



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 148 • NUMBER 287 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Friday, April 27, 2018

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, April 27, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

•(1005)

[*Translation*]

TOBACCO ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill S-5, An Act to amend the Tobacco Act and the Non-smokers' Health Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There being no amendment motions at report stage, the House will now proceed without debate to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (for the Minister of Health) moved that Bill S-5, An Act to amend the Tobacco Act and the Non-smokers' Health Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker Mrs. (Carol Hughes): When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (for the Minister of Health) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise today in support of Bill S-5, an act to amend the Tobacco Act and the Non-smokers' Health Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

Over many months, this legislation has been reviewed, amended, and enhanced. Canadians have weighed in on the proposed approach. Our stakeholders have shared their feedback, and both the Senate and the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health have conducted detailed reviews.

Today, I am pleased to rise in the House to share the results of all of that excellent work.

I will begin my remarks by reminding the House of why this important legislation is necessary. Next, I will describe how Bill S-5 has been strengthened to better protect youth, particularly since its review by the Standing Committee on Health. Finally, I will talk about what comes next.

Let us begin with why we need the legislation.

Canada has made outstanding progress over the past 30 years in reducing smoking rates. Our success speaks to the effectiveness of a strong regulatory approach. Nevertheless, tobacco-related illness continues to kill 45,000 Canadians every year. That is one person every 12 minutes. These statistics are alarming and unacceptable. That is why our government is working to reduce tobacco use in Canada, from 15% in 2015 to less than 5% by 2035.

As we work toward this goal, we need to recognize that tobacco use in Canada is changing. The tobacco market today is very different from what it was 30 years ago. Vaping products have changed the landscape and are becoming increasingly popular. From a public health perspective, this poses both challenges and opportunities.

Bill S-5 strikes the right balance between protecting Canadians and recognizing the potential benefits of vaping as an alternative to smoking. It also addresses an important need, by establishing a new legislative framework for the regulation of vaping products.

The bill is a key element of the government's new vision for addressing tobacco use, which includes taking action to ban menthol in tobacco products, implementing plain and standardized packaging requirements for tobacco products, and modernizing Canada's approach to driving down tobacco use.

Budget 2018 has made additional investments of \$80.5 million to support this strategy. Between these new funds and our existing efforts, the Government of Canada plans to invest close to \$300 million over the next five years with the goal of helping Canadians who have an addiction to tobacco, and protecting the health of young people and non-smokers.

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We know that money alone is not the answer. We need to ensure that our approach is based on evidence. We need to listen to the experts and learn from what they tell us. That is why, since its introduction, Bill S-5 has been studied so extensively.

From the public consultation process to strong committee review, our government has heard from a wide range of stakeholders on the bill. This includes public health experts, industry representatives, consumer advocates, and academics, and their valuable feedback has informed the amendments to Bills-5.

In particular, I would like to express my very sincere thanks to the Standing Committee on Health and all of its members for its careful review of the bill. Most notably, the committee made amendments to prohibit lifestyle advertising for vaping products. This means that all lifestyle advertising, anything that associates a product with a way of life that includes glamour, recreation, and excitement will be prohibited. This will better protect our youth and non-tobacco users from being enticed into using vaping products, which could lead to the use of tobacco products and to the renormalization of smoking behaviours.

In addition, the bill was amended to provide regulatory authority to require information, such as health warnings, to be displayed on individual tobacco products, including on individual cigarettes. This amendment will align the approach for vaping and tobacco products. It may also be used to improve consumer awareness of the health hazards and health effects associated with the use of these products.

Protecting youth has been a key concern to stakeholders throughout the consultation process. It was a guiding principle as we drafted the legislation. In particular, many stakeholders have told us they worry about how vaping products could affect young people, and we share their concern.

Experts agree that vaping is harmful but less harmful than smoking. Although I have heard from Canadians who tell us that vaping has helped them quit smoking, their role in smoking cessation has yet to be substantiated. Thus we must be cautious. We must ensure that the availability and prevalence of vaping products do not lead young people and non-smokers to start smoking and to develop nicotine addictions.

That is why, upon royal assent, Bill S-5 will make vaping products legally available only to Canadians over the age of 18. This includes prohibiting vending machine sales and putting measures in place that require retailers to ensure that products purchased online are delivered only to adults.

• (1010)

The bill also includes measures that will ensure vaping products are not glamorized to appeal to young people through slick marketing promotion efforts. For example, there has been a great deal of discussion about how certain flavours could potentially make vaping products more appealing to young people.

