethics commissioner. Irony is dead over there.

My question for the Prime Minister is this. Exactly how many ethical violations and investigations is it going to take before the Liberals realize that the rules apply to them too?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we come to the end of this year, one cannot help but feel bad for the members of the opposition, because of the results we have gotten as a government. The job creation numbers, 441,000 new jobs, the best in 18 years; the growing economy; the help for the middle class; and the positive outcomes leave the opposition with nothing to do but to fling accusations and throw mud. That is not what Canadians want. That is not what Canadians deserve. I hope they will be getting better than that in the coming year.

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[*Translation*]

TAXATION

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said he would lower taxes for the middle class, but he actually raised taxes on public transit, children's sports and arts activities, camping, and even beer and wine. In fact, 80% of middle-class Canadians are paying more taxes, and the wealthiest Canadians are paying $1 billion less. The only word to describe this is incompetence.

When is the Prime Minister going to stop making life easier for his rich friends and harder for everyone else?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, Conservatives are demonstrating that they do not understand how to help Canadians. The statistics he is referring to do not take into account the Canada child benefit. This benefit gives more money to nine out of 10 families. It has lifted hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty and is helping Canadian families immensely. It is one of the elements that led to the economic growth we are seeing now.

The Conservatives would have preferred to keep their own benefit, which gave money to millionaires every month. We are giving money to families who actually need it.

● (1435)

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is rich millionaire friends who are getting the benefits of the government's policy. However, the incompetence extends to so many other areas.

It has been two years, and the Prime Minister has broken two key promises of his campaign. First, he said he would run modest deficits. Now we know that his out of control spending is costing taxpayers over $100 billion. Second, he said he would balance the budget in 2019. Now his government is telling us it does not even know when the budget will be balanced. The Prime Minister cannot even read a balance sheet. How can Canadians have any confidence in anything else he is doing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in order to chase their goal of balancing the budget at all costs, they created the Phoenix fiasco, they nickel and dimed our veterans, and they continued to cut services for Canadians across the board.

We made a different decision than they did. We told Canadians that we would run deficits, so we could grow the economy and put more money in the pockets of Canadians who needed it. That is exactly what we have done, and that is working for Canadians.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about Phoenix. Let us talk about the Liberal decision to ignore a third-party report that said the system was not ready, and yet they rushed ahead for political reasons. It was their choice to press the start button. They have had two years to fix it. Two years, and they have done nothing. Meanwhile, families across the country are suffering because of the government's lack of action and incompetence.

When will the Prime Minister take responsibility for his decision and stop trying to blame other people?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite actually just laid it out. The problem was that they fired 700 people in order to book the savings they were counting on so they could magically balance the budget just in time for the election, to try to save their skins from their terrible economic performance over the past 10 years.

We did not create the Phoenix problem, but we are going to fix it.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they started the Phoenix program before it was ready, ignoring the advice of a third-party report. They have had two years to fix it, and no one believes they are going to do anything about it. It is going to take a Conservative government to clean up their mess.

The incompetence is everywhere. The Liberals campaigned on a new process to replace our fighter jets. They then abandoned that process and said they would sole source Super Hornets. Now, they are searching the reduced-for-quick-sale bin for used fighters from Australia. Will the Prime Minister take responsibility and admit we are never going to get new jets?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the men and women of our military deserve the equipment they need to fulfill their responsibilities and deliver on their commitments.

For 10 years, the previous Conservative government was unable to give the men and women of our forces the equipment they needed. It completely botched the process. That is why we were proud to launch a full, open competition yesterday to replace our fleet of aging fighter jets, not with 65 jets like the Conservatives spoke about but 88 jets, to ensure our military can fulfill the roles we expect it to.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. If members do not like what someone is saying, they should keep in mind that their turn on their side will come and they should wait for that. We had Santa Claus visiting earlier in fact, and he told me that he did not like to hear all this heckling. He will reinforce that, I am sure. I am a good friend of his. He is here to confirm that.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nobody is buying the Prime Minister's revisionist history. Let us take a look at the record: strategic airlift craft, Hercules tactical airlift craft, Chinook helicopters, upgraded Aurora surveillance planes, and modernized Halifax-class frigates for our navy. That is just a partial list of the Conservative government's success on the procurement file.

What do we have in contrast? We have a fabricated credibility gap, which is having us search Kijiji in Australia for used fighter jets. This is a disgrace to our men and women in the armed forces.

When will the Prime Minister just take the blame for his own incompetence?

● (1440)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know you are trying to invoke Santa Claus to help them out, but let us not forget that the Conservatives like coal.

We take very seriously the responsibility we have to ensure that the men and women of our armed forces actually have the opportunity to do their jobs safely and with the right equipment. We take that extremely seriously after the Conservatives botched the process for 10 years.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have been taking it seriously for two years and nothing has happened. Maybe it is time they start taking it super seriously and we might actually get some results.

The incompetence extends even further. Canadian veterans are in limbo amid a backlog of applications for disability benefits. I know the Prime Minister will get up two years into his mandate and try to find other people to blame. However, let us remember that this is happening under his watch and as a direct result of his decision.

When will the Prime Minister stop blaming others and stand with our brave men and women in uniform?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Over the past two years, Mr. Speaker, we have invested in hundreds of millions of dollars for veterans. We have improved the benefits they receive. We have reopened veteran service offices that were closed.

We are ensuring that we live up to the sacred obligation we owe to our veterans and to their families. This is work we take very seriously and it is work we are delivering on.

* * *

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the dictionary definition of consultation is "the act or instance of consulting, to seek information or advice from someone".

Sending a letter with the name of just one candidate is not consulting; it is imposing a choice. Giving the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics one hour with the candidate for the position of Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner does not show openness; it limits the discussion.

If the Liberals really wanted to consult the opposition, why did they wait until the very last minute to do so?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, six months ago, early this summer, we consulted the opposition members. We asked them exactly what kind of concerns they had, whom we should talk to, and which communities should be involved in choosing who the next officers of Parliament should be.

This was a commitment we made regarding a process we were developing specifically to ensure greater transparency and openness. We are proud to have done so much consultation with the opposition members, and we will continue to do so.

[*English*]

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear here. It is not like the Liberals do not know what consultation with other parties looks like. They did consult the opposition before appointing the Supreme Court justice recently. However, they consistently fail to consult on appointments for officers of Parliament. These watchdogs do not work for Liberals; they work for all of Parliament, and we represent all Canadians.

Therefore, when will the Prime Minister drop his tired talking points, keep the promise to be open and accountable, and commit right now to follow the right process, the legal process, for these appointments?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his comments and for contributing to the Supreme Court appointment process. As he mentioned, it is a very good one.

However, I want to correct him in that we did, for example, on the Commissioner of Lobbying and the Commissioner of Official Languages, reach out to the opposition parties back in June to talk about the stakeholders they wanted, the communities they thought we would involve, how they felt the appointment process should go. We were happy to consult them then.

We are happy to be open, transparent, and engaging throughout the process.

* * *

TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals tried to raise taxes on health and dental benefits, but we stopped them. They tried to raise taxes on people with autism and diabetes, but we stopped them. They are trying to raise taxes on our family farmers and local businesses, and we continue to stop them.

Will the Prime Minister admit that he is just putting these tax increases targeted at vulnerable people on hold and that he will try to bring them back in, if, God forbid, he gets another chance after the next election?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we lowered taxes on the middle class and raised them on the wealthiest 1%, and the Conservatives tried to stop us. We brought in a Canada child benefit that would give more money to nine out of 10 Canadian families and lifts hundreds of thousands of kids out of poverty, and they tried to stop us. We moved forward in increasing the guaranteed income supplement for our most vulnerable elderly seniors, and they tried to stop us. We moved forward on strengthening the CPP for future generations, and they tried to stop us.

● (1445)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals always talk about their real record. Despite their promises, the wealthiest 1% in Canada are paying a billion dollars less in taxes. Despite their promises, the middle class, 87% of them, are paying higher taxes. Despite their promises, that millionaire, the Prime Minister, continues to get child care benefits in the form of taxpayer-funded nanny services. Their wealthiest friends continue to stash away their money in tax havens that the government has done nothing to address.

When will the Liberals admit that it is a government by the rich, of the rich, and for the rich?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, in their pursuit of endless partisanship, the Conservatives follow think tanks that do not include the whole picture. The stats they are quoting now do not actually include the Canada child benefit. I can understand why. They campaigned against our Canada child benefit, which gave more money to nine out of 10 Canadian families and lifted hundreds of thousands of kids out of poverty. They wanted to continue with their benefits that sent child benefit cheques to millionaire families. I do not think that is fair. Canadians did not think that was fair. That is why we are delivering on what we committed to Canadians to do.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals continue to deliver child care benefits to that millionaire in the form of taxpayer-funded nannies.

However, beyond that, the Prime Minister criticized the source I used for statistics. He says it is a think tank. Actually, it is his own finance department, which has the wealthiest 1% paying a billion dollars less under the government.

No new taxes for his trust fund, no new taxes for Morneau Shepell, no new taxes for his fundraising chair, just more taxes for the working people who pay the bills in our country. Why?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one cannot help but feel bad for the Conservatives. They are resorting to flailing around with personal attacks because we have created over 441,000 new jobs over these past 12 months. That is an 18-year record for the Canadian government. We are delivering the fastest growth rate in the G7. We are delivering on low unemployment and benefits to Canadians, which are making a real and tangible difference in their lives. All they have left is groundless personal attacks.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I quote facts from the Prime Minister's own finance department and he considers it a terrible personal attack against him. Maybe he should take that up with the finance department.

When the government gets big, we know who pays more. It is the working class. It was not Morneau Shepell that paid higher taxes. It has not been his fundraising chair. It has not been him. In fact, we know that the wealthiest 1% pays a billion dollars less. Yes, that is a record to cry about.

The reality is that when the government gets bigger, the working class pays more. When are the Liberals going to put an end to that injustice?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the first thing we did was lower taxes for the middle class and raise them on the wealthiest 1%. This summer, when we said we were going to be lowering taxes for small businesses and making sure that wealthy Canadians would no longer be encouraged to use Canadian-controlled private corporations to pay lower tax rates than middle-class Canadians, those Conservatives went on the warpath, scared everyone across the country, and are now sheepish that we are lowering taxes on small businesses as of January 1. They can do nothing but give personal attacks.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ETHICS

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in committee, the nominee for Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner that the Liberals imposed on us would not confirm whether he plans to pursue the investigations into the Prime Minister's trip and the Minister of Finance's involvement in Bill C-27. Canadians are really concerned. These investigations are important to Canadians and certainly to our democracy, but the Liberals do not seem to realize that.

Do the Liberals think the commissioner should continue the investigations his predecessor started?

● (1450)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians and especially parliamentarians expect officers of Parliament to perform their duties with integrity and to make decisions based on facts. That is exactly what the commissioner said he would do. He said he would not cater to partisan interests or needs and that the facts and intellectual rigour would dictate how he carries out his responsibilities. That is what we expect, whereas opponents seem to expect nothing but partisanship.

[*English*]

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, is the Prime Minister trying to pretend that his selection process is not partisan?

Canadians want the investigations into both the Prime Minister and the finance minister to be completed and reported. In committee yesterday, the government's nominee refused to commit to do so. These investigations are important for our democracy, and the Liberals must be held to account.

Do the Liberals not agree that investigations already started need to continue under the new commissioner or do they believe they are above the law?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the question is whether parliamentarians and Canadians expect officers of Parliament to fulfill their duties with integrity, with responsibility, and based on the facts. That is exactly what the commissioner testified to yesterday. That is what we all expect from agents of Parliament, to do their job responsibly, above the petty partisanship that so often animates the House.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the Minister of Finance met with his counterparts from across the country to work collaboratively and take action that was in the interests of all Canadians, to strengthen the middle class, and to help those working hard to join it. As a result, a number of agreements were reached, including a coordinated approach on the cannabis excise framework.

Could the Prime Minister inform the House on the cannabis agreement, and how it benefits provinces, territories, and municipalities?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, cities and towns across the country are among our most important partners in our effort to legalize and strictly regulate access to cannabis. That is why we are providing the provinces and territories 75% of collected excise tax from cannabis, so municipalities can get the resources they need to keep cannabis away from kids and profits out of the hands of criminals.

This agreement will be reviewed within six months of legalization to confirm that communities, cities, and towns are well supported by the provinces.

* * *

TAXATION

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the announcement made today by the Minister of Finance, there is still one very troubling aspect of the small business changes, which is this. A married woman in a family business will now have to prove that she receives a dividend from that company. However, for a divorced woman, it is assumed she will receive that dividend from the same company. Therefore, from one feminist to another, how is that fair?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on January 1, we are lowering small business taxes for 100% of small businesses across the country. Three per cent of small businesses of Canada-controlled private corporations use income sprinkling. Of that 3%, many will be able to continue under recently-clarified rules that apply.

Those who are trying to use income sprinkling as a way of avoiding paying their fair share of taxes no longer will be able to. That is what Canadians expect of this government when we make the tax system fairer, and that is what we are delivering on.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been accused on the other side of not understanding arithmetic, so I think I will help the Prime Minister on this one. Three per cent of small businesses is 45,000 small businesses in this country that, in the next two and a half weeks, will have to understand these rule changes and then implement corporate structure changes to their own businesses in order to be able to be on the right side of the CRA, and then the CRA will test to determine if it is reasonable what they are doing. This does not help anyone in this country. Will the Liberals withdraw these tax changes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on January 1, small businesses will be paying lower taxes, because we are dropping the small business tax rate. For those Canadian-controlled private corporations that do use income sprinkling, they will have the entirety of 2018 to determine how to give out dividends, and then they will have a few more months after that to prepare their taxes. We are giving plenty of time to businesses to ensure that they are able to continue to do things that matter to their businesses.

* * *

● (1455)

[*Translation*]

ETHICS

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, facts are facts. They can be checked.

Let us look at the Minister of Finance's record: he imposed a tax reform to raise taxes on small businesses; he was fined by the Ethics Commissioner because he failed to declare one of his companies that owned one of his villas in France; he failed to put his assets in a blind trust; he sold $10 million worth of shares in his company days before introducing tax measures that he himself put in place; and he introduced Bill C-27, which earned his family's company more than $5 million.

When will the Prime Minister call for his Minister of Finance to resign?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can understand why the members across the way keep making these personal attacks. It is because the real record of our Minister of Finance is extremely positive: 441,000 new jobs created in the past 12 months, breaking an 18-year record.

We are creating the strongest economic growth in the G7. We are helping Canadian families succeed after 10 years of a Conservative government that did not give families the help they need.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister's main role is to manage finances, the money that Canadians worked hard to earn.

This is the reality: a deficit of more than $20 billion at the expense of our children and grandchildren, higher taxes for businesses, higher taxes for families, and no plan to balance the budget.

My wish for Canadians in 2018 is that the Prime Minister do the right thing: fire the finance minister and find one with integrity who will be transparent and do his job in a responsible manner.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): The personal attacks keep coming, Mr. Speaker.

The reality is that the Minister of Finance has met expectations, especially those of Canadian families, with respect to Canada's economy. The first thing he did was lower taxes for the middle class by raising them for the wealthy. Then he established the Canada child benefit, which helps nine out of ten families and will lift hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty.

He does that by not sending benefit cheques to the families of millionaires like the former government did. We are creating economic growth that is benefiting Canadians.

* * *

[*English*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week Liberals again excluded the Native Women's Association of Canada from high-level federal-provincial-territorial meetings, and it is not the first time. Indigenous women were shut out of first ministers meetings in October, March, and last December. NWAC was not even invited to a reconciliation meeting with the Prime Minister. We need a diversity of voices, and leaving women out means they only get half the wisdom. How can this so-called feminist Prime Minister call this reconciliation, when he keeps blocking indigenous women's voices?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is simply not true. We continually work with indigenous women's organizations and indigenous groups across this country to ensure that all voices—youth, elders, women, and survivors of residential schools—are heard in every possible forum. We know that the work of reconciliation needs to involve everyone, not just indigenous people and the government but non-indigenous Canadians as well. That is the work we are doing. That is what we take so seriously and what we are focused on as we build a brighter future that includes everyone in this country's success.

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, speaking of survivors, those of St. Anne's residential school have been forced to go back to court to end interference by government lawyers.

The Liberals have been fighting those survivors for years by covering up documents and forcing them to find witnesses to verify evidence, and now the Liberals want them to pay for court costs. This is a re-victimization of survivors who have suffered horrific levels of abuse. When will the government commit to real partnership with survivors? If I was asked, I would say that this does not seem like a real partnership.

● (1500)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we must never allow this dark and painful chapter of our history to be forgotten. We are encouraging all survivors to share their stories and documents with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. Where an individual requests it, our government is willing to absolutely waive privilege and encourages all other entities to do exactly the same.

We remain committed to bringing closure to this system.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the wife of a Canadian soldier with severe PTSD went to the Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, she was told, "You married him. It's your responsibility."

When a young mom and cancer survivor asked why the government continued to deny her benefits, the minister compared her question to the old question, "When did you stop beating your wife?"

To a thalidomide survivor, this same minister quipped, "Everyone in Canada has a sob story."

My question for the Prime Minister is simple. Do these comments reflect the position of his government?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister has responded to these allegations. He is working right now on important accessibility legislation for helping every person with disabilities in this country.

When he was minister of veterans affairs, he delivered on our commitment to increase the caregiver recognition benefit and reopened offices across the country that Conservatives shuttered. He will continue to be a strong advocate for persons with disabilities, and of course for his constituents in Calgary Centre.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities does not have what it takes to be minister. A minister must listen to people, and be receptive and empathetic. The minister clearly does not get this, and has repeatedly acted inappropriately and made condescending comments to Canadians, like Kim Davis. What is worse is that the minister ordered his staff to publicly humiliate Ms. Davis.

Does the Prime Minister endorse his minister's actions?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities has addressed these allegations.

He is working on important legislation to increase accessibility in order to help every disabled Canadian.

When he was the minister of veterans' affairs, he delivered on our commitment to increase the caregiver recognition benefit, and he re-opened offices across the country that had been closed by the Conservatives. He will continue to be a passionate advocate for persons with disabilities and for his constituents in Calgary Centre.

[*English*]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an alarming pattern but a clear one: the Liberals are compassionate toward vulnerable Canadians only when it is politically convenient for them.