We recognize that some of those smokers prefer flavoured vaping products, but we must also acknowledge that these flavours can draw youth to vaping, something we wish to avoid. For this reason, Bill S-5 would restrict the marketing and promotion of vaping product flavours that could appeal to youth, such as candy.

We have already taken significant action on this front by expanding the ban on menthol to cover 95% of all tobacco products. Bill S-5 would take further action by banning the use of menthol and clove in all tobacco products. These measures would help protect Canadians, particularly Canadian youth, from serious long-term health effects of nicotine and tobacco use.

Bill S-5 would also advance our goal of implementing plain and standardized packaging for tobacco products. Thanks to increasingly restrictive measures put in place by governments in Canada, the tobacco industry has few options left to advertise and promote its products to recruit new users. Packaging is one of the last remaining channels for the promotion of tobacco products to youth. That is why this is being addressed.

Research has shown that promotion through tobacco packages and products is particularly effective with adolescents and young adults. Colourful packaging that includes logos, textures, and brand images can have an enormous influence on young people at a time in their lives when they are establishing brand loyalty and smoking behaviour. Research has also shown that plain and standardized packaging reduces the appeal of tobacco products, particularly among youth.

This is why countries all around the world, including Australia, the United Kingdom, and more than 20 others, are either considering or have introduced requirements for plain and standardized packaging for tobacco products. I think we can all agree that tobacco companies should not be able to use packaging to make a harmful product appealing. Bill S-5 would put that principle into action.

As I have outlined today, the bill has been studied extensively. It has been shaped by expert opinion and reviewed by all our colleagues, both in the House and in the other place. As a result, Bill S-5 is before us today as well-researched and balanced legislation, and is part of a comprehensive new vision for addressing tobacco use.

Bill S-5 would meet the needs of a wide range of Canadians by addressing today's tobacco market. It would protect young Canadians from the risks of tobacco, while at the same time allowing adults to legally access vaping products as a less harmful alternative to smoking. It would also support our government's efforts to implement plain and standardized packaging of tobacco products.

If passed, Bill S-5 will position us to protect our youth, reduce tobacco use, and ultimately save lives. With Bill S-5 in place, Canada can once again be a world leader in tobacco control and preserve the health of Canadians for many years to come.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was one of the members on the Standing Committee on Health who worked on this legislation. It is important that we all bring our ideas on how to improve a bill. However, we did bring forward quite a number of amendments and not a single one of them was accepted by the government.

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Could the member comment on why that happened?

Mr. Bill Blair: Madam Speaker, once again, my sincere gratitude to the member opposite for her very significant contributions to the work of the health committee. We very much value the contributions of all members of committee.

Quite a number of amendments were proposed, were discussed and debated upon, and voted on within that committee. We are convinced that the excellent work of the committee has informed a significant enhancement of the bill, and we express our gratitude for that. However, we also respect the role of the committee in determining which amendments it would bring forward and to make recommendations to the government. We respect that process.

Once again, I thank the member for all of her hard work.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I hear a lot from my constituents about electronic cigarettes and vaping. Some people want to promote it as a safer way for people who need to get their nicotine and as a safer way to keep kids from cigarettes, but I also hear totally the opposite. There seems to be information on both sides, very conflicting information, as to whether they are safer or whether they draw kids in or keep them away from cigarettes.

Would the government commit to funding independent research on those effects so we can have credible answers to those very important questions?

• (1015)

Mr. Bill Blair: Madam Speaker, it is a concern we have heard from health professionals and academics. The need for ongoing research and the lack of research on the effects of some of these products was a matter robustly discussed by the committee as well. The government has made a commitment to ongoing research, and we believe that we are in an excellent position to adapt and react to that research as we gain more information about the potential harm from these new, emerging products.

I also want to assure the member that our government is taking a precautionary approach. Until the evidence supports their having healthful benefits, we are being very careful and cautious in placing appropriate restrictions on these products so as not to allow them to promote tobacco renormalization, particularly among our youth.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, with the lack of clarity in the bill, I have a question. I am trying to understand the meaning of this bill. With plain packaging of cigarettes, what will happen to the contraband industry? What will happen to the future of cigarette sales in general where we still have to deal with the problem of contraband cigarettes?

Mr. Bill Blair: Madam Speaker, the issue of contraband cigarettes is a significant concern for this government, because it is the way many young people are accessing tobacco products. We rely, again, on the evidence and experience of other jurisdictions in this regard. There is very strong evidence from Australia, in particular, that indicates that plain packaging has no deleterious effects on the increased use of contraband products. They also faced challenges there.