Thalidomide survivors, veterans' families, and sick mothers, who have all gone to a minister for assistance, have been dismissed and belittled. It gets worse. For his own political damage control, it seems he told his staff to publicly humiliate and discredit the wife of a sick veteran by sending screen shots of her personal Facebook posts to the media.

How can the Prime Minister condone his minister's words and actions?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister has responded to these allegations. He continues to work on important measures that are going to make Canada more accessible and ease the challenges facing Canadians living with disabilities.

When he was veterans affairs minister, he made historic improvements to support veterans and their families and will continue to be a strong voice for the compassionate approach this government continues to have.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Rohingya refugees continue to live in dire circumstances. They face serious challenges related to food, shelter, health, and the safety of women and children.

The Myanmar crisis relief fund, which the government announced last month, has come to an end. Canadians are generous, and compassion is one of our core values.

Can the Prime Minister give the House an update on the amount collected?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Brome—Missisquoi for his question. Our government is still very concerned about the situation of the Rohingya in Myanmar and Bangladesh.

I am pleased to inform the House that Canadians generously donated $12.5 million. Our government will therefore increase our humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya by that same amount. This will bring the overall contribution of Canada and Canadians in 2017 to $50 million for our partners in Myanmar and Bangladesh.

* * *

● (1505)

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, women who have undergone female genital mutilation suffer infections, difficult urination and childbirth, pain during intercourse, and more.

Practitioners of FGM are entering Canada, and Canadian girls are being taken abroad to have the procedure performed on them. Raising awareness of FGM is a core part of the fight against it, and that is why it is listed in Canada's citizenship guide as a practice Canada does not tolerate.

I have a simple question: Will the Prime Minister end his consultations on FGM and decide today that warnings about FGM belong in Canada's citizenship guide?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, being vocal about this important issue is something I have always done. Indeed, when I was last in west Africa, I actually spoke up clearly and strongly against this issue.

In regard to the citizenship guide, we are pleased to take recommendations and suggestions from all Canadians, including members of the opposition. I can assure members that we will be very clear about this issue, because this is not an issue for partisanship; this is an issue on which we are all united.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the *Kathryn Spirit* is going to cost taxpayers $24 million.

Most of the money will go to the company that dumped this eyesore in Beauharnois in the first place. To make matters worse, the government has not established a penalty in case the company fails to meet the dismantling deadline in early 2019. The cherry on top is that this company has been fined by Quebec for committing environmental violations. It is also facing a $10-million class action lawsuit.

How does this government plan to impose strict environmental regulations, and why is there no late penalty, given that the dismantling is already six years overdue?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to protecting the health and safety of Canadians and of our waters.

We are taking the necessary steps to ensure that the permanent removal of the *Kathryn Spirit* is carried out safely and efficiently. The contract to fully dismantle the *Kathyn Spirit* was awarded after an open and transparent procurement process. We are still monitoring the ship and will continue to keep the local community informed as the work progresses.

* * *

[*English*]

SCIENCE

Mr. Jati Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during her testimony to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, the Minister of Science told the committee that when she was at the G7 in Italy, Canada was viewed as a beacon for science around the world.

Could the Prime Minister update the House on the actions he is taking to ensure that Canada remains a top destination for international talent and how that is benefiting post-secondary institutions in Canada, but especially in my home province of British Columbia?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his advocacy on behalf of his constituents and his province. Our government's support for research and innovation is being noticed around the world. Through our investment of $117 million in the Canada 150 research chairs program, we are recruiting talented researchers and scholars from a broad variety of disciplines.

Today the Minister of Science welcomed our first group of talented researchers, including Dr. Addis, Dr. Colijn, Dr. Ramalho-Santos, and Dr. Seltzer, who will work in Ontario and in British Columbia. We look forward to welcoming additional chairs in the coming months.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with the serious delays in the naval strategy and the decommissioning of the *Preserver* and the *Protecteur*, even the Minister of National Defence recognizes that there is a serious operational gap. His parliamentary secretary has called for the *Obelix*. It says in the Prime Minister's mandate letter to the minister and on page 35 of the Liberal defence policy that the minister must maintain the capacity of the deep-sea fleet. We need two ships: the *Asterix* and the *Obelix*.

When will the Prime Minister make national security a top priority and ask the Davie shipyard to build the *Obelix*? Will he do so before the holidays?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to remember that the procurement requirements of the navy and the Coast Guard were subject to a comprehensive review. For the moment, the long-term procurement plan does not include a second supply ship. That was not one of the needs that was identified. Our government does not plan to buy or obtain the services of a second supply ship for the moment.

● (1510)

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as we all know, today is the last sitting day of parliament before the holidays, but more importantly it is the last sitting day before hundreds of workers loose their job at the Davie shipyard.

The Prime Minister cannot go on holiday when hundreds of workers are about to spend Christmas without a job. This is the last chance to announce a real contract in the House so that workers can keep their jobs.

Will the Prime Minister take that chance, show some compassion, and protect jobs at the Davie shipyard?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are still very concerned about the impact of job losses on workers and their families, and we acknowledge the excellent work done by Davie employees.

With regard to other shipbuilding projects, the strategy allocates $2 billion for competitive projects granted to Canadian shipyards like Davie.

Since that was the last question, I would like to wish everyone a merry Christmas and happy holidays. Let's all come back safe and sound in 2018.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, I seek the consent of the House to move the following motion: that the House condemn the horrific acts committed by ISIS; acknowledge that individuals who joined ISIS fighters are complicit in these horrific acts and pose a danger to all Canadians; call on the government to bring to justice and prosecute any ISIS fighter returning to Canada; and insist that the government make the security and protection of Canadians its priority, rather than the reintegration of ISIS fighters.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, moments ago, during question period, in his response to a question from the member for Carleton, the Prime Minister mentioned a study that he said came from a lobby group, but the study is actually from the finance department, and for the eighth time, I seek the consent of the House to table the document.

[*English*]

It is from the Department of Finance annual financial report of the Government of Canada, 2016-17, page 16, "Personal income tax revenues decreased by $1.2 billion, or 0.8%, in 2016–17, largely reflecting the impact of tax planning by high-income individuals."

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to table the document?

Some hon. members: No.

● (1515)

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Prime Minister for his Christmas wishes, but Davie workers would like a decision on *Obelix*. I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to table the Liberal defence policy saying we need two ships. That is written on page 35. We call that a naval task group. We need it for our national security. It is a way to say merry Christmas to Canada and the people of Lévis.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to table the document?

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been some discussions among the parties and if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House:

(a) after the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion for third reading of Bill C-24, An Act to amend the Salaries Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Financial Administration Act, the questions on the motions standing on the Order Paper in the name of the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons in relation to the appointments of the Commissioner of Official Languages, the Commissioner of Lobbying, and the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, shall be put forthwith and successively, and that, if a recorded division is requested on any of the aforementioned motions, the bells to call in the members shall not ring and the recorded division shall be taken immediately;

(b) Bill C-66, An Act to establish a procedure for expunging certain historically unjust convictions and to make related amendments to other Acts, be deemed concurred in at the report stage and ordered for consideration at third reading later this day; when the House begins debate on the motion for third reading of the said Bill, a Member of each recognized party, a Member of the Bloc Québécois and the Member for Saanich—Gulf Islands may speak to the said motion for not more than 10 minutes, followed by five minutes for questions and comments and, at the conclusion of the time provided for Government Orders this day or when no members rise to speak, whichever is earlier, the motion be deemed adopted and the Bill read a third time and passed;

(c) the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology be the committee designated for the purposes of section 92 of the Copyright Act; and

(d) when the House adjourns today, it shall stand adjourned until Monday, January 29, 2018, provided that, for the purposes of any Standing Order, it shall be deemed to have been adjourned pursuant to Standing Order 28 and be deemed to have sat on Thursday, December 14 and Friday, December 15, 2017.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Does the hon. government House leader have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SALARIES ACT

The House resumed from December 12 consideration of the motion that Bill C-24, An Act to amend the Salaries Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Financial Administration Act, be read the third time and passed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 3:18 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-24.

Call in the members.

● (1525)

[*Translation*]

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

(Division No. 435)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya

Ayoub
Bagnell
Baylis
Bennett
Bittle
Boissonnault
Bratina
Brison
Carr
Casey (Charlottetown)
Chen
Cuzner
Damoff
Dhaliwal
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser (West Nova)
Freeland
Garneau
Goldsmith-Jones
Graham
Hajdu
Harvey
Hehr
Housefather
Iacono
Jones
Jowhari
Khalid
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lefebvre
Lightbound
Long
Ludwig
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Monsef
Morneau
Murray
Nault
O'Connell
Oliver
Paradis
Peterson
Philpott
Poissant
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Romanado
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Eyolfson
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Gerretsen
Goodale
Grewal
Hardie
Hébert
Holland
Hutchings
Joly
Jordan
Kang
Khera
Lametti
Lapointe
Lebouthillier
Levitt
Lockhart
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
Maloney

McDonald
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk

Morrissey
Nassif
Ng
Oliphant
O'Regan
Peschisolido
Petitpas Taylor
Picard
Qualtrough
Rioux
Rodriguez
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Samson
Sarai
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Tootoo
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Arnold
Barlow
Beaulieu
Benzen
Bernier
Blaikie
Block
Boulerice
Brassard
Brown
Cannings
Chong
Christopherson
Clement
Cullen
Deltell
Doherty
Dubé
Dusseault
Eglinski
Finley
Gallant
Généreux
Gill
Godin
Hardcastle
Hoback
Jeneroux
Kelly
Kitchen
Kusie
Lake
Laverdière
Liepert
Lobb
MacKenzie
Malcolmson
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McColeman
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz
Nantel
Nicholson
Paul-Hus
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Caron
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Davies
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Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
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Fortin
Garrison
Genuis
Gladu
Gourde
Harder
Hughes
Julian
Kent
Kmiec
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Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
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McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Moore
Mulcair
Nater
O'Toole
Pauzé
Poilievre
Raitt
Rayes
Rempel
Saganash
Saroya
Shields
Sopuck
Stanton
Strahl
Sweet
Trudel
Van Loan
Viersen
Waugh
Wong

PAIRED

Nil

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I declare the motion carried.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1530)

[*Translation*]

COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

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

That, in accordance with subsection 49(1) of the Official Languages Act, R.S.C., 1985, c. 31, and pursuant to Standing Order 111.1(2), the House approve the appointment of Raymond Théberge as Commissioner of Official Languages, for a term of seven years.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

COMMISSIONER OF LOBBYING

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That, in accordance with subsection 4.1(1) of the Lobbying Act, R.S.C., 1985, c. 44, and pursuant to Standing Order 111.1(2), the House approve the appointment of Nancy Bélanger as Commissioner of Lobbying, for a term of seven years.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICS COMMISSIONER

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That, in accordance with section 81 of the Parliament of Canada Act, R.S.C., 1985 c. P-1, and pursuant to Standing Order 111.1(2), the House approve the appointment of Mario Dion as Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, for a term of seven years.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, on division we usually find out how people would like to vote. I was going to vote in favour of two of the commissioners and against one. Is that permissible?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): When it is accepted on division, normally what happens is the majority of the people accept it. Since we do not have a vote, I am afraid it is not expressed under these conditions.

Since all of you are leaving, if I could have your attention, please. I just want to wish everyone happy holidays. I hope all of you spend a lot of time with those who are close to you, those you love, and enjoy the time you can take. We will see you in the new year.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TREASURY BOARD SECRETARIAT

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the annual report to Parliament for the fiscal year 2016-17 entitled "Benefits and Costs of Significant Federal Regulations, and the Implementation of the One-for-One Rule".

This report highlights the net benefit of important regulations made by the Governor in Council in 2016-17 and serves as a public report for the one-for-one rule, as required under the Red Tape Reduction Act.

* * *

[*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 responses to eight petitions.

* * *

● (1535)

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation respecting its participation at the mission to the country that will next hold the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union and the fourth part of the 2017 session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Sofia, Bulgaria and Strasbourg, France, from October 4 to 13, 2017.

Merry Christmas, Skipper.

Mr. Geng Tan (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation respecting its participation in the co-chairs annual visit to China of the Canada-China Legislative Association held in Kunming and Hainan, People's Republic of China, October 10 to 14, 2016.

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, two reports by the Canadian delegation of the Canada-China Legislative Association and the Canada-Japan Interparliamentary Group. The first is respecting its participation at the 25th annual meeting of the Asian-Pacific Parliamentary Forum, APPF, held in Fiji January 15 to 19, 2017.

The second is respecting its participation at the 38th general assembly of the ASEAN Interparliamentary Assembly, AIPA, held in the Philippines September 14 to 20, 2017.

Season's greetings to everyone.

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been a while since I have had the opportunity to present some reports from the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group. As the former chair, I did that regularly, but on behalf of the current chair, the member for Malpeque, I have the honour today to rise in the House.

Pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, two reports of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group. The first report concerns the U.S. congressional visit held in Washington, D.C., the United States of America, from March 14 to 16 of 2016. That one is a little old.

The second report concerns the 55th annual meeting with members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, in Washington, D.C., United States of America, from June 20 to 22, 2016.

Mr. Speaker, since this will be the last time I have an opportunity to rise in the House in 2017, I wish everyone here, and all of my constituents, a merry Christmas and happy new year.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Neil Ellis (Bay of Quinte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, entitled "Comparative Study of Services to Veterans in Other Jurisdictions".

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

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish a merry Christmas and a happy new year to you and everyone in the House.

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development in relation to Bill C-57, an act to amend the Federal Sustainable Development Act. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

I would also like to wish you, Mr. Speaker, my fellow colleagues, and all my constituents back home a very merry Christmas and all the very best in 2018.

● (1540)

[*Translation*]

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Dan Ruimy (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology entitled "Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation: Clarifications are in Order".

[*English*]

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

To all the clerks, analysts, translators, support staff, and especially to Tonya and everyone in publications, I thank them for working so hard to deliver this report before the winter break.

I want to wish everyone a very merry Christmas, happy holidays, and a happy new year.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 15th report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, entitled "Building an Inclusive Canada: Bringing the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act in Step with Modern Values".

I would like to take a moment as well to thank the members of the committee for their very diligent and good work on the report. As well, particular thanks to Erica the clerk, Julie, and Madalina, and the translators, who worked around the clock this week to have it ready before the House rose.

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

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our dissenting report agrees with the finding that change absolutely must occur in relation to the excessive demand provision. However, it outlines that the committee report was issued with many crucial data points not being considered; that the minister was undertaking a provincial consultation process that provides a parallel policy option, as opposed to what is recommended in the report; that a majority of the provinces and territories did not participate in the study; and that the report's recommendations only reflect one of two policy options presented at committee.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, entitled "Strategic Electricity Interties".

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my fellow committee members who worked so hard to get this report done, and particular thanks to the staff, analysts, and the clerk, who made this all happen.

I would also like to say merry Christmas to all of my constituents in Etobicoke—Lakeshore, and to all of my colleagues in the House.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 10th and 11th reports of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

The 10th report is entitled "Protecting Canadians' Privacy at the U. S. Border". Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

The 11th report is entitled "Certificate of Nomination of Mario Dion to the Position of Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner".

Mr. Speaker, we would like to wish you and your family a very merry Christmas.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following six reports of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. I am pleased to be joined by my vice-chair today, the hon. member for Brossard—Saint-Lambert.

The 34th report entitled "Report 2, Customs Duties, from the 2017 Spring Reports of the Auditor General of Canada-Part 1"; the 35th report entitled "Report 5, Temporary Foreign Worker Program, of the Spring 2017 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada"; the 36th report entitled "Report 1, Management of Fraud Risk, of the Spring 2017 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada"; the 37th report entitled "Special Examination Report-Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, of the Spring 2017 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada"; the 38th report entitled "Report 6, Civil Aviation Infrastructure in the North, of the Spring 2017 Report of the Auditor General of Canada"; and the 39th report entitled "Special Examination Report-Defence Construction Canada, of the spring 2017 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada".

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests the government table a comprehensive response to each of these six reports.

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts adopted these six reports yesterday, all unanimously. I want to thank the members and the substitutes of our committee for their great work. These reports represent over 140 pages, in each official language, that were translated, formatted, and published by a small group of employees of the House, who worked diligently in record time to meet today's deadline.

I want to thank all the employees of the translation bureau, parliamentary publications, our committee analysts and the clerk, and many other assistants who made this miracle happen.

As well, to all Canadians and to my constituents, and to all members here, I want to wish all a very merry Christmas from my family to theirs. We hope they all have a very safe holiday, and come back in the new year refreshed and ready to do the right thing for all Canadians.

* * *

● (1545)

CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-388, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (bestiality).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce an act to amend the Criminal Code, bestiality. On June 9, 2016, the Supreme Court ruled that the Criminal Code provisions around bestiality do not adequately define which sex acts with animals are prohibited.

Consequently, the Supreme Court upheld an acquittal of a British Columbia man who was charged with bestiality after compelling the family dog to sexually abuse his daughter. This case makes it obvious that a loophole for sex abusers to avoid conviction exists. This case highlights the need for updated legislation to keep both humans and animals safe. The current law is reflective of an archaic understanding of sex, and the change the bill seeks to make reflects the language of the Supreme Court ruling and, frankly, is a no-brainer.

The Liberals should have introduced legislation to correct this issue immediately after the ruling. Nearly a year and a half later, I hope that tabling this bill today will encourage the Prime Minister to stop dragging his feet, and to take action to make this common sense change.

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

* * *

STUDENT DEBT RELIEF ACT

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-389, an act respecting the development of a national strategy on student loan debt.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to introduce this bill, the student debt relief act, with great thanks to my seconder, the hard-working member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

This legislation provides for the development of a national strategy with the objective of reducing student loan debt. Too many Canadian students have been forced to assume a crushing debt load simply to receive an education.

According to the Canadian University Survey Consortium, the average Canadian student will now graduate with over $26,000 in debt. This legislation looks to reduce student loan interest rates to prime rate, introduce incentives to complete a degree, including loan forgiveness, and establish rewards for on-time payments of loans, such as the possibility of interest rate reductions. New Democrats believe every Canadian student, who studies hard, should be able to access a world-class education without going deeply into debt.

Therefore, I call upon all parliamentarians to work together to make debt-free post-secondary education a reality for all students in Canada.

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

* * *

EMPLOYING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-390, an act respecting the development of a national employment strategy for persons with disabilities.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to introduce this bill, the employing persons with disabilities act, again with thanks to my hard-working colleague, the member for Windsor—Tecumseh.

This legislation provides for the development of a national employment strategy to increase the economic participation of persons with disabilities. At present, there are over 400,000 working-age Canadians with disabilities who are not working, but whose disability does not prevent them from doing so. Almost half of these potential workers are post-secondary graduates.

People with disabilities have a great deal to contribute to our society. We must do more to improve workplace accessibility, and promote the participation of people with disabilities in the workforce. This legislation seeks to educate business owners and private sector employers about the potential of persons with disabilities, correct misconceptions that exist about employing persons with disabilities, encourage private sector employers to adopt more inclusive hiring practices, and promote the opportunities fund for persons with disabilities.

I call upon all parliamentarians to support these vital initiatives to have these wonderful, creative, talented people participate fully in our society and economy.

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

* * *

● (1550)

PETITIONS

PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I table this petition today I want to say that, as part of the October 15 campaign, I had the privilege and opportunity to walk alongside Canadians in support of thousands of families across our country who have suffered the loss of an infant.

Events in my home province of Alberta, like Quinn's Legacy Run in Airdrie, or the Baby Steps Walk to Remember in Calgary, Edmonton, and Sherwood Park, or Vaughn's Memorial Color Run in Cochrane, to events in Saskatoon like the No Foot Too Small Perinatal Loss Awareness Walk, to events like them all across the country, commemorate the lives of children who were taken too soon.

Therefore, I table this petition, which calls upon Parliament to walk alongside Canadian families, and to look for ways to better support parents dealing with pregnancy and infancy loss.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we prepare for the Christmas break, it is important to remember there will be political prisoners around the world spending this holiday season in prison, people who have committed no crimes other than to simply engage in practices or beliefs that the government where they are find threatening. Some of these people are Canadians.

In particular, I table a petition today drawing attention to the ongoing persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China. The petitioners note that Falun Gong is a spiritual practice that follows the principles of truth, compassion, and forbearance. However, 18 years ago, the Chinese Communist Party started a violent and illegal persecution against Falun Gong practitioners. The petitioners highlight this issue, and call upon the government to take strong action in response to it.

I personally had the opportunity to raise the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners with Chinese officials when I was in China two weeks ago. I encourage all members of Parliament to be seized with these issues, as well as other violations of fundamental human rights happening in the People's Republic of China, and continue to raise them at every opportunity.

CANADA POST

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table two petitions.

The first petition was initiated by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, and asks the government to remedy a major issue for too many people living in small rural towns and villages across Canada.

Nearly two million Canadians lack access to local banking services, but with its existing networks, the petition asks that Canada Post sees itself as being well-equipped to fill the service gap. Postal banking could make banking services accessible to all Canadians.

The petitioners are calling on Parliament to add postal banking with a mandate for financial inclusion, and that the secret study conducted on postal banking by Canada Post be released.

● (1555)

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am honoured to table is on behalf of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada.

Public servants in the greater Toronto area are concerned by the Canada Revenue Agency service modernization initiative that will cause significant disruptions and hardships to many workers. This change has been green-lighted without meaningful consultation, and will result in a number of things, including relocation for some, longer commutes, and greater challenges for many employees who need child care, or care for an elderly family member.

Forcing public servants to scatter across Canada's largest city to their own detriment contradicts the government's promise to promote a healthy work-life balance for public service workers.

I am proud to present their petition today.

I would like to wish all my colleagues and my constituents, and especially you, Mr. Speaker, happy holidays and a happy new year.

[*Translation*]

PENSIONS

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I am honoured to present an e-petition signed by a few thousand people who deplore the fact that hundreds of pensioners are going to lose their pensions when their employer goes bankrupt. The petition also indicates that the Quebec National Assembly and Canada's unions support the petitioners in calling on the federal government to reform the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act to ensure that supplemental pension plans are considered preferred creditors in the event of bankruptcy or company restructuring.

I am very honoured to present this petition. I wish everyone the very best for the holidays.

SAFETY OF SEAFOOD PRODUCTS FROM VIETNAM

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition, signed by the Vietnamese community of Montreal, on the safety of seafood products imported from Vietnam, given that the Formosa steelworks dumped large amounts of toxic waste in the ocean in 2016, killing a huge number of fish and damaging the Pacific marine ecosystem along the coastline of central Vietnam.

Despite this ecological disaster, Vietnam continues to export fish, seafood, and derived products to other countries. The signatories call upon the Government of Canada to pay special attention to inspections of seafood and derived products from that part of the world in order to ensure they are safe for the Canadian public to consume.

[*English*]

CANADA POST

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, standing with the Union of Postal Workers, residents of Nanaimo, Duncan, Ladysmith, and Whitehorse in Yukon urge the federal government to recognize that many rural people do not have access to banking services. Nearly two million people are without access to banking services, and are instead dependent on payday lenders.

The petitioners call on the government to add postal banking to Canada Post's mandate, including a mandate for financial inclusion, and also that the secret study Canada Post conducted on postal banking be made available to the public.

We commend the petition to this Parliament.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition regarding Canada being an active signatory to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and a signatory of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

That being said, there is a petition with 5,000 signatures from across Canada. The petitioners are concerned for the situation of U. K. citizen Jagtar Singh Johal. He was abducted, forcibly, by Punjabi police. He is receiving poor treatment, and has also been refused medical treatment.

We are encouraged, through this petition, to add our collective voices with our counterparts, who are also signatories to the convention, so we have justice and fair treatment for this gentleman.

FIREARMS

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition regarding the United Nations protocol against the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms, which recommends that Canada adopt a system that will ensure that Canada can trace firearms that cross our borders.

The petitioners indicate that the RCMP currently successfully traces firearms through the use of a firearm's make, model, and serial number and that the serial number contains all the information required to trace a firearm. They add that Canadians have invested millions in the development of firearms reference tables and that the implementation of firearms marking regulations would impose costly, onerous, and unnecessary requirements on manufacturers and importers. The petitioners request that the government revise the firearms marking regulations protocol to recognize that the current serial number on imported firearms can be used to satisfy the UN's request.

The petitioners are from Mindemoya, Spanish, Espanola, Manitowaning, Elliot Lake, Webbwood, and 15 other communities in northern Ontario as well as from Huntsville.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I want to wish you and my constituents all the best as we move into the holiday season.

[*Translation*]

Merry Christmas and happy new year!

● (1600)

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, as many in this House know, but I do not know how many Canadians are aware, the petition process does not begin with petitioners at the age of 18. Any Canadian citizen can sign a petition.

This is the first time have had occasion to rise in this House to present a petition prepared by constituents in my riding, in particular from Salt Spring Island. The youngest petitioner is 11. As a mother, this chokes me up. It is from youth petitioners and those who care deeply about youth. The oldest petitioners are in their nineties. They are calling for action on climate change as an intergenerational threat.

The petitioners note that the Paris agreement was agreed to two years ago, that chances of hitting the Paris targets are vanishing, and that current government actions are not sufficient to meet the Paris targets. These youth call on the House of Commons to ensure that meaningful steps are put in place, and very soon, to ensure that they have a future.

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Her Majesty's Canadian Ship *Haida,* the most fighting ship in the Royal Canadian Navy, sank more enemy tonnage than any vessel in Canada's entire naval history. HMCS *Haida* served with distinction during the Second World War, the Korean War, and the Cold War, demonstrating throughout Canadian excellence at sea.

I rise to present petition e-560, initiated by Patrick White, which asks that HMCS *Haida* be recommissioned and recognized as the flagship of the Royal Canadian Navy, that it be examined as to the feasibility of including it as a permanent part of the Canadian War Museum, and that the Royal Canadian Mint commission a commemorative coin featuring the Battle of Vimy Ridge, Billy Bishop, and HMCS *Haida*.

PAY EQUITY

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no one should be paid less due to gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. While we have legal equality in Canada, we still have not reached economic equality. I firmly believe in the principle of equal pay for equal work. I am proud to rise today to present an e-petition calling for equal pay legislation in Canada.

Statistics Canada and UN human rights reports have both highlighted concerns about pay inequalities between women and men. Specifically, they have found that pay gaps have disproportionate effects on our society's more vulnerable members, including low-income women, racialized women, and indigenous women. This principle of equal pay for equal work matters to Canadians. It is simply not fair to pay people differently based solely on their gender.

It is my honour to present e-petition 1136, initiated by Celine Yegani, of Edmonton Centre, asking our government to help ensure equal pay for equal work.

TAXATION

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and present this petition sparked by recent decisions by the Canada Revenue Agency that assessed some campgrounds as being too small to qualify for business deductions, resulting in tax rates over three times greater than other small businesses in Canada and even greater than some billion dollar enterprises.

These group campgrounds are in the same category as apartment buildings, mobile home parks, and other full-time residential complexes. If this decision is not reversed, some campground closures are expected. Therefore, my petitioners are requesting that Parliament and the department of finance ensure that family-run campgrounds are granted active business status, similar to other tourism operators, such as hotels, motels, and marinas, in order for campground operators to be able to claim a small business tax deduction.

* * *

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. 1291, 1294 to 1296, 1310, 1346, and 1353.

[*Text*]

Question No. 1291— **Mr.Steven Blaney**:

> With regard to submissions to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) of Form RC193, Service-Related Complaint, since November 4, 2015: (*a*) how many submissions have been received; (*b*) for each submission in (*a*), what are the details, broken down by (i) nature of the complaint, (ii) topic, (iii) date of complaint, (iv) resolution desired by the complainant, (v) actions, including internal, taken by the CRA to resolve the complaint, (vi) on what date was the complaint closed, if applicable; (*c*) how many complaints have been submitted that specifically relate to the rejection or review of the admissibility of a claim for the Disability Tax Credit; and (*d*) for each submission in (*c*), what are the details, broken down by (i) nature of the complaint, (ii) topic, (iii) date of complaint, (iv) resolution desired by the complainant, (v) actions, including internal, taken by the CRA to resolve the complaint, (vi) on what date was the complaint closed, if applicable?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): : Mr. Speaker, what follows is the response of the Canada Revenue Agency, CRA, for the period of November 4, 2015 to October 26, 2017, that being the date of the question. With regard to part (a), for the above noted period, the CRA received 9,429 submissions.

With regard to part (b)(i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (v), and (vi), the CRA is not able to extract this level of detail from its systems without manual intervention and validation, which could not be completed in the time provided under paragraph 39(5)(a) of the Standing Orders.

With regard to part (c), while the CRA is unable to provide the number of complaints that have been submitted that specifically relate to the rejection or review of the admissibility of a claim for the disability tax credit without manual intervention and validation, it can confirm that 585 of the service complaints received were of the topic "credit—disability".

With regard to part (d)(i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (v), and (vi), the CRA is not able to extract this level of detail from its systems without manual intervention and validation, which could not be completed in the time provided under paragraph 39(5)(a) of the Standing Orders.

Question No. 1294— **Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault**:

> With regard to Canada Post's delivery service: (*a*) how many packages from China have been delivered; (*b*) what are the costs and the losses or profits, if any, for Canada Post resulting from these deliveries; and (*c*) under the Universal Postal Union rate structure, how much has the Chinese government paid the Canadian government in compensation for the packages delivered in (*a*)?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada Post is an arm's-length crown corporation that operates on a self-sustaining financial basis. The requested information is sensitive and commercial in nature and has always been treated as confidential.

Question No. 1295— **Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault**:

> With regard to tax information exchange agreements signed by Canada: (*a*) how many times has the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) obtained information from its partners under these agreements; (*b*) how many times has the CRA released information to its partners under these agreements; (*c*) for each time agreements in (*a*) and (*b*), what is (i) the country in question, (ii) the year?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to parts (a) and (b), Canada currently has 93 tax treaties and 22 tax information exchange agreements, TIEAs, in force.

Over the past six years, the CRA has had an average of 1,000 exchanges per year.

Providing details regarding treaty or TEIA exchanges, including statistics, on the number of requests that have been received by Canada would alert taxpayers to information that could allow them to avoid their tax responsibilities.

Confidentiality is the cornerstone of the exchange of information process because without this safeguard, our partners would be less likely to provide us with information. Treaty and TIEA partners diligently abide by their obligations. Providing this information could also be a breach of the confidentiality provisions of the ITA, section 241.

With regard to part (c)(i) and (ii), for the reasons outlined above, the CRA cannot reveal this information.

Question No. 1296—**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault**:

> With regard to the efforts of the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to combat tax evasion and tax havens: (*a*) how many Canadian business or taxpayer cases are currently open at the CRA; (*b*) how many taxpayer cases are currently closed at the CRA; and (*c*) for the cases in (*a*) and (*b*) in what year were the cases opened and in what year were they closed, broken down by income bracket?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the annual statistics provided in this response are recorded by fiscal year and on a quarterly basis. "Q1" and "Q2" in this response refer to the first two quarters of the 2017-18 fiscal year, up to September 30, 2017.

For this current fiscal year, up to the second quarter, as at September 30, 2017, the CRA has almost 5,800 taxpayers, including businesses, under audit in the programs related to aggressive tax planning, ATP, activities. This includes aggressive tax avoidance, high net worth individuals, and offshore audit activities.

In terms of criminal investigations, the CRA is committed to protecting the tax base by ensuring that cases of tax evasion are investigated and, where appropriate, referred to the Public Prosecution Services of Canada, PPSC, for criminal prosecution. For this current fiscal year, up to the second quarter, as of September 30, 2017, 195 cases were open in criminal investigations.

As with any criminal investigation undertaken by law enforcement bodies, CRA's criminal investigations can be complex and require months or years to complete. This will be dependent upon the complexity of the case, the number of individuals involved, the availability of information or evidence, cooperation or lack thereof of witnesses or the accused, and the various legal tools that may need to be employed to gather sufficient evidence to establish a case beyond reasonable doubt.

With regard to part (b), the most recent statistics available are those of the number of cases completed or closed over the last two fiscal years, including the first two quarters of the 2017-18 fiscal year, up to September 30, 2017, Q1 and Q2.

In terms of ATP audits, for the period of April 1, 2015, to September 30, 2017, 22,074 files were completed.

With regard to criminal investigations, for the period of April 1, 2015, to September 30, 2017, 280 cases were closed either by the CRA's criminal investigations program or by the PPSC. This includes files closed at the preliminary investigation and court stage.

With regard to part (c), the CRA does not track this information by income bracket; therefore, the information cannot be provided in the manner requested.

Question No. 1310— **Mr. Gérard Deltell**:

> With regard to the Public Service Health Care Plan recoveries, as indicated in Volume II of the Public Accounts 2017, what explains the difference between the amount of $3,278,262 for the previous fiscal year and the amount of $157 for the current fiscal year?

Ms. Joyce Murray (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these revenues relate to prior years' member contributions to the Public Service Health Care Plan, PSHCP. The PSHCP is offered to eligible employees, retirees of the public service, including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canadian Forces, and other participating employers. Member contributions to the PSHCP are usually remitted to the TBS and used to offset plan expenses in the same year.

In 2015-16, TBS identified an opportunity to improve the process related to the remittance of member contributions. This process change means that remittances from the PSHCP are issued to the TBS in a more timely manner, and resulted in a one-time retroactive adjustment of $3.2 million received in 2015-16. Moving forward, the TBS revenues are expected to be more consistent from year to year, beginning in 2016-17, as a result of this process change.

Question No. 1346—**Mr. Glen Motz**:

With regard to suspected or known terrorists coming or returning to Canada: (*a*) how many suspected or known terrorists have come or returned to Canada since November 4, 2015; (*b*) if exact numbers are not known for (*a*), what is the government's best estimate; and (*c*) of the suspected or known terrorists referred to in (*a*) or (*b*), how many are currently under surveillance?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, given its mandate and specific operational requirements, CSIS does not generally disclose details related to its operational activities, such as subjects of investigation, operational exchanges, or reports.

CSIS is currently aware of approximately 60 individuals with a nexus to Canada who have engaged in terrorist activities abroad and returned to Canada. This number has remained relatively stable over the past two years, in part because it has become more difficult for extremists to successfully leave or return to Canada.

Due to the relatively small number of those individuals who have returned to Canada, the disclosure of more detailed information could identify specific operational interests. As such, CSIS is also unable to discuss the precise nature of its investigations, including details related to surveillance.

CSIS works closely with international and domestic partners, including law enforcement, to investigate those individuals who pose a threat to the security of Canada.

Question No. 1353— **Mr. Kelly McCauley**:

With regard to the Prime Minister's trip to Fogo Island in March, 2017: (*a*) what are the details of each expenditure including (i) flights, (ii) vehicle rentals, (iii) accommodations, (iv) meals and per diems, (v) other transportation costs, (vi) other expenses, (vii) security; and (*b*) of the expenses incurred in (*a*), which expenses were incurred by the following groups of individuals (i) the Prime Minister and his family, (ii) ministerial exempt staff, including staff in the Office of the Prime Minister, (iii) departmental staff, (iv) Royal Canadian Mounted Police and other security?

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister did not travel to Fogo Island in March 2017.