Our government remains committed to working with law enforcement authorities and others to reduce the incidence of contraband tobacco within our society. However, based on the evidence available to us, we do not believe that the introduction of plain packaging will have a negative effect on those efforts.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, there has long been a concern about flavoured tobacco drawing in youth who begin smoking it at an early age, and then we have other Canadians addicted. I am wondering if the member supports adding menthol and cloves as prohibited additives in all tobacco products so as to discourage young people from being drawn toward tobacco products because they find them appealing.

Mr. Bill Blair: Madam Speaker, in my remarks I said that we have already eliminated 95% of use. These regulations in Bill S-5 will enable us to prohibit the use of all tobacco products flavoured with menthol and cloves to address the concern she raises.

Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my question focuses on youth and nicotine addiction. I have experienced, through my career working with youth, that they are often driven to nicotine addiction as a result of stress in school and in their lives, for example. I know that Bill S-5 addresses youth in particular with respect to the development of nicotine addiction. I am wondering if the member could expand on some of the things in this bill that would directly address nicotine addiction among youth.

Mr. Bill Blair: Madam Speaker, I share the member's concern about the effects of tobacco use on the long-term health of our kids. That is why this bill is a very strong step forward. It would enable us to restrict access to it by young people. As I mentioned in my earlier remarks, the government is also making significant investments in research and treatment to ensure that we achieve this not only through regulation but through significant investments in those kids and their health.

We also recognize that there are many social determinants of tobacco use in our society, and we see those social determinants not only through Bill S-5 but through the entire government agenda. We are attempting to address social conditions such as unemployment, poverty, and lack of access to adequate services, which have in many communities resulted in increased tobacco use. Through regulation, we are ensuring that tobacco products are not appealing to young people, but at the same time, we are making other significant investments to change the circumstances in which the choice to use tobacco products is made by our kids.

• (1020)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the vaping industry has grown quite significantly over the last number of years. When we have an industry such as that growing, the national government and other stakeholders, and I am thinking in particular of the provinces, need to look at how that industry is developing, especially when it comes to young people and others. I wonder if my friend and colleague could provide his thoughts on why it is so important that the government monitor industries such as that in the hope that we continue to go in the right direction.

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Mr. Bill Blair: Madam Speaker, one of the things the government recognized, based on the evidence we heard in our consultations and from the witnesses who came before committee, was that there was some potential in alternatives to smoking, such as vaping, to be less harmful. However, we also heard that there was not yet a great deal of evidence as to what the actual health effects might be of vaping. That is one reason we have taken a cautious approach by putting what we believe are appropriate restrictions on the marketing of vaping products to make sure that Canadian consumers have health information and that young people, in particular, are not introduced to or having access to these products or having them marketed to them. It is to protect them from making that choice.

We heard a real concern that vaping could renormalize tobacco. We have made incredible strides in Canadian society in denormalizing the use of tobacco. I think our kids recognize, in increasing numbers, the health risks tobacco usage represents to them. We do not want to change that path. In effect, we want to build upon it and continue to move forward. Therefore, we will continue to be very cautious with the use of alternative methods of ingestion that may not yet have the proven health benefits that are often promoted by the manufacturers.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak today on Bill S-5 regarding plain packaging and vaping.

Canada has come a long way in terms of smoking cessation. Over the last number of years, half a century or so, the smoking rate has been reduced from about 50% to 13%, and the Conservative Party has been a great part of that. During the time we were in government, we definitely promoted many plans and programs that promoted the cessation of smoking. In fact, at one point, we focused specifically on youth, because there was a concern that youth smoking rates were rising again. We were able to reduce those rates from 33% to less than 20%. I think we need to continue to march along and figure out how to reduce smoking among young people and, of course, all Canadians.

One of the things I find a little hypocritical about the government is that in the budget, the Liberals introduced \$80 million to stop people from smoking but \$800 million to get them to start smoking marijuana. I think that is a total misalignment, in terms of health outcomes, that we would want to look at.

In terms of studying the bill, it was actually quite an education for me. We got to see all kinds of little products. There is a lot of new technology that has been developed. I did not bring any of it today, of course, because we do not allow props, but to let members know, there is a myriad of new technologies coming forward.

There is something called the HeatSticks, which are little tobacco sticks that are not combusted. The sticks are put in a device that heats them so that there are fewer harmful products. It