● (1605)

[*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's response to Questions Nos. 1292, 1293, 1297 to 1306, and 1312 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 1292— **Mr. Steven Blaney**:

With regard to staffing levels at the regional development agencies, broken down by agency: (*a*) how many full-time equivalents were employed by each agency as of (i) April 1, 2015, (ii) April 1, 2016, (iii) April 1, 2017; and (*b*) what is the breakdown in (*a*) by city or location of employment?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1293— **Mr. Steven Blaney**:

With regard to government expenditures on tickets for sporting events since September 19, 2016, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity: what was the (i) date of event, (ii) location, (iii) total cost, (iv) cost per ticket, (v) number of tickets, (vi) title of persons using the tickets (v) title and description of event?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1297—**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault**:

With regard to the passport applications processed by the Passport Program since 2010: how many applications were processed for postal codes from the Estrie region, broken down by year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1298— **Mr. Gordon Brown**:

With regard to the government's plan to negotiate mutual logistics support arrangements with Spain and Chile, as required, to provide at sea replenishment, until the arrival of the joint support ship (JSS), as referenced in the government's response to the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence's Report titled "The Readiness of Canada's Naval Forces": (*a*) what estimations have been done to determine the cost of having Spain and Chili supply the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) and will the contract including costs be tabled; (*b*) what studies have been done to ensure Spain and Chile can provide the necessary capabilities for the RCN; (*c*) what are the operational limitations imposed on the RCN in relation to its contract with Spain and Chile, including (i) period of use, (ii) restrictions to operations, (iii) utility of vessels for multi-role capabilities (hospital, HADR, and ammunition carriage) and will the list be tabled in Parliament; (*d*) was the feasibility of contracting the construction of a third JSS in Canada performed and will this assessment be tabled in Parliament; (*e*) was the feasibility of procuring a second Resolve Class Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment vessel performed and will it be tabled; (*f*) what analysis was done to understand the impacts of the support arrangements with Spain and Chile on Canadian jobs, as well as the readiness of the RCN in comparison to acquiring an additional Resolve Class ship Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment; (*g*) what is the duration of the contract with Spain and Chile; (*h*) how does this contract help Canada's middle class in the near and medium term; and (*i*) will the government table any study of social, economic or political risks associated with contracting Spain and Chile to supply the RCN into the mid-2020s when the first JSS will be ready?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1299— **Mrs. Karen Vecchio**:

With regard to all the contracts entered into by each minister's office or the funds from the budget allocated to each minister's office, other than for the salaries of employees in that office, since April 23, 2016: what are the (i) names of the beneficiaries, (ii) amounts, (iii) contract dates, (iv) funding dates and durations, (v) titles of the individuals who signed the contract on behalf of the office, (vi) description of their purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1300—**Mr. Gérard Deltell**:

With regard to regional development agencies' files requiring decisions by the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, since November 4, 2015, broken down by agency, and for each file: (*a*) what is the file number; (*b*) on which date did the agency receive the application, request or else, precipitating the need for a decision by the Minister; (*c*) on which date did the agency seek the Minister's decision; and (*d*) on which date did the Minister make his decision?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1301—**Mr. Gérard Deltell**:

With regard to government-wide advertising activities, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation and other government entity, since June 15, 2016: (*a*) how many advertisements have been (i) created in total, broken down by year and by type (cinema, internet, out-of-home, print dailies, print magazine, weekly or community newspapers, radio, television), (ii) given an identification number, a name or a media authorization number (ADV number); (*b*) what is the identification number, name or ADV number for each advertisement listed in (*a*)(ii); (*c*) for each advertisements in (*a*), what is (i) the length (in seconds or minutes), if applicable, (ii) the cost for the production or creation, (iii) the companies used to produce or create, (iv) the number of times it has aired or been published, specifying the total number of times and, if applicable, the total length of time (in seconds or minutes), broken down by month, (v) the total cost to air or publish, broken down by year and month, (vi) the criteria used to select the advertisement placements, (vii) media outlets used to air or publish, broken down by month, (viii) the total amount spent per outlet, broken down by month; and (*d*) if known, what was the start and end date of each advertising campaign?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1302—**Mr. Tom Kmiec**:

With regard to the federal riding of Calgary Shepard: what is the total amount of government dollars received by business, corporations, and entities within the riding between April 11, 2016, and the present date, including (i) each department or ministry through which the funding was received, (ii) the name of the initiative or program providing the funding, (iii) the date of each transfer, (iv) the amount of each individual transfer?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1303—**Mrs. Cathy McLeod**:

With regard to the creation of the Ad Hoc Cabinet Committee on Federal Recovery Efforts for 2017 British Columbia BC Wildfires, announced by the Prime Minister on July 14, 2017: (*a*) what are the titles of all briefing notes provided to the committee between July 14, 2017, and October 30, 2017; (*b*) what are the details of all meetings of this committee, including for each meeting the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) agenda, (iv) minutes; (*c*) what analysis has been conducted from July 14, 2017, to present by the government with regard to the long-term impact of the 2017 BC wildfires on BC residents, communities, businesses, and First Nations; (*d*) what analysis has been conducted from July 14, 2017, to present by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada with regard to the long-term impact of the 2017 BC wildfires on First Nations in BC; and (*e*) on what date will the committee disband?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1304—**Mrs. Cathy McLeod**:

With regard to the First Nations-Canada Joint Committee on the Fiscal Relationship: (*a*) what are the names and titles of each member of the Committee; (*b*) has the list of committee members changed since December 12, 2016; (*c*) what are the titles of all briefing notes provided to the Committee between December 13, 2016, and October 30, 2017, by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada; (*d*) what are the details of all meetings of the Committee, including, for each meeting, the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) agenda, (iv) minutes; (*e*) what are the total travel costs covered by the government for the Committee; (*f*) what are the total accommodation costs covered by the government for the Committee; (*g*) what is the daily per diem rate, which members of the Committee are entitled to; and (*h*) what is the total paid out in per diem for the Committee?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1305— **Mrs. Cathy McLeod**:

With regard to the Privy Council Office and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: (*a*) what is the total amount of money allocated to the Privy Council Office from the National Inquiry's budget; (*b*) how was the money referred to in (*a*) spent, and what is the itemized breakdown of all such expenditures; (*c*) how many employees within the Privy Council Office have been assigned to the National Inquiry between August 1, 2016, and present; and (*d*) what action has the Privy Council Office taken to support the National Inquiry?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1306— **Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie**:

With regard to Motion M-42 on tax avoidance in Barbados, voted on by the House on October 26, 2016: (*a*) was there any analysis by the Department of Finance; (*b*) did the Minister of Finance notify his department of the motion; (*c*) did the Department provide any recommendations regarding the motion; (*d*) did the Department request a legal opinion on the legality of paragraph 5907(11.2)(*c*) and subsection 5907(11) of the Income Tax Regulations; (*e*) did the Minister submit a position on the motion to the Treasury Board; (*f*) did the Minister provide his colleagues with a proposed position on the motion; (*g*) did the Minister discuss the motion with his colleagues; (*h*) did the Minister discuss the motion with the Prime Minister; (*i*) did the position in (*e*) include his department's recommendations; (*j*) did the Minister recuse himself from his caucus's discussions on the motion; (*k*) did the Minister recuse himself from any discussions on this matter since the last election; (*l*) did the Minister reveal to the Department during discussions on Motion M-42 that he was potentially in a conflict of interest as a Morneau-Sheppel shareholder; (*m*) did the Minister reveal the magnitude of the amount he had at stake in the debate on Motion M-42; (*n*) before legalizing tax avoidance by the Cooks Islands, did the Minister notify the Prime Minister; (*o*) does the Department have a legal opinion stating that paragraph 5907(11.2)(*c*) of the Income Tax Regulations meets the requirements of the Canada-Barbados Income Tax Agreement Act, 1980; and (*p*) under which section of the Income Tax Act did the government adopt subsection 5907(11) of the Income Tax Regulations?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1312—**Mr. Kennedy Stewart**:

With regard to housing investments and housing assets held by the government: (*a*) how much federal funding has been spent in Burnaby on housing over the period of 1995-2017, broken down by year; (*b*) how much federal funding is scheduled to be spent on housing in Burnaby over the period of 2015-2019, broken down by year; (*c*) how much federal funding has been invested in cooperative housing in Burnaby over the period of 1995-2017, broken down by year; (*d*) how much federal funding is scheduled to be invested in cooperative housing in Burnaby over the period of 2015-2019, broken down by year; (*e*) how many physical housing units were owned by the government in Burnaby over the period of 1995-2017, broken down by year?; (*f*) how many physical housing units owned by the government are scheduled to be constructed in Burnaby over the period of 2015-2019, broken down by year; and (*g*) what government buildings and lands have been identified in Burnaby as surplus and available for affordable housing developments?

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

EXPUNGEMENT OF HISTORICALLY UNJUST CONVICTIONS ACT

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by eight minutes.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to order made earlier this day, the House will now proceed to the consideration, at third reading, of Bill C-66, an act to establish a procedure for expunging certain historically unjust convictions and to make related amendments to other acts.

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.) moved that Bill C-66, An Act to establish a procedure for expunging certain historically unjust convictions and to make related amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise on this particular bill.

Today Canadians who were unjustly convicted because of who they love are one step closer to clearing their names and moving on with their lives. They were victims of past federal policies and practices that under no circumstances would hold up in Canada today. They were systematically discriminated against and demeaned, and they spent much of their lives with all the repercussions of a criminal record, unable, in some cases, to find work, or even travel with their families. They were made to feel as though they had committed a major crime, and they were made to feel as though their sexual orientation could determine whether or not they had a chance in life.

Many tried to fight their convictions and lost. Some waited decades for redress, and others nearly half a century. Tragically, some did not live to see this day.

Today we are sending all of them and their loved ones a clear message when we move this legislation forward: their country is deeply sorry. Their country was wrong. Their country wants to make amends and help their healing process.

[*Translation*]

I would like to take a moment today to thank all members, on both sides of the House, for their dedication to moving this bill

forward. I would also like to thank all the activists and all those who have fought for more than 50 years and put themselves in danger to demand these changes over the past five decades.

[*English*]

We have accounted for these issues by adding the provision that in cases where court or police records are not available, sworn statements may be accepted as evidence.

Second, I would like to speak to some of the questions we have heard concerning bawdy house laws. To be clear, bawdy house laws were intended to capture a broad scope of acts deemed immoral at the time. What this bill would do is deal with charges under gross indecency, buggery, and anal intercourse, which were used under the Criminal Code to victimize LGBTQ2 people systematically. We have enumerated those in the schedule to make sure we are being precise and clear.

Some have raised questions about whether we are simply passing the legislation and then leaving the rest to the LGBTQ2 community. That would be a mischaracterization. Once the bill passes, the government will undertake a proactive outreach process for potential applicants to increase awareness of the initiative as well as the criteria and the application process.

The government will work closely with federal partners and stakeholders from the LGBTQ2 community to inform those applicants. We will not leave members of the LGBTQ2 community in the dark. We have set aside $4 million over two years to implement the process, and I am confident that the process will be sound, efficient, and effective.

The Parole Board, once applications are made, will determine, case by case, successful applications, and successful applicants will have their records of convictions permanently destroyed. The RCMP can then destroy any records of convictions it has in its custody, and it can direct other federal departments or agencies to do the same. The expungement order will then be communicated to other courts and police forces as appropriate.

The bill would also allow the Parole Board of Canada to refuse to issue expungements in certain circumstances. More information on the application process will soon be available to potential applicants. It will not be long after the bill receives royal assent that the Parole Board could begin accepting applications.

The suffering the LGBTQ2 community has endured will not be forgotten. The government will contribute a minimum of $15 million for projects to record and memorialize the tragedy of the past and the hope for the future. That includes a national monument here in Ottawa and an education package concerning discrimination against LGBTQ2 Canadians.

I am proud to stand behind the government's efforts to improve life for our LGBTQ2 community.

● (1610)

[*Translation*]

I invite my hon. colleagues to help eliminate discrimination and right the wrongs committed against the LGBTQ2 community by joining me in giving their full support to Bill C-66.

[*English*]

Before I end, let me say, on behalf of the Prime Minister, the House leader, and all of my colleagues on this side of the House, a very merry Christmas and happy new year to you, Mr. Speaker, and your family, to all parliamentarians and staff for their hard work, to the Clerk and all table officers, to all branches and services of the House administration, to all the families connected to the Houses of Parliament, and to all the loved ones present here today and those we remember because they are now in our prayers and no longer able to be with us. I wish the pages good luck in their exams, and may they have much success in their future endeavours.

[*Translation*]

Feliz Navidad, merry Christmas, and happy new year.

[*English*]

Merry Christmas to all and to everyone in this place.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have had some constituents contact me about the process by which expungement will occur. For example, if someone has passed away and does not have a family member who can advocate for the record to be expunged, is there going to be a process by which someone else could step into the gap so that there is equality in how the expungement occurs down the road?

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member across the way for her support and the work she has done in her caucus and on matters related to the LGBTQ2 community. It is a good question. It is a question we will look into.

The provisions in the legislation right now are that family members can apply posthumously on behalf of their family members, and we will go through that process. There will be the ability to have sworn affidavits in cases where particular police documents do not exist. I will take the hon. member's question to heart and share it with the minister's department.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Edmonton Centre for his remarks today, as well as the government and the official opposition for co-operating to get this legislation to this point before we rise for Christmas.

I have a concern with the remarks that the hon. member made about the use of bawdy house laws and why they are excluded from this bill. The member must be familiar with the history of police raids on public places frequented by gay men, either gay bars or bathhouses, which were defined as places of prostitution when they were not clearly. This was part of police campaigns to persecute gay men for consensual same-sex activity.

It seems peculiar to me that he is saying—and I hope I am wrong, but I thought I heard him say—that the government is not willing to add to the schedule of offences the use of bawdy house laws, because the Prime Minister included the bathhouse raids and entrapment of gay men in his apology. It seems peculiar to me that the list of offences currently in the bill is narrower than the apology that the Prime Minister gave. I am hopeful the Liberals will correct this, as the bill would allow them to do, as soon as it becomes law.

● (1615)

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member across the way for his leadership on LGBTQ2 issues and the work that he has done in his caucus to get us to this stage.

What is important to understand is that at this stage the bill is speaking to offences related to buggery, anal intercourse, and gross indecency. That is the very clear position of our government. We are listening to the community, as we have done for many months and, indeed, years. We understand where communities are coming from and it is important to say that we understand the devastating consequences that bathhouse raids had on communities. That is why the Prime Minister mentioned the culture of fear and discrimination that our government was part of creating. We take the hon. member's comments to heart as well.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have some of the same concerns that my hon. colleague from Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke has raised, and I am sure the member is familiar with these criticisms, which I will put to him.

Gary Kinsman, for instance, a professor emeritus of sociology from Laurentian University, as a historian, noted that the bill does not cover what it needs to cover. Specifically, bawdy house offences are particularly concerning. I want to quote what Gary Kinsman said, which is that this bill "doesn't cover what it needs to cover. And it's also been done without any consultation with people in the LGBTQ, two-spirited communities. None of us who are historians and experts on the sexual history of Canada and the sexual regulation of same-sex sexuality have been consulted."

It is really welcome. I know we are speeding this through before Christmas and we do not usually like to hesitate in passing something that is in the general direction of righting past injustices, but how does the government propose to deal with the exclusions of really significant offences, for which people have records that should be expunged?

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's work in this area and her commitment to human rights. She will understand well that the 2005 Supreme Court decision on Labaye took a lot of the teeth that were in the legislation pertaining to bawdy house laws out of the legislation. What is important to note is the fact that in its current state, there is no jurisprudence that indicates that the current state of the law post-2005 Labaye would violate charter provisions. That is something we are mindful of.

What is important to note is that this legislation is historical. The Government of Canada stepping in to expungement is something that has never been done before and we take the member's recommendations and comments to heart.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure and it is a great privilege and honour to stand in this place and speak on behalf of this legislation.

For those who may be watching and are wondering what we are doing on the last day before we rise for the December adjournment, we are debating Bill C-66, an act to establish a procedure for expunging certain historically unjust convictions and to make related amendments to other acts.

This enactment would create a procedure for expunging certain historically unjust convictions and provides for the destruction or removal of the judicial records of those convictions from federal repositories and systems.

This enactment would provide an application for an expungement order that might be made for respective convictions involving consensual sexual activity between same-sex persons related to the offences of gross indecency, buggery, and anal intercourse.

The enactment provides that the Governor in Council may add certain offences to the schedule and establish criteria that must be satisfied for expungement of a conviction to be ordered.

What does that mean?

I would like to translate what that means and why this legislation is so important to somebody who is a Calgarian. As a Calgary MP, I just want to take a moment and talk about him, because he and many others are the reason why this legislation needs to occur in the first place and "him" of course is Everett Klippert.

I want to thank Kevin Allen, a Calgarian, who has been working on absolutely important work. It is called the Calgary Gay History Project. He is writing a history of this topic in Calgary and he has been doing it for many years. He was very helpful in the consultation that I undertook on this particular issue. This is from him:

> Despite homosexuality being a criminal offence in 1960s Canada, and [Klippert's] multiple convictions of gross indecency, he was always frank and truthful in his interactions with the state, even though he paid a severe penalty for that honesty.
>
> When Calgary Police questioned him about the 18 names in his little black book, which was also his dating record, he confessed to having had homosexual relations with them all.
>
> In Pine Point, NWT, local RCMP brought Klippert in for questioning and threatened him with an arson charge of which he was innocent. Using it as leverage to open Klippert up about his sex life, he readily confessed to having had intimate relations with four men there.
>
> In every court case, he pled guilty. A court psychiatrist reported that Klippert told him his "homosexual behaviour had existed since the age of 15; that to him homosexual activity [was] his only satisfactory sexual outlet. He found the thought of heterosexual conduct abhorrent. He told me that he never had heterosexual relations."
>
> Gay activist and lawyer Douglas Saunders interviewed the incarcerated Klippert in December 1967 in what he described as "the fortress-like Penitentiary at Prince Albert, Saskatchewan." His unjust treatment gave his convictions a certain resolve. Klippert told Saunders: "If I meet someone on the outside now and he asks me, I'll say sure I'm a homosexual, what are you? I'm not going to be ashamed of it anymore."
>
> Klippert who grew up Christian took comfort in his prison bible and noted Psalm 22:24 to Saunders: "For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help."

This man should not have been incarcerated. I do not know what more to say than that. This legislation is important because it would reverse that. I cannot imagine. I read John Ibbitson's piece on him. He noted how his family was reluctant to talk because they did not want to have to revictimize him posthumously.

I am really glad that we are pushing this legislation through the House of Commons, because one of the things that I stand behind in my party and in our policies declaration is a belief in the equality of all Canadians. It is right there.

Every once in a while as Canadians we really have to think about what equality means. It is a beautiful thing for me to be able, generations after Mr. Klippert, to think that there is no situation in which my government would persecute me based on who I love or what I do in my personal life.

● (1620)

Can members imagine what the people who are subject to this bill had to go through? The stories that I heard when I went through the consultation for the apology were the antithesis of what equality means. I heard from someone whose lesbian partner at that point in time was actually physically hauled out of her house for questioning on allegations of her sexual preference. There was the "fruit machine". I have had people write into my office and say, "the government is spending so much on this apology". We spent a lot of taxpayer dollars back then persecuting people. We spent a lot of taxpayer dollars developing a "fruit machine". That is a dark point in Canada's history. If we are going to stand up and talk about equality, there cannot be partisan differences. It just should be something that we all accept, and that is why this bill is important.

For people who had to go through a criminal conviction or suffered employment loss or anything that gave them a record based on whom they love, that is not equality, that is not Canadian, that is a violation of human rights. If we stand here as Canadians and talk about how we comport ourselves in international relations when we demand other countries to behave certain ways, we had better be getting it right at home, consistently, all the time.

What this bill is trying to do, in its spirit, is a no-brainer. I appreciate that my colleagues are bringing up technical points. I know that my colleagues within our party have brought up some technical points too. My colleague across the way acknowledged that this is the first time, I believe, that expungement happened. We are, in good faith, believing that this bill will do what it is intended to do. There will be time to hold the government to account on that, certainly. I am very pleased to be here today to say that there is no question that this should happen. I want to be very clear about that. From the bottom of my heart and from the depth of my soul, if we want to believe in the equality of all Canadians, no Canadian should have a criminal record for loving somebody. It is really as simple as that.

It is really cool to be able to stand up and support this bill, and I think it is really cool that this bill has all parties' support. It is something that Canada can celebrate internationally. I encourage individuals who have questions or concerns about this bill to really have a hard think about the rights that they have as Canadians, to really have a hard think about what equality means for them. If we do not make everybody equal, we have lost what it means to be Canadian. Whom one loves should not be a question of equality. There should not be historical or current criminal penalties for that. There should not be discrimination against that. It is just wrong.

To you, Mr. Speaker, and for all of my colleagues in this House, it is fantastic and pretty cool that we are debating something of such importance as we rise for Christmas break. Every once in a while, we do something here that resembles work. Because I am not sure anyone has ever done this in the House before, I am going to quote RuPaul, "If you can't love yourself how in the hell you gonna love somebody else?"

Merry Christmas.

● (1625)

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for her heart and her commitment. It is truly an honour, as a fellow Albertan, to stand in this place and hear those words.

I would like to share for my hon. colleague a comment that I shared with my caucus colleagues a while back after the Orlando shootings. What I said is that if they have ever been in public with their loved one and they have never had to pause before grabbing their hand, then they do not know why the gay and lesbian clubs we have in our country are necessary, because they are safe spaces. This legislation in the past would have applied to me. I would probably already be in jail 30, 40, or 50 years ago.

Not as a member of Parliament, not as a party boss, but as a citizen of Canada, a great Calgarian, why does this matter so much to the member personally that we continue to focus on the basic equality of all Canadians?

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, it is very simple. Equality is not something that is achieved and is static.

Many Canadians will have grown up blissfully free of any sort of knowledge of what it is like to be persecuted for their beliefs, for who they love, or for their gender, but that is not the case in all situations. Those rights, that equality, those freedoms are under constant attack.

Many people in Canada have not travelled to some place where those basic rights do not exist, where they have to act differently or fear for their safety. That is the reality. Around the world, some of us could be killed for even talking about this.

The reason why it is so important for Canadians to be unequivocal and unanimous on issues like this is that if we are not unequivocal and unanimous on issues here, we cannot change the world. Also, at home, there is always more work to do.

We are a pluralistic country. We just need to ensure we never take our rights for granted.

● (1630)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is important to note the progress we have made in Canada, when there are still more than 70 countries where it is illegal to be gay, and more than 17 jurisdictions where people can be put to death for being a gay man.

Just having the bill before us is a marker of progress. In particular, having all-party support for the bill, and particularly Conservative Party support, is a sign of progress. I want to thank the member for Calgary Nose Hill for her work in opposing discrimination and promoting acceptance for the LGBTQ2 community.

I am a little unhappy with her today since she has stolen from me the ability to be the first one to quote RuPaul in the House of Commons, but I will forgive her for that. I really do not have a specific question for her. I just want to acknowledge how far she and many others in her caucus have come, as well as what appears to be a united Liberal Party. I also want to thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her support of the bill as well.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, my colleague across the way asked why these bills were important. I spoke about the need to constantly protect human rights. With people like my colleague who just spoke, I know Canadians will never be without a voice, questioning how we can put things forward.

At the end of the day, as we close Parliament for this session, that is how this place should work, when legislation is pushed forward, we have a variety of different voices being the moral compass of Canadians, the fiscal watchdog of Canadians.

We are pretty blessed in that the stuff we argue about here makes our country a lot better, one way or another. I know it gets heated, but this bill, when it passes, will be a milestone and it will be something that pushes our country forward in a better way.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as a gay man, I take particular pride in standing in the House today to speak to Bill C-66. For me, the bill is an important and necessary part of the apology delivered by the Prime Minister in the House just a week ago. In that apology, the Prime Minister acknowledged that governments in Canada had run campaigns of humiliation, intimidation, firings, and persecution of fellow Canadians on the basis of their sexual orientation. This ranged from interrogations; to pressure to inform on colleagues, to firings from the public service, the foreign service, the RCMP, and the Canadian Forces; and to campaigns by police targeting gay men for consensual same-sex activity, all of this despite the fact that most forms of same-sex activity were legalized in 1969.

As a gay man of a certain age, I also take a personal interest in the expungement legislation. It was probably more a matter of luck than anything else that I was not caught in the nets cast to capture gay men in public places, like the 146 men arrested in raids on two gay bars in Montreal in 1977, places and a year in Montreal which I am familiar. More than 300 were arrested in raids on four bath houses in Toronto in 1981.

What is important about these two events is that both of them sparked public demonstrations for the first time against these campaigns of arrests. More than 2,000 turned out in Montreal and more than 3,000 turned out in Toronto. These demonstrations marked the beginning of the organized resistance of the LGBTQ community against these campaigns of oppression, resistance which has ultimately led to this legislation being before the House today.

Correcting some of the injustices resulting from these campaigns is indeed the purpose of Bill C-66, as those subject to these campaigns suffered real consequences. However, some of these consequences can never be reversed, especially as many of the resulting charges led to public humiliation when the names of those arrested were released for publication in the media, this at a time when being out was not really a thing and was far from being socially acceptable. Those who were convicted found themselves with severe limitations on their ability to retain jobs or to find new jobs if they were fired, as discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation was only outlawed in most jurisdictions in the 1990s, with the notable exception of Quebec, where it took place in 1977, and Manitoba in 1986.

A settlement of the class action law suit launched by those who were fired from their federal jobs, and on which agreement in principle was reached only days before the apology, will provide some monetary compensation to those still living who lost jobs. However, there are other consequences of convictions resulting from these campaigns against consensual same-sex activity that continue to this day.

Those with criminal records remain prohibited from volunteering with vulnerable people, whether that would be serving as a role model for LGBTQ2 youth, as foster parents, or volunteering to serve seniors with dementia. Of course, criminal records often result in severe restrictions on the ability to travel abroad.

While I am glad to see the legislation being dealt with expeditiously in the House, I have to remind my colleagues that many in my community have waited decades for this moment to come. Many never thought we would see this day and many, in fact, did not live to see this day, some simply because it has taken too long and some because having their lives and careers ruined as a result of those campaigns led them to take their own lives.

In 1992, NDP MP Svend Robinson raised the question of the gay purges with Conservative Prime Minister Mulroney, and he responded that "if" these campaigns had occurred, they would have constituted human rights violations and should have been investigated. However, 25 years ago nothing came of this.

Activists within the LGBTQ community first made formal demands for an apology in 1998, nearly a decade ago, but the Liberal government of the day did not respond. In 2014, long-time NDP member of Parliament and first out lesbian in the House, Libby Davies, introduced a motion calling for an apology. Also in 2014, NDP MP Philip Toone introduced a bill to get rid of these unjust criminal records.

When we look at how the LGBTQ2 community has pursued an apology and expungement of criminal records for 25 years, the words fast and expeditiously need to be used sparingly when it comes to Parliament acknowledging the unjust treatment of the community and responding appropriately.

Nevertheless, I take the apology very seriously. I hope it will be a springboard for action, not just to redress previous wrongs but to launch efforts to remove ongoing discrimination against my community, including ending the gay blood ban, fully implementing Bill C-16 to bring about equal treatment for transgender and gender variant Canadians, and ensuring the concerns of two-spirited Canadians are addressed whenever reconciliation is on the table.

● (1635)

At this point, I should restate the NDP position on the bill, and that is that the bill should go forward quickly, as there are ways within the bill itself to deal with the concerns that have been raised since it was tabled.

It is unfortunate that the community and the many researchers and activists who have been working on this issue were not consulted in the drafting. those like Gary Kinsman and Patrizia Gentile, who we can actually say wrote the book on this, when they published their book *The Canadian War on Queers* in 2010. For some reason, the Liberal government was determined to keep consultations on redress separate and apart from consultations on the apology itself.

Turning to the contents of Bill C-66, there is of course one big omission in the bill. It excludes bawdy house offences from the list of offences for which one can apply for expungement, never mind that raids on gay bars and bath houses were key parts of the campaign of persecution against gay men. It is a curious omission from the list for which one can seek expungement when the Prime Minister himself clearly labelled use of bawdy house provisions against the LGBTQ2 community as discriminatory, and specifically included both bathhouse raids and entrapment by the police in his apology. Therefore, it seems wrong that the list of offences in the bill is narrower than the apology delivered by the Prime Minister.

One might ask why am I arguing this bill ought to go forward with this gap in it. Clause 23 of the bill allows cabinet to add offences to the schedule by order in council. I trust the Liberal government will consider these issues that have been raised and discussed here today and will fully implement the apology after the bill passes by adding bawdy house offences to the schedule. The New Democrats will be here to remind the Liberals if they should forget or dawdle.

Some have expressed a concern that offences added later would have lesser status and could easily be removed by a future government. Let me point to the testimony by officials in the public safety committee Monday, reassuring us that once offences were in the schedule it would require legislative action to remove them.

On the question of ensuring there are no obstacles to LGBTQ2 citizens being able to use the expungement process, again we heard reassurance from the public safety, justice, and Parole Board officials. First and foremost was the confirmation that we had again here today, that there would be no fee to apply for expungement. Second, there was assurance from the Parole Board that the application process would remain "simplified" and that staff would be made available to help citizens file their applications so they would not be required to retain legal counsel to do so.

Another concern is the question of what would constitute proof of consent for offences, which are often quite old and are convictions for offences for which the question of consent was not germane to the conviction. The bill says that it has to have been consensual sex. Again, officials assured the public safety committee that dealing with this question was the purpose of proposed section 7(3), allowing sworn statements where records, and therefore evidence on the question of consent, are not available. Further, the government's charter statement on Bill C-66, which was tabled yesterday, very clearly says the following, "Pursuant to sections 12 and 13, the Board must expunge if there is no evidence that the applicable criteria are not satisfied..."

With regard to the age of consent provisions, officials again pointed out that the laddering provisions in effect at the time of the conviction allowing exemptions for those close in age would still apply to the expungement.

I stand here today as a proud member of the LGBTQ2 community and a proud member of a House of Commons, which has acknowledged the historical campaigns of persecution against my community, apologized for those injustices, and with this bill, has begun the process of redress that will complete the apology.

My community waited decades for this acknowledgement and apology, so I am glad we have moved quickly on the bill, even if we were very late at getting to the starting line.

Let me stress once again my hope and the hope of my community that the apology will mark a turning point and a springboard not just for action to address the historical injustices, but a springboard for action to remove ongoing discrimination.

● (1640)

Members of the LGBTQ2 community who were the subject of campaigns of persecution should not have to wait longer to see the formal part of these injustices undone. We have come a long way, but there is still more work to do.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his work on behalf of LGBTQ2 Canadians. I would like to ask him about the process.

As he knows, an applicant will identify someone who has been given a criminal record that is historically unjust. They may be members of the public service, they may be military service members prosecuted under the National Defence Act, and the schedule of eligible offences for Bill C-66 accounts for both. These applicants will then gather available evidence and apply free of charge directly to the Parole Board. Family members or another appropriate representative may apply on behalf of the deceased individual.

I would like to know the member's comments on those provisions in the bill. Moreover, on a more personal nature, how in the future, after his long advocacy on these matters, will he reflect on the latter two months of 2017 in this place?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, after our committee hearings I am confident that the government has produced a bill that intends to make this process as accessible as possible, and I was reassured by the comments of the Parole Board about the assistance it will offer to members in filing the applications for expungement.

There are a couple more things that have to happen along with this. One of those is that we have to take care of the revision of service records for those in the military who received discharges that were less than fully honourable, or were dishonourable. That is not really covered by the bill, but it is very closely related.

The second part is that while there is agreement in principle in the class action lawsuit, we have to press forward and make sure that the lawsuit is settled to the satisfaction of those plaintiffs.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was away on Foreign Affairs committee business at the time of the apology, so I do want to take this opportunity to associate myself with the words of our leader at that time and the sentiments expressed in the House.

I would ask my colleague to comment on some of the international dimensions of LGBT issues right now. In his remarks, he highlighted the international situation, the ongoing terrible persecution in certain countries around the world. We have had some discussion in this place about the issue of LGBT refugees. Some concerns have been expressed by advocates recently of a possible lack of specialized training of visa officers and some funding uncertainty.

We need to recognize the fact that when it comes to refugees, there are communities that are particularly vulnerable, be they religious minorities or the LGBT community, and we need to make sure that we have the sensitivity to identify with those areas of particular vulnerability. I wonder if the member has a comment on where we are on that, and where we can go going forward.

● (1645)

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question is an important one that I have been pursuing the government on since it was elected, because it had stated that LGBTQ refugees would get a high priority. However, the government has not done, in most cases, the things that are necessary to make that a reality. There are difficulties in accessing our refugee system. There are difficulties with the settlement process for those who have a special need.

Why do we take special measures? People say that everyone should be treated equally, and the government tends to respond that it is treating them equally. Well, we take special measures because they are at higher risk than other people and because there are very few places in the world that accept queer refugees and where they can resettle safely.

If I could be indulged for a second, because this is probably the last time I will be on my feet, I would like to add my words of thanks to the staff of the House of Commons, to the Speakers, to the table staff, to the pages, the security staff, all of those who make our work here possible, and to the staff in all of our members' offices both here in Ottawa and in our constituencies, and to wish all of them and all members a happy holiday season.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues from Edmonton Centre, Calgary Nose Hill, and Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke.

Today, we meet following the historic apology to the LGBTQ2 community.

[*English*]

We had a historic apology to the LGBTQ community, two-spirited community, queer community, and the trans community. It was extremely moving. It was powerful. Today, with Bill C-66, the intent is to provide tangible reparations, the expungement of criminal records, for crimes that we would no longer regard as anything but a historical shame for Canada to have treated our fellow brothers and sisters and citizens in this way.

This bill is flawed. Many historians have been referenced already. I will mention how grateful I was to learn so much from the positions put forward by a professor from Carleton, Patrizia Gentile; from York University, Tom Hooper; from Laurentian, as I have already mentioned, Professor Gary Kinsman; and Steve Maynard from Queen's University. They are all historians who have looked at the really troubling, disturbing, and horrific record.

Our colleague from Calgary Nose Hill spoke very emotionally and personally about how it affected her while getting to know more of what occurred. I certainly know that in meeting with my constituents about their treatment in the Canadian military and being jailed, these are stories that we find virtually impossible to believe. Fortunately, for the most part, we have an enlightened society. It is extraordinarily important that we could meet today with unanimous consent to ensure that Bill C-66 passes, but I do so with some misgivings because of the flaws in the bill that have been brought to our attention since it was originally tabled.

I also take comfort from the assurances by government members, particularly the hon. member for Edmonton Centre, who bears a particular responsibility on behalf of the Prime Minister, to be responsible for championing issues that relate to the LGBTQ, two-spirited, trans community. It is enormously important that the designation has occurred and that we have a consensus in this place.

I want to add that the wrongs that were done do not pass from our minds easily. It is one of those things that sticks with a person. When I was a very small child, I do not remember why I got into a conversation with my mother about same-sex couples and why some people thought it was wrong. This would have been, relatively speaking, a long time ago, because I now find myself something of an elder in this place, being over 60. I think I was about six and talking to my mom about friends who were gay and beginning to understand that gay friends were once discriminated against and sometimes still were.

My mother told me the story of one of the people she loved best in her music program. My mom was a pianist and she knew a brilliant young pianist, one of the most gifted of her generation in her school, who took his own life because he was not allowed to live the life of a gay man. He felt suicide was his only choice. It grieves me to this day to think about that musician, who cut his life short, who was one of my mom's contemporaries, but it did educate me a bit.

I remember the horror I found in beginning to love and read Oscar Wilde. I still love and read Oscar Wilde, and I think about that brilliant man dying in prison, disgraced for whom he loved. These things we tend to push out of our minds when we quote Oscar Wilde, when he was funny, which he was virtually all the time. He was brilliant and witty, jailed and disgraced.

Many cultures have now moved through this, but we recognize that the discrimination against, and in fact targeting for eradication of, gay men in Chechnya has now been exposed by journalists. We saw Canadian Journalists for Free Expression give its award this year to the brave reporter who broke that story. Therefore, around the world, Canadians are standing up.

● (1650)

By the way, it was only Lithuania and Canada that were willing to offer refuge to gay men from Chechnya so they could escape being targeted and murdered. This is now. This is what is happening around the world now, so there is a lot more work to be done.

However, in addressing the past wrongs that were done in Canada, this bill will be watched closely. I thank my hon. colleague for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke for committing that he and his party will keep an eagle eye on this. I will do my best from the Green Party caucus of one to keep an eye on this, to make sure that criminal records from bawdy houses, from offences that are not listed, and military records of dishonourable discharges, and all of the historical wrongs that remain on people's records in Canada will be removed. I thank my hon. colleagues on the government side for their commitment. Based on that, I think we could move to unanimous consent today to expedite this bill.

I looked for something from Oscar Wilde to share that was not witty, that spoke to the issue, because I do not quote RuPaul. I am just too old for this. Oscar Wilde said, “Keep love in your heart. A life without it is like a sunless garden when the flowers are dead.”

Keeping love in our hearts is why we redress past wrongs. Keeping love in our hearts is why it matters that we redress the past wrongs of the treatment of indigenous peoples, and why after a century and a half of discrimination and racist policies against indigenous peoples they are still prepared to talk to us. It is an enormous tribute to the human spirit that the will for justice can flourish between and among the past oppressors and the past oppressed, especially when this is recent history.

With that, I am thinking of love. I know that short of questions and answers, this will be the last time I address this House in 2017. For all my friends and colleagues—and they are all friends—I want to say from the bottom of my heart that I hope they enjoy time with their families between now and our resumption in late January; that, if they celebrate Christmas they have a merry and blessed Christmas with the arrival of our Lord and saviour in that small manger in Bethlehem; and if they are experiencing Hanukkah, I would point out that we are about to light a menorah down the way and I wish everyone a happy Hanukkah; and if they celebrate other religions or no religions, that they celebrate the time that Canada as a whole comes to a lovely pause.

Things slow down. Statutory holidays alone give us a chance to be with those we love, and we should turn our hearts and our minds, particularly at this time of year, to those who are alone at Christmas, who are unable to put a meal on the table, and to take some time to donate to those good causes in all of our communities that ensure that a meal will be served and that the homeless are welcomed with warmth, and that all of us reflect the enormous blessings of our lives at this time through sharing with all of those who are without.

Merry Christmas, God bless.

● (1655)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before we go to questions, 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 Calgary Shepard, Ethics; the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan, Public Service and Procurement; the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, Employment Insurance.

The hon. member for Brossard—Saint-Lambert.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to revert to presenting reports from committees. We had a last-minute effort by the production people, and I have a report.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Do we have consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 40th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts entitled "Special Examination Report — Canadian Museum of Nature, of the Spring 2017 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada". Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

Thank you to the entire production team who made an extraordinary effort. Merry Christmas, everyone.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

EXPUNGEMENT OF HISTORICALLY UNJUST CONVICTIONS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-66, An Act to establish a procedure for expunging certain historically unjust convictions and to make related amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Pursuant to order made earlier today, Bill C-66, an act to establish a procedure for expunging certain historically unjust convictions and to make related amendments to other acts, is deemed read a third time and passed.

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to see the clock as 5:38 p.m., so that we can begin private members' business.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is there unanimous consent to see the clock as 5:38 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

HISTORIC SITES AND MONUMENTS ACT

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.) moved that Bill C-374, An Act to amend the Historic Sites and Monuments Act (composition of the Board), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House to speak about my private member's bill, Bill C-374, An Act to amend the Historic Sites and Monuments Act (composition of the Board).

I would like to begin by recognizing we are on the traditional territory of the Algonquin people. As we all recognize, acknowledging traditional territories is a small but meaningful way to promote reconciliation with indigenous people.

Bill C-374 would amend section 4(d) of the Historic Sites and Monuments Act to include three new indigenous representatives on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, or HSMBC, one each for first nations, Métis, and Inuit.

While section 4(d) of the Historic Sites and Monuments Act currently provides for one representative from each province and territory, and while there is an indigenous affairs and cultural affairs directorate from Parks Canada, there is no formal representation of indigenous peoples, organizations, or governments on the board.

Bill C-374 would address this by implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to action 79.i, which calls upon the federal government to "amend the Historic Sites and Monuments Act to include First Nations, Inuit, and Métis representation on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and its Secretariat." This change is crucial to continue breaking down the walls of exclusion, which have historically existed between the federal government and indigenous people in Canada.

The fact is no relationship is more important to our government and to Canadians than the one with indigenous people. We have been clear that we are committed to a renewed relationship based on recognition of rights, mutual respect, co-operation, and partnership. It is critical we recognize the journey toward true reconciliation is far from over, and that we can and must do more in repairing our relationships with indigenous people.

Our government has been clear in our support for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action, and indeed have made progress on 41 of them. Bill C-374 and the inclusion of indigenous persons on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada presents an opportunity for all members in this House to continue this important work.

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada plays a fundamental role in the ways in which we recognize historical persons, places, and events in Canada. It evaluates applications for designating national historic places, heritage railway stations, and heritage lighthouses.

The Historic Sites and Monuments Act grants the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada the power to: receive and consider recommendations respecting the marking or commemoration of historic places; establish historic museums, and the administration, preservation, and maintenance of historic places and museums; and advise the minister in carrying out his powers under this act.

The board has the mandate to advise the Minister of Environment on the designation of national historic sites, heritage railway stations, heritage railway lighthouses, persons of national significance, and events of national significance.

Today, Canada's network of national heritage designations encompasses nearly 1,000 sites, 650 persons, and 400 events. My home province of British Columbia has 94 designated sites, 40 events, and 52 persons of national significance. Through these designations, we are able to deepen our understanding of the past, appreciate the present, create a better future.

Reconciliation involves a similar process, linking past, present, and future. To forge a new relationship with indigenous people, based on mutual respect and recognition, we must first critically re-examine Canada's history, and how that history influences our modern reality.

The changes proposed in Bill C-374 address a specific aspect of reconciliation: the designation and commemoration of historic places, persons, and events. The Government of Canada is committed to achieving reconciliation with indigenous peoples based on the recognition of rights, and through mutual respect, co-operation, and partnership.

Senator Murray Sinclair put the issue poignantly. He said, “Reconciliation is not an aboriginal problem, it is a Canadian problem. It involves all of us.”

I am hopeful that members on both sides of this House will join me in supporting Bill C-374, and help advance reconciliation with indigenous peoples in Canada. I am proud of the progress that our government has made and continues to make in advancing reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

Our government took the unprecedented move of dismantling the paternalistic and colonist approach to indigenous affairs, creating two new federal departments: Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, and Indigenous Services. We recognized that a new relationship required new structures.

● (1700)

Further, we have committed a new integrated approach to Jordan's principle, resulting in 1,500 additional children now receiving care. We committed full support of, and commitment to fully implement, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We launched a national inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. We developed bilateral mechanisms with indigenous organizations to develop policy on shared priorities.

This last point, new bilateral mechanisms, is one I would like to highlight in particular as it reflects our government's commitment to new ways of engaging with indigenous peoples, as well as ensuring their voices are represented in government decision-making processes. That is why the bill is so important. It would ensure indigenous persons would be given a voice at the decision-making levels of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

How can we expect to accurately commemorate our heritage spaces if we lack the voices of first peoples of this land?

The need for inclusion of indigenous voices in commemorating our past was highlighted through the recent work of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, a committee on which I participate. As members in this place will know, our committee recently tabled a study on the state of heritage preservation in Canada, entitled “Preserving Canada's Heritage: the Foundation for Tomorrow.”

The Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development believes the federal government needs to take stronger action to preserve Canada's historic places. During our study, we heard from numerous witnesses. During his appearance before the committee, Mr. Ry Moran, director of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, reminded the committee about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations regarding the protection and conservation of indigenous heritage in Canada.

Mr. Moran expressed particular concern about the state of conservation of the 17 remaining residential schools if nothing was done to preserve them. He explained to the committee that some indigenous communities wanted to preserve these residential schools as evidence of history. However, he said that it was easier to obtain funding to demolish these schools. Mr. Moran noted that indigenous communities wanted to be able to choose whether they preserved or demolished these buildings. Moreover, he emphasized the need to commemorate the places where demolished residential schools once stood, as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommended.

The committee heard that the inclusion of indigenous people was a priority and a necessity for the heritage community; that today's heritage organizations, departments, and agencies were ill-equipped to protect and preserve indigenous heritage; that indigenous people must be involved in defining, designating, commemorating, and preserving their heritage; and that indigenous communities, governments, and organizations wanted to have a voice and a place for their people to have a voice in heritage conservation.

Ms. Joëlle Montminy, vice-president of indigenous affairs and cultural heritage directorate, Parks Canada Agency, commented:

> ...we have started engaging with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, for instance, specifically on call to action 79(iii), the aspects of commemorating the legacy of residential schools. We're looking at how we're going to be implementing that. There's also, as you know, under 79, the appointment of members to the board—indigenous members, Métis, first nations, and Inuit. We're working on that, and that will done in consultation with indigenous groups. There's also the other section of 79, in relation to reviewing our policies, protocols, and practices to make sure we are inclusive of indigenous perspectives and voices...of the board.

Bill C-374 would directly support this work by Parks Canada by creating the legislative framework to implement call to action 79(i).

Mr. Christophe Rivet, president of ICOMOS Canada, also provided testimony to the recent study. He noted:

> I will certainly not pretend to speak on behalf of indigenous people. However, I will share some of the echos of what we've heard, and we have indigenous people on our board of directors. What we see is that Canada is not equipped to deal with protecting things that are important to our indigenous people. It does so through certain legislation, but there are some big challenges. One of them is the protection of cultural landscapes. Another is the protection of archeological sites. These are significant shortcomings in thinking about how to, for example, implement the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This is something we are noticing, and this is why our committee is looking at it as a priority. We feel ill-equipped to respect, express, and protect the world vision of the many indigenous communities.

Returning to Mr. Moran's testimony, he further noted:

> This is an exceptionally important conversation that we're going to have here, and not only in regard to heritage. What I will be presenting strikes at the very heart of our national identity: what we choose to remember, what we choose to forget, and the essential requirement asked of us as Canadians to preserve and remember a history that is deeply troubling, has been deeply damaging, and will continue to affect this country for generations to come.

● (1705)

He further stated:

> Central within those calls to action are a number of calls related directly to commemoration. Those commemoration calls relate directly to the creation or establishment of a "national memory" and our ongoing need as a country to make sure we continue to shine light into the darkest corners of our history.

He went on to say, "We know there's broad support for implementing those calls to action."

Karen Aird, president, and Madeleine Redfern, director, of the Indigenous Heritage Circle, also provided testimony.

Karen Aird stated:

> ...in this time, this time of reconciliation, this time when we see a new change in government, there's a need for people to start thinking differently about heritage, and moving it beyond built heritage, and thinking...how indigenous people perceive it and how we want to protect it. We do have our own mechanisms. We do have our own methods and approaches to protecting and interpreting heritage, and we feel it's really time...for indigenous people to have a voice in this.

She goes on to say, "There's a need for a voice and a place for people to have a voice."

Ms. Lisa Prosper provided testimony. She stated:

> The apparatus that we have in place—not just us, it's the heritage apparatus—is born out of a particular trajectory, and is, in my opinion, ill-equipped to currently address the context of indigenous cultural heritage.

She also stated:

> ...I would say that the broad objective should be to get to a place where the indigenous community sees themselves reflected back to them in what is recognized as Canadian heritage....The immediate steps are to work within existing frameworks. If the Historic Sites and Monuments Board is the vehicle by which...[this] can happen, and then therefore the recognition of important sites to commemorate, if you want, a sort of backlog of potential sites for commemoration, is a possibility, and some sort of recognition of the residential school system and various other elements that are out there.

Prior to working in politics, I was a long-time worker with Parks Canada and had the opportunity to manage a number of national historic sites. I was also involved with the commemorations program. Here are some examples.

One that I turn to is Yuquot. It is an amazing site on the west coast of Vancouver Island. It was commemorated first in 1923 as Friendly Cove. It was designated as a place discovered by James Cook in March of 1778. Yuquot or Friendly Cove is the heart of the Mowachaht/Muchalaht community from the beginning of time. It was really the heart of their social, political, and economic world. In 1985, through lobbying of the Mowachaht/Muchalaht community, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada revisited that commemoration and commemorated it for what it actually is, the heart of the Mowachaht/Muchalaht nation, and the point where the first contact with Europeans happened. This is the kind of voice that an indigenous perspective can bring to these very important conversations.

I will say that Parks Canada works with 300-plus indigenous partners and communities on the conservation, restoration, and presentation of natural and cultural spaces. All of these accomplishments reflect progress made in Canada's relationship with indigenous peoples. Despite these facts, Canada's network of historic designations reflects a rather narrow view of the past. For millennia, indigenous peoples have thrived on this land. They farmed, fished, and hunted. They established vast trade networks, and celebrated their heritage. Reconciliation involves a multi-faceted, deliberate, and ongoing process. Many call it a journey. Along the way, we must acknowledge the wrongs of the past, learn more about the diversity of our history, and work together to implement indigenous rights.

As it stands today, Canada's historic designation system is outdated. Many past designations, along with the board's composition, are rooted in this country's colonial history. We should celebrate Canada's entire past. We should tell a broader, more inclusive, and more accurate story.

This is an issue that impacts all Canadians, and we have a unique opportunity for members of this House of Commons to come together and advance the process of reconciliation. To that end, I am asking my hon. colleagues to support Bill C-374.

● (1710)

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this bill is a direct implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to action 79(i), which calls upon the federal government to amend the Historic Sites and Monuments Act to include first nations, Inuit, and Métis.

With that, does the member find that this will in fact break down the walls of exclusion, which have historically existed between the federal government and indigenous peoples in Canada, and move more toward a culture of resurgence?

Mr. John Aldag: Mr. Speaker, absolutely, it is a step in the direction of reconciliation and breaking down those walls of exclusion.

This is one small step, as I noted. Call to action 79.i is a way of recognizing that, right now, the commemorations program excludes the voices of our indigenous communities. Until we have representation there, we will continue to have those barriers to full inclusion.

That is why I feel this bill is so important, to have the structure of the board changed to accommodate, officially, a representative of first nations, Métis, and Inuit. That will help us move forward in reconciliation.

● (1715)

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague across the floor for introducing this bill in the House. We sat together on the environment committee, and this was certainly one of the recommendations. I would like to give the member an opportunity to talk about two or three of the other really important recommendations that came out of the report that was tabled in the House in the last week or so.

Mr. John Aldag: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from across the way for his excellent work, and many contributions to the study that we just had on built heritage.

In the committee, we did talk about many ways of advancing the reconciliation aspects, the move forward with our indigenous communities, the implementation of recommendation 79. The call to action 79.i, which my private member's bill covers, was one of those, very clearly.

There is a greater need to engage with the indigenous communities about what heritage means. We have heard very compelling testimony that the indigenous communities look at heritage in a different way than in the western world. We need to have many other discussions with the indigenous communities across the country about heritage, and how we can actually capture that in the mechanisms.

I would encourage all members of this House to read the report, because there is some excellent work, particularly on moving forward on commemorating indigenous history in this country.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Cloverdale—Langley City. Under private members' business it states there is a constitutional requirement that bills proposing the expenditure of public funds must be accompanied by a royal recommendation.

Has the hon. member followed through on that?

Mr. John Aldag: Mr. Speaker, there are discussions with the government about ways we can add members to the board. The ruling on royal recommendation is not required until after the committee stage. There are some possibilities to deal with this specific issue at the committee stage. Discussions are ongoing, and I am hopeful to find a resolution to allow this to proceed because it is a very important step in the move toward reconciliation.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak in support of Bill C-374, put forward by my colleague from Cloverdale—Langley City. This piece of legislation seeks to amend the Historic Sites and Monuments Act. The bill addresses call to action No. 79 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, which reads:

> Commemoration 79. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal organizations, and the arts community, to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration. This would include, but not be limited to: i. Amending the Historic Sites and Monuments Act to include First Nations, Inuit, and Métis representation on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and its Secretariat.

There are two further recommendations under the commemoration heading of the commission, but these are not discussed in this legislation.

Prior to being assigned to the indigenous and northern affairs committee, I was a member of the heritage committee for a year and a half. While the majority of the heritage committee meetings were dedicated to a media study on the impact of digital technology on print media and other media in this country, including indigenous publications and broadcasting, there were also four very interesting meetings concerning the state of Canadian museums.

My experience on the indigenous and northern affairs committee has been limited to land claims and the response of indigenous communities, including those in Saskatchewan, to the wildfires this past year. Nonetheless, it has also given me some insight into how the communities work. I believe my experiences on both the heritage and indigenous affairs committees have served me well in addressing the merits of the bill before us.

The mandate of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada is to advise the Government of Canada, through the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, on the commemoration of nationally significant aspects of Canada's history.

Following a thorough evaluation process and recommendation by the board, the minister declares the site, the event, or person of national historic significance.

In addition to handling designations of national significance, the board provides advice on the other related laws and programs.

The board comprises a representative from each province and territory, with appointments of up to five years and the possibility of additional terms. There is also the librarian and archivist of Canada, an officer of the Canadian Museum of History, and the vice-president of Parks Canada's heritage conservation and commemoration directorate, who acts as the board's secretary. Presently, quorum sits at 10.

My home province of Saskatchewan has many national historic sites, some of which are in my own backyard. A very good example is the Wanuskewin Heritage Park in Saskatoon. I have walked the land of Wanuskewin many times. It is 240 hectares and there are 19 sites that represent the active and historical society of the northern plains peoples. Six thousand years ago indigenous peoples from across the northern plains gathered there to hunt bison and gather food and herbs and to escape the winter winds.

The story of Wanuskewin is just beginning to be uncovered. Along the Trail of Discovery one will find the University of Saskatchewan hard at work at excavation sites. These sites provide clues to the daily existence of early peoples. The park also provides unique experiences such as tipi camping.

Always looking forward, the management board of the Wanuskewin park has launched a $40 million fundraising campaign called "Thundering Ahead". In a very short time it has nearly reached its goal. I am so proud of the people on the board of the Wanuskewin Heritage Park in my city.

The renewal plan includes reintroducing interactive exhibit galleries, improving educational offerings, expanding and renovating the facility, and introducing a herd of plains bison.

● (1720)

All this is being done with a view to it becoming a UNESCO world heritage site. We do not have any in Saskatchewan. This would be the very first. It is a lofty goal, but it is very exciting to see a bison herd back on these plains. None of this would be happening if the Historic Sites and Monuments Board had not proclaimed Wanuskewin a national historic site.

Another national historic site in my province is our legislative building in the capital city of Regina. According to the Parks Canada directory of heritage designations website, key elements that express the heritage value of this site include the cultural landscape of the legislative building within its grounds and centred on Wascana Lake; its fine exterior masonry of Tyndall sandstone; the high quality of the materials, including stone, marble, and wood, all carved with great skill by craftsmen brought in for their expertise; the stone carving within the facades of shields; the stone carvings of allegorical figures of settlers and aboriginal people, wheat sheaves, and garlands; and its original layout and public spaces, such as the grand staircase, the skylit rotunda under the dome, and the library, galleries, and legislative chamber, with their fine finishes featuring marble, oak, and carved limestone detailing.

If any of the description bears a passing resemblance to where we sit today, it is because both the House of Commons, after the fire of 1916, and the Saskatchewan legislature were built by the same Montreal company, Peter Lyall and Sons Construction Co., and the fine craftsmen he employed both here in Ottawa and in Regina, the capital of Saskatchewan. If members have not been there, the Saskatchewan legislative building is truly a beautiful building, and I would encourage anyone to take a tour of it when in our provincial capital of Regina.

Now on to the matters at hand. There is a wonderful resource available to our members of Parliament. It is called *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*. I have used it many times, especially when I sponsored my own private member's bill, Bill C-241, which, sadly, was unsuccessful.

I mentioned here before that under the heading "Private Members' Business", it states:

> There is a constitutional requirement that bills proposing the expenditure of public funds must be accompanied by a Royal Recommendation, which can only be obtained from the Government and presented by a Minister. A private Member may introduce a public bill containing provisions requiring the expenditure of public funds, provided that a Royal Recommendation is obtained by a Minister before the bill is read a third time and passed.

Because Bill C-374 would require additional expenditures for the Historic Sites and Monuments Board to cover the expenses of three additional members, I wonder how this could be achieved, even for a member of the governing party. Is there a plan in place to acquire the royal recommendation before third reading? I will leave that to my colleague, the member for Cloverdale—Langley City, to answer during the question and answer period.

I would like to suggest an alternative plan, without the need for a royal recommendation, a trip to the committee, and a trip to the Senate, all of which take a great deal of time, as we know in this House. The alternative would simply mean an amendment to the composition of the board membership by including the requirement that three of the 13 provincial and territorial members be first nations, Inuit, and Métis. This could be done in relatively short order. In fact, there are two vacancies on the board right now, one in the province of Quebec and one in Yukon. I believe a third will become vacant next month, in January. I do not know if the author of Bill C-374 has given this alternative any thought.

I see that my time is up. I want to wish you, Mr. Speaker, your family, and all those in the House a merry Christmas as we take a break heading into this month and January.

● (1725)

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my friend from Cloverdale—Langley City for bringing the legislation to the House of Commons. The member and I both sat on the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development. For the past three months we studied heritage issues. Our final report from that committee was recently tabled in the House.

The committee found many concerns, including a lack of attention paid to Canada's archeological sites, limited support for the owners of heritage buildings, inconsistencies with how the federal government protected the heritage buildings it owned, and critically, there was currently no federal legislation to protect UNESCO World Heritage sites in Canada.

Of all the witness testimony we heard, perhaps the most surprising and certainly the most moving came from representatives of indigenous groups.

Mr. Ry Moran, director of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, told the committee about the neglected legacy of Canada's residential school system. He told us we did not have a program for preserving the residential schools. Nor had we considered how to commemorate the schools that still stood or the ones that had been torn down.

In my riding of Kootenay—Columbia, the St. Eugene Mission School in Cranbrook was transformed by the Ktunaxa Nation into a successful hotel, casino, and golf course resort. However, it also contains photos from its days as a residential school, and Ktunaxa guides provide tours to keep the history alive. As Mr. Moran told the committee, St. Eugene was a rare exception. In fact, while the federal government offered funding to tear down residential schools, it offered nothing to commemorate them.

Mr. Moran also told us about the residential schools graveyards. As we know, thousands of the children forced into the schools never returned home, and their whereabouts are unknown to this day. The schools buried many of those children, and there are at least 400 cemetery locations across the country. Many of them are forgotten and neglected.

It may surprise members in the House to learn that when I was a young child, my brother Greg and I attended a residential school in Chesterfield Inlet, about 500 kilometres north of Churchill on Hudson's Bay. The residential school and the Hudson's Bay store were located on one side of the inlet and our home was located on the other. We were able to go home every night, but my classmates, as young as five years old, did not. They were allowed to go home at Christmas and in the summertime. Even as a young child, I knew that not being able to go home when one was only five years old was wrong.

My sympathy for those kids back then extends to my heartfelt feelings today. We must commemorate the residential schools so we never forget a past that must never be repeated.

The committee also heard from two representatives of the Indigenous Heritage Circle, Ms. Karen Aird, the president; and Ms. Madeleine Redfern, a director. They pointed out something of which I do not believe the committee members were aware. Many of us consider heritage to refer to things like buildings and sites, but indigenous heritage may include intangibles, like laws, stories, and oral histories. It may mean a sacred place, or certain artifacts.

When we met with one of the chiefs in Jasper, he said something that really stayed with me. He said that the good Lord did not give them the written language, so their story was written on the land and that they could still find it today.

Ms. Aird said:

> We feel that in this time, this time of reconciliation, this time when we see a new change in government, there's a need for people to start thinking differently about heritage, and moving it beyond built heritage, and thinking about how indigenous people perceive it and how we want to protect it. We do have our own mechanisms. We do have our own methods and approaches to protecting and interpreting heritage, and we feel it's really time now for indigenous people to have a voice in this.

Canadians saw an example of the lack of understanding of indigenous heritage and spirituality recently when the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the Jumbo Glacier in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia would not be protected from the development of a large ski resort. Jumbo Glacier is also known as Qat'muk and it is a sacred place to the Ktunaxa Nation, which knows it as the home to the Grizzly Bear Spirit. The Court ruled that a specific site or "object of beliefs" could not be protected. As a result, this important spiritual place, where the Grizzly Bear Spirit has been honoured for hundreds or even thousands of years by the Ktunaxa, is now at risk of being destroyed.

How can we solve these issues? What changes must we make, both to our thinking and to our procedures?

● (1730)

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission offered some solutions in its calls to action.

Mr. Moran said:

> Central within those calls to action are a number of calls related directly to commemoration. Those commemoration calls relate directly to the creation or establishment of a "national memory" and our ongoing need as a country to make sure we continue to shine light into the darkest corners of our history.

Call to action 79 states:

> We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal organizations, and the arts community, to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration. This would include, but not be limited to:
>
> i. Amending the Historic Sites and Monuments Act to include First Nations, Inuit, and Métis representation on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and its Secretariat.

This is exactly what is accomplished by Bill C-374. It goes on to state:

> ii. Revising the policies, criteria, and practices of the National Program of Historical Commemoration to integrate Indigenous history, heritage values, and memory practices into Canada's national heritage and history.
>
> iii. Developing and implementing a national heritage plan and strategy for commemorating residential school sites, the history and legacy of residential schools, and the contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canada's history.

Bill C-374 responds directly to call to action 79.i. The bill would increase the number of members of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, and it would provide dedicated spaces for first nations, Inuit, and Métis representatives on the board. It would also provide the necessary financial accommodation for the additional members.

We know the bill does not address all of the sections of call to action 79, but it begins in the right place, which is ensuring there is representation on the board, so that decisions about indigenous heritage include indigenous decision-makers.

When the Truth and Reconciliation Commission first released its report in June 2015, the NDP leader at the time said, "Today, our country is trying to turn the page on the many dark years and to move forward toward a better future for all peoples." We have the opportunity to take one step forward toward honouring the actions listed by the commission, and in doing so, we honour the past and those who suffered under this terrible past called the residential school system.

I am proud to support Bill C-374,, and have the NDP members in the House joining me in that support.

I would also like to take the opportunity to wish a merry Christmas to all those in the House who celebrate, as well as those back home in Kootenay—Columbia and across Canada.

Best wishes to all for a happy holiday season.

● (1735)

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak in support of Bill C-374, an act to amend the Historic Sites and Monuments Act. Before I begin, it is important to acknowledge that we are gathered on traditional Algonquin territory.

As my hon. colleagues are aware, acknowledging the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples represents a small but significant step in reconciliation with Canada's first peoples.

My remarks today address another opportunity to advance reconciliation by ensuring indigenous peoples contribute meaningfully and openly to decisions about the designation of historic places, persons, and events.

Bill C-374 proposes to add dedicated first nations, Inuit, and Métis representation on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

[*Translation*]

There is no doubt that indigenous peoples have played a key role in the history of our country. Indigenous peoples have forged important economic, cultural, and political relationships by opening up a large number of the routes on land and on navigable waters that we continue to use today.

In 1536, Jacques Cartier's crew would have died of scurvy if not for the remedy administered by the Huron people. The alliance of indigenous peoples led by Tecumseh made it possible for Great Britain to drive back the American invaders in the War of 1812.

[*English*]

Some of Canada's designated historic events, persons, and sites are directly linked to indigenous peoples, but we know that we can do more to recognize the full depth and the full breadth of indigenous history and the significant contributions of indigenous peoples.

While relatively few Canadians may be familiar with the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, almost all Canadians are familiar with at least one event, one person, or one site that carries a national historic significance. Since 1919, the board has served as an expert advisory body to the Government of Canada on historical matters. The board considers whether a person, event, or place has had a nationally significant impact on, or illustrates an important aspect of, Canadian history. Its recommendations have inspired the Government of Canada to formally recognize nearly 1,000 sites, 650 persons, and 400 events. The board's recommendations help to shape our national identity.

National historic designations are of profound importance to Canadians. They enable us to connect with our past and with the people, places, and events that helped shape our country. They encourage us to appreciate and understand our rich and diverse heritage. They tell their own unique history, contributing a sense of time, identity, and place to our understanding of who we are and how we came to be Canada. They are necessary to the greater story of our great country and to our understanding of Canada as a whole.

[*Translation*]

The sad truth is that indigenous people have left an indelible mark on our culture and our identity, but their contributions are not fully recognized.

Many Canadians canoe and kayak, for example. In winter, we snowshoe and toboggan down hills. Those are indigenous inventions. Many popular sports in Canada, such as lacrosse, hockey, luge, and bobsleigh have indigenous roots.

It is time to truly celebrate the many contributions of indigenous peoples to our heritage. We must recognize the full extent of the history of indigenous peoples who have lived on our land since time immemorial. Our understanding of Canada is linked to our ability to openly discuss the deep historic roots of the peoples who have lived here forever. Inviting indigenous peoples to participate directly in decisions about historic designations would allow us to enrich our collective knowledge of course, but also to foster reconciliation.

● (1740)

[*English*]

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada stated this plainly in its report, “What we have learned: Principles of truth and reconciliation”. The report states:

> Too many Canadians still do not know the history of Aboriginal peoples’ contributions to Canada, or understand that by virtue of the historical and modern Treaties negotiated by our government, we are all Treaty people. History plays an important role in reconciliation; to build for the future, Canadians must look to, and learn from, the past.

Bill C-374 responds directly to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to action report. The report called on Canada to amend the Historic Sites and Monuments Act to include first nations, to include Inuit, and to include Métis representation on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

The board works closely with Parks Canada, and Parks Canada already prioritizes reconciliation with indigenous people through a number of strategies. The agency incorporates indigenous knowledge in its conservation and restoration programs, and promotes events and experiences involving indigenous people and cultures across national parks and national historic sites. Through this work, Parks Canada provides Canadians and visitors alike with opportunities to appreciate the role that indigenous peoples have played in our history.

The truth is that indigenous histories and cultures go far beyond canoes and herbal medicines. It is time for Canadians to open their hearts and minds to learn more about the history of this great land. The voices of indigenous peoples must be heard. Canadians take great pride in our heritage programs. They are cornerstones in the promotion of our collective national identity. Furthermore, Canadians are determined to continue on the journey toward reconciliation with indigenous peoples. Surely it is time that indigenous peoples played a more direct and meaningful role in the decisions about historical designations.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I dedicate this speech to the thousands of survivors who spoke out during public consultations as part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and during hearings for the national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. They have initiated this necessary dialogue. We are inspired by their strength, and we have much to learn from them.

I rise today, particularly aware of my duty as a parliamentarian, and with humility and respect, to speak in favour of Bill C-374, an act to amend the Historic Sites and Monuments Act. This bill would increase the number of members of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada to provide for first nations, Inuit, and Métis representation on the board. This bill directly addresses the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to action 79. It states:

> 79. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal organizations, and the arts community, to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration. This would include, but not be limited to:
>
> i. Amending the Historic Sites and Monuments Act to include First Nations, Inuit, and Métis representation on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and its Secretariat.

The political, social, and cultural engagement of first nations, the Inuit, and the Métis is a crucial component of the management and development of historic sites and monuments. Every government should ensure that each community has a chance to improve and contribute to the country without facing any barriers or discrimination, and this measure is a step in the right direction. We can no longer determine what is historic without considering the views and opinions of the founding nations of our country.

The introduction of this bill coincides with the first Quebec hearings of the national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, which began several days ago in Maliotenam. About 50 families courageously testified. We must respond with equal courage.

The reconciliation process will take time. It will take form through concrete actions, such as the one discussed today, and through our sincere willingness to listen. We need to both hear and listen. Greater awareness will lead to greater understanding. That is how we will build a reciprocal and meaningful relationship between our peoples and our nations.

We need to begin the reconciliation process for future generations. We need to correct mistakes, rebuild bridges, and be candid about what happened. In 2007, Stephen Harper, former prime minister of Canada, recognized that the residential school system had profound and lasting effects on aboriginal cultures, heritages, and languages. As a result, the Conservative government of the time created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

From 1870 to 1996, approximately 150,000 aboriginal children were taken away from their families and sent to denominational schools as a result of a shameful policy designed to civilize first nations. Quebec had 12 federally funded residential schools. According to the Missing Children Project report, at least 3,000 aboriginal children died while attending a residential school and 30,000 of them were physically or sexually abused.

By acting as it did, the federal government of the time diminished the capacity of many former students to raise their own children properly and sealed the fate of future generations. Since then, thousands of people have testified to the cultural genocide experienced by first nations, Inuit, and Métis. Now, we are hearing testimony on the ongoing tragedy of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls.

● (1745)

Indigenous women are three times more likely to experience violence than other Canadian women, and they account for a disproportionate number of missing and murdered women in this country. In 2015, one-quarter of the women murdered in Canada were indigenous. Michèle Audette, a commissioner for the national inquiry, said that missing and murdered women are more than statistics. They are women who had dreams, dreams that were shattered by a society that turned a blind eye.

Now that the truth is out, the next step is reconciliation. Once all of the abuse is brought to light, we will have to rebuild bridges, make reparations, and take meaningful action. The healing process will be long and ongoing. Today we are taking one more step along that path. From now on, we will no longer speak of our national historic sites and monuments without acknowledging the words and opinions of the first inhabitants, first nations, Inuit, and Métis, who are an integral part of our country.

We are also doing this for future generations. We have a duty to educate each other. What we know about others influences how we act toward them. The abuse stems from attitudes and assumptions that fuel the impression that the other can be treated differently. It is by gaining a deeper knowledge of the roots of conflicts and their impact that we begin to understand the repercussions of the public policy decisions that we make here in Parliament. Only then do we shed our false beliefs, prejudices, and lack of education, setting up future generations to be more aware of the consequences of the mistrustful and colonial attitudes of the past. This change of mentality is necessary for reconciliation.

It is also time to begin a new chapter in the history of our beautiful and great country, Canada. It is time to prove that Canada is a prosperous and just democracy. In starting this new chapter, we must strive to build a reciprocal relationship, a rich and meaningful relationship, with the indigenous peoples.

This will take an ongoing commitment and the necessary material resources. If promises are not followed by action, we risk jeopardizing the entire reconciliation process that is being undertaken. Let us not forget that.

We have an opportunity to commit to a fresh start and to leave a legacy of new, healthy, flourishing relationships for our children and grandchildren. Let us not squander this opportunity. The challenge is great, but we must honour all those who agreed to publicly share their painful memories, those that might otherwise have been buried in the past.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the privilege of speaking to such an important issue, a privilege that I want to share with all those who were affected in the past.

● (1750)

[*English*]

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just before I start, this being the end of the session, before the holidays, I too would like to add my best wishes to everyone for a wonderful Christmas and new year, and thank all Canadians for their generosity. Everyone at some time in their life faces difficult situations, and Canadians are very generous, and have been this season, in helping to increase that magic so that everyone, even those in need, experience it. I encourage all Canadians not to stop now. There is still lots of need before Christmas and Hanukkah, etc.

I want to talk about this wonderful bill. It is an excellent example of the reconciliation that everyone in this House wants to promote. I want to talk about two things. One is why it is so important to have indigenous people on the historic sites board. We might miss things without them.

The first thing I want to talk about is materials, including, for example, when Europeans came a few hundred years ago. I would also like to talk about the frequency of the sites. There are far more opportunities for sites, because the indigenous people have been here more than 10,000 years longer than Europeans. There were all those years to create historic sites. They have vastly more sites and, of course, we would want to make sure they have good representation, government-to-government representation, a specific spot on the board to ensure their presence, over and above other spots that could also be indigenous.

An example is that in the northern part of Yukon, we can see driftwood lying around. It could look like driftwood to any of us, but these are historic cariboo fences that were set up to guide the cariboo to spots where they could be hunted. The Europeans used materials that would last, cement, etc., not natural materials. The first nations people, indigenous people, use the land, natural materials, which are not as easy to distinguish.

Fish traps could perhaps be made out of willow. People would not necessarily know what these were, or bush camps that they used to live in, even at 40 below zero. Non-indigenous people on the board would not necessarily know what these are. They are much harder to detect because they are a part of nature. They always were part of nature.

There are a number of battle sites that, once again, non-indigenous people would have no idea where these might be. People would have to go to these sites to even be able to identify them.

There are far more frequent indigenous historical sites possible because of the 10,000-plus years of people living here. In my area alone, just one of the ridings in the country, there are six indigenous languages: Kutchin, Southern Tutchone, Northern Tutchone, Gwich'in, Kaska, and Hän, and maybe a few more.

It shows how bountiful the people were who lived on this land. There is a map in this month's *National Geographic* that shows all of the first nations and indigenous languages of Canada. It is so dense right across the country, we can imagine how many historic sites they must have. What people might not think of as indigenous sites in fact are. In my riding, for instance, we just had the 75th anniversary of the Alaska Highway. It was first nations' guides who followed their trails and showed the army where to build the highway. There were also Tlingit traders. When the gold rush came, people might think that was the first gold rush, but of course people had lived there for thousands of years, indeed 10,000 years ago, in the Bluefish Caves in Yukon, for instance.

The Tlingit from the coast had what they called the grease trail, the eulachon trail, to bring eulachon oil into the centre of Yukon. Non-indigenous historians would think that the Chilkoot Trail and the White Pass trail that gold rushers came in on were the start, but these were the first nations' trails from time immemorial, where they traded into the interior and had interactions, both positive and conflictual, with other indigenous people, and with the whole trading system, the whole economic system in the interior.

● (1755)

Another item that people would not necessarily know about was a volcano, roughly 1,100 years ago. If people dig beneath the surface in most of Yukon, they will see a layer of white ash. A whole new culture started in Yukon at that time. It changed from atlatl weapons to a bow and arrow. These are all things that only the indigenous people might draw us to.

Other aspects of indigenous history in Yukon are tar sites, where there was caribou dung piled on a hill. People might not know what that was if they did not have the appropriate education. These were discovered only a few years ago, actually. In the summer, the caribou have to get away from the bugs and go on ice patches in the mountains, which last all summer. For thousands of years people hunted the caribou on those sites, and now historical weapons are being found where those patches existed.

There is such a prevalence of aboriginal sites all across Canada, hundreds of different first nations. If they come from Europe, people might think they are all the same, but, as I said, there are 14 separate first nations just in my area, one riding of the country. We can imagine how many first nations there are across Canada, how much history, and how many historic sites, for which we need the interpretation and wisdom of the elders.

Fortunately, they had an oral history, and these records are in the minds of the people. We all agree that this oral history is an important part of the historic record of Canada. That is why it is so important that this bill creates spots for Inuit, Métis, and first nations people on the board, so that far more of these sites will be recognized and recorded for the very important history of our nation.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Yukon will have two and a half minutes remaining in his speech when the House next delves into this subject.

The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired.

[*Translation*]

The order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

● (1800)

[*English*]

ETHICS

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one would think we would have a chance to skip adjournment proceedings, but I am actually glad we get to be here for this last moment, this last chance to again revisit a question I raised. On November 24, I raised two questions, and did not get a satisfactory answer. I am hoping today will be different. I am hoping that on this last day, there will a Christmas miracle, and I will get answers to my questions.

At the time, I posed a riddle to you, Mr. Speaker, which I will read again, because it seems to have been quite popular with members of the press gallery:

> We're exempt from tax hikes of the everyday sort. You won't find us in a parliamentary disclosure report. What are we?

Why, we're the finance minister's private holdings, of course.

At the time, I did not get a satisfactory answer. I got evasion, a pretty standard response that I am used to in the House at this point, especially from that particular minister. It is still a continuing question on the personal finances of the minister, and not a personal attack on him.

Are the decisions the finance minister is taking in the best interests of all Canadians? Do they make sense? Are they in the long-term interests of future Canadians who will come to this House some day, perhaps as newly-minted members of Parliament, the seats we are stewarding on their behalf? It is one of those questions.

I ask this because we also have a record of attacks on small business that we saw a partial retreat on today. We have workforce participation numbers. Statistics Canada keeps reporting that workforce participation is falling year after year. Starting in 2015, it has actually accelerated a little. Half of the reduction in the unemployment rate is not due to new jobs being created by the private sector; it is due to people dropping out of the workforce.

We have a $20 billion deficit in this fiscal year, compounded by nearly a $30 billion deficit in the previous year, and we expect it to climb to $113 billion in the next four years, or so. Therefore, in its first mandate, the government will have added an immense amount of debt.

How is the finance minister is making decisions? Are they actually in the best interests of Canadians, or perhaps a smaller, more elite group of Canadians he has specifically selected.

I will ask the parliamentary secretary of the government's choosing. What is actually in the private holdings of the Minister of Finance? Will he reveal it? Will he let the House be the judge of whether he has been making decisions truly for the benefit of Canadians?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question, even though it is not very factual. It is important to recognize that the Minister of Finance, like every other member of this chamber, we assume, has been very transparent with our commissioner. All assets were provided to the commissioner. At the end of the day, what we have seen is an attack of character, a character assassination of sorts, coming from joint opposition parties. The opposition has spoken out against anything and everything the Minister of Finance has done over the last couple of years.

Even in the question that the member was putting forward to me today, he made reference to a number of issues. For example, he talked about numbers and jobs. He tried to give a false impression that the job numbers are not healthy when, in fact, in the last two years, we have seen the creation of a net increase of 400,000-plus jobs. I would compare those numbers to the Harper government any day. I believe Canadians understand and appreciate the value of the good decisions that this Minister of Finance has put in place, whether it is the middle-class tax break, the Canada child benefit enhancement, or the guaranteed income supplement enhancement. The member across the way talked about small businesses. Does he not realize that very soon we are going to see 100% of small businesses in every region getting a tax decrease?

These things are happening. No matter how the Conservative Party attempts to put its spin on the issues, our Minister of Finance has done an outstanding job. Like all other members, the Minister of Finance has been reporting all his assets to the Ethics Commissioner. That is expected of all members.

We need to have confidence in Mary Dawson, the Ethics Commissioner, and the fine work she has done. She leads a truly independent office. As opposed to Canadians listening to what the opposition parties have to say, I would highly recommend we let the office of the Ethics Commissioner do the job it is supposed to be doing and has been doing. At the end of the day, I believe we will all be better off.

Earlier today, one interviewer indicated that it is not just one side of the House that the commissioner looks at. We will find there are members on both sides, even New Democrats and Conservatives, who Mary Dawson has looked into. It is not just Liberals, but members on both sides of the House. As an independent agent of this Parliament, we respect that the work she does is of great contribution to Canada as a whole.

We continue to move forward today for Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it, as well as taking actions necessary to give strength to and expand our economy in all different regions of Canada, whether through tax reductions, investments in infrastructure, and so on.

● (1805)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member brought up the Ethics Commissioner, who has actually fined the Minister of Finance $200, a nominal amount, for a transgression of his.

A Yiddish proverb states, "Every answer can result in a new question." This is my second question now, and I want to preface with a quote from Anthony Furey, something he tweeted, which says:

> Don't be fooled. [The Minister of Finance] still claims here that he followed all the rules. But the Conflict of Interest Act says you either divest or use a blind trust. The option he employed—a numbered company—is not one of those two.

Obviously, questions come from that. The answer we received from the other side is not satisfactory. They imply and say all the time that every question we ask is automatically character assassination. That seems to be the default position of the Liberal government. It is simply not. This is a place of accountability. Every question we ask in this House is to find out more from the government on what it is doing.

My question to the parliamentary secretaries, any of them, is basically this. What is in the private holdings of the Minister of Finance?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, given that these will likely be my last comments of 2017, I would first like to offer season's greetings to each and every member. I would like to emphasize the fine work our *Hansard* people do. They do not have any choice but to listen to the things we say, and at times, I do say quite a bit.

I say to my colleagues across the way that the Minister of Finance has done an outstanding job in the short two years we have been in government, and he is in full compliance in working with and meeting with Mary Dawson, the Ethics Commissioner. He has made himself available to meet with her to discuss different issues.

To try to give the impression that the minister is somehow doing something outside the law is to give a false impression. The Minister of Finance, much like members on both sides of the House, does due diligence and fine work in representing his constituents.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as we adjourn for the holidays, the Phoenix pay system has become the grinch who stole Christmas for far too many of our public servants.

It is a basic expectation of any employer to pay his or her employees correctly and on time. Not only has the Phoenix pay system created huge problems for the payment of federal employees, but those payment problems have also created tax problems, and that is something to contemplate as we near the end of this year.

Difficulties with record-keeping have also deprived many federal public servants of benefits to which they should be entitled, and the nervousness about making any kind of change to payroll deductions has deterred many from enrolling for charitable contributions from their pay. Therefore, we see that Phoenix has had a negative effect not only on the pay of public servants but on many other people and groups as well.

In recognition of the severity of this crisis, in yesterday's question period, no fewer than eight New Democratic MPs rose to ask questions about Phoenix. We are making this issue a priority.

We also saw the Phoenix pay system come up in today's question period in an exchange in which the Prime Minister was trying to blame the former Conservative government for Phoenix, and the Leader of the Opposition was trying to blame the Liberal government. At one level, I appreciated that this was almost the closest to a debate I have perhaps seen during question period since being elected, so I enjoyed the back and forth, but ultimately, the Liberals and the Conservatives trying to blame each other is not a solution to the problem.

What are the solutions to the Phoenix pay system? Fundamentally, we need to rebuild and re-establish a publicly administered payroll system. In the meantime, I have suggested that the government should empower members of Parliament with tools to help constituents who come to our constituency offices with Phoenix problems. One of the great frustrations members of all parties have is that there is very little we can do for constituents who come forward with these types of difficulties.

If someone comes in with a problem to do with immigration or employment insurance benefits, there are hotlines our staff can call to get answers and information about that individual's case. There is no such hotline for the Phoenix pay system. About eight months ago, I suggested establishing one, and at that time, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement seemed to feel that it was a good and constructive idea. More recently, when I followed up on this suggestion in a previous adjournment debate, the response was that there is already a triage system and that we would not want to allow people to jump the queue by going to their MP's office.

Of course, that is not the logic we would apply to immigration or to employment insurance. In those areas, we accept that MPs have a responsibility to serve our constituents and that constituency offices serve as 338 points of contact across the country to improve the delivery of public services.

I want to again ask the parliamentary secretary about the possibility of establishing a Phoenix hotline so that members of Parliament have some tools in 2018 to help our constituents with Phoenix problems.

● (1810)

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, as it is my last occasion in 2017, I wish you and your family as well as all of the staff in the House of Commons, those who serve all members so well and dedicate themselves so entirely to the good functioning of this place, a happy holiday. I also wish a happy holiday to my hon. colleague with whom I have had the pleasure of exchanging many constructive comments with respect to the Phoenix pay system.

We make no bones about the fact that the Phoenix pay system is a major public administration challenge. We make no bones about the fact that we have had to essentially rebuild a capacity that was yanked from the Government of Canada by our predecessor. There were 700 specialists, people who had spent careers learning about collective agreements, pay rules, and the administration of compensation in the public service. These people were no longer available to us and no longer available to implement the new system, breaking almost every rule of business transformation and IT transformation that exists.

What we have had to do with absolute single-mindedness since the beginning of our mandate is rebuild this capacity, and I think our track record demonstrates this. The former member for Burin—Trinity and the former minister of public services and procurement initially opened satellite pay centres to ensure that capacity remained close to where public servants worked. These have continued to grow and develop across the country. Miramichi has seen major investments of human and technological resources and will see the opening, probably before we meet again in the House of Commons, of a brand new pay centre early in the new year. We have made major investments, and we are rebuilding the capability to execute public servants' pay.

Our public service labour partners, such as the public service unions, have made the point continuously that we need to rebuild capacity of all kinds inside the public service, whether it be technological, compensation, or others. I think we have a demonstrated track record.

I do not think for a minute that my friend believes that there is any difference between his, mine, or any public employee's motivation to solve the problems with respect to the Phoenix pay system.

● (1815)

[*Translation*]

As the year comes to a close, I want to assure my constituents in Gatineau, as well as all Canadians, that we are on the job, we are working hard, and we are allocating all possible resources. Knowing that we are testing the patience of our public servants, we are providing the officials in charge with every tool in the toolbox. We are fully motivated to fix the problems associated with the Phoenix pay system. I am confident that we will see continuous improvement in the new year.

[*English*]

Mr. Erin Weir: Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary concluded by looking to the new year. Indeed, as we look to 2018, I want to briefly ask him about another aspect of the public services and procurement portfolio.

The Liberal government was elected promising to restore door-to-door mail service. So far, mail delivery has not been restored in communities that lost it under the former Conservative government. Indeed, Canadians have observed community mailboxes cropping up in neighbourhoods that currently have door-to-door delivery.

When the Minister of Public Services and Procurement appeared before the government operations committee on November 28, I asked her whether the government would respond to our committee's report on the future of Canada Post before Parliament rose for Christmas. She said that, yes, the government would respond before now.

Parliament has just adjourned for the holidays, and the government has still not responded to our report on the future of Canada Post. Therefore, I am wondering if the parliamentary secretary is in a position to provide that response in his final minute or can at least tell us when that response will be forthcoming.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, we take very seriously our role and our responsibility to provide Canadians with answers regarding Canada Post's key strategic directions. We are very aware of the commitments we made and the commitments we have fulfilled with respect to mail service across the country.

Canadians want this service, and they are telling us that it is important. Before the end of the year, the minister will be able to provide a response and a strategy for Canada Post's key directions, while fully respecting and acknowledging our election commitments.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on October 2, I rose in the House to ask a question about problems with employment insurance. During the election campaign, the Liberals made many promises in that regard. Solving the spring gap problem was one of them. After two years, however, the problem has still not been resolved. Despite the promises, many seasonal workers will again have no income next spring.

Although urgent action is needed, the Liberal government still cannot find a real solution to help families who are in a precarious situation because of its failure to act. More than 16,000 seasonal workers are grappling with the spring gap, and almost 40% of them are Quebeckers. The majority of these seasonal workers will once again run out of EI benefits up to four months before they are to return to work. These people are not just numbers, they are people who are suffering a great deal of stress and are afraid that they will not be able to feed their families at the end of winter.

What makes this even harder to understand is that we saw this crisis coming. When the unemployment rate goes down in some regions, it has an impact on eligibility for EI. The new calculation can shorten the benefit period for workers, making the spring gap even longer. For example, in the Restigouche-Albert region of New Brunswick, where the unemployment rate has gone down, workers now have to accumulate 490 hours of work to be eligible for 23 weeks of benefits, whereas they previously had to work 420 hours for 30 weeks of benefits. Workers now have to go even longer without an income, even though the work resumes on the same date the following spring. Imagine going almost 21 weeks with no benefits and no income. It is impossible.

The worst thing about this is that the Liberals continue to blame the Conservatives, when in reality, the extended spring gap is a direct consequence of a mechanism put in place by the Liberals in 1995. Since then, the regional unemployment rate has been an integral part of the EI eligibility criteria. Today, the government insists that the solution is to wait for the unemployment rate to go up. What a joke. A lower unemployment rate should be good news, but in this case it spells bad news for seasonal workers.

That is not the only promise the Liberals have broken with regard to EI. In December 2016, the Prime Minister himself promised to take swift action to extend EI sickness benefits. A year later, guess what, we are still waiting. More than a third of recipients need far more than the 15 weeks set out in the program. It makes no sense.

Fifteen weeks of sick leave is not enough, especially for someone struggling with serious health problems. We cannot expect people who are sick to get better when they are under a tremendous financial strain. EI is important for everyone, including people who are ill and seasonal workers.

When will the government finally do whatever it takes to fix all the problems associated with EI, so that all Canadians receive the benefits they are entitled to?

● (1820)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my NDP colleague for her remarks.

[*English*]

Since taking office in 2015, our government has faced two overarching challenges. First, we have been working very hard to implement our own agenda of real change to help middle-class Canadians and those working very hard to join the middle class to attain the jobs and status they need to be able to provide for their families and themselves. At the same time, we have faced a second challenge, which is to reverse and fix the disastrous changes put in place by the previous government. While we see these two challenges playing out across the whole of government, I feel that the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot has highlighted an area where we have been working especially hard to meet the needs of Canadians who need help the most.

While our employment insurance system has long been one of the core pillars of our social safety net for all communities, the fact is that under the previous government, long overdue and long required changes were left undone. Rather than ensuring that EI gave Canadians the flexibility they needed during challenging times, the previous government generally ignored the system and just hoped for the best.

[*Translation*]

That is why, since taking office, we have been working hard to make sure that EI meets Canadians' needs by providing equitable benefits across the country.

We have reduced the waiting period from two weeks to one, easing the financial burden on EI recipients at the beginning of their benefit period.

That change means Canadians are receiving an extra $650 million per year.

We rescinded the 2012 changes that specified what kind of jobs unemployed workers were supposed to look for and accept. We improved access to the program by getting rid of certain eligibility criteria for workers who are new entrants or re-entrants to the labour force.

● (1825)

[*English*]

I apologize for my French. I played hockey last year against the Conservatives and had my teeth knocked out, and proper pronunciation is still evading me at times. However, I will struggle on.

We introduced a more flexible working while on claim pilot project that helps certain claimants stay connected with the labour market and to earn extra income while they are on the claim between work sessions. Just a few weeks ago, we introduced new, more flexible EI benefits that help new mothers and parents spend more time with their families and other Canadians to take care of their loved ones during difficult times.

In her question, the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot talked about seasonal workers and EI in the great province of New Brunswick. The reality of course is that this challenge goes beyond simply a single province and encompasses some very important sectors of the Canadian economy from coast to coast to coast, including agriculture, forestry, fishing, construction, all of which are essential components of our labour market and all of them reliant to various degrees on seasonal labour.

As the member knows, EI is designed to respond automatically to changes in an EI economic region's unemployment rate. That way, people residing in similar labour markets are treated fairly and similarly, with the amount of assistance provided adjusted according to the changing needs of regions and communities.

Our government is reviewing and seized with these issues. While we are very proud of what we have achieved so far, particularly considering the state of the system when we took it over, we will continue to work hard to provide more EI improvements to more Canadians who need it most all across the country. The issues that have been raised about the gap are significantly important, and we are working with employers, workers and unions, as well as provinces and local municipalities to try to find a way to resolve these issues as quickly as we can. Meanwhile, we continue to move forward with reforms that we think are important to EI.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Mr. Speaker, the answers are always the same. It is time that the Liberals kept their promises and took meaningful action to tackle all the problems with EI.

Groups like MASSE, the Mouvement autonome et solidaire des sans-emploi, and CNC, the Conseil national des chômeurs et chômeuses, are waiting for the government to finally keep the promises it made about the the spring gap problem.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend Action-Chômage Côte-Nord and their partners for their courageous initiative in organizing a large rally on November 24 to denounce this crisis. On that day, groups representing the unemployed joined forces with unions, mayors, reeves, and politicians to issue a unanimous appeal for help. It is time for the government to react and bring in an emergency measure to avert the calamity facing 16,000 workers and their families.

I will ask my question again. When will this government finally take the necessary steps to fix all the problems with EI?

[*English*]

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure my colleague that our government has been and remains committed to supporting Canadians right across the country when they need it. This issue is front of mind for the minister as we head toward the new year.

● (1830)

[*Translation*]

We understand that EI provides financial security to families and workers across the country during a period of unemployment.

[*English*]

We know important sectors of our economy rely on seasonal labour. Contributing to the well-being of the seasonal workers that are employed in those sectors, including through the EI program, is important.

We are challenged with success because of the high employment numbers, because of the extraordinary job this government has done to get people back to work. One of the challenges we face are the regional issues where employment statistics are on the rise, but certain sectors are not been attended to as properly as they could be. We understand the need to talk to unions, to employers, and to talk to the communities affected to find a permanent solution to this.

I assure the member that it is front of mind for the minister as we head toward the new year.

As I end, I would like to say *Joyeux Noël* to my colleague, the opposition, to the House, and to the staff. I thank them very much, and wish them a great new year. Have a happy Christmas and happy Hanukkah as well.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: I would like to add my thanks to everyone working for the Parliament of Canada in the House of Commons. I wish everyone, all Canadians, a merry Christmas and a happy new year. *Joyeuses Fêtes*.

The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Pursuant to order made earlier today, the House stands adjourned until Monday, January 29, 2018, at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Orders 28(2) and 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:30 p.m.)

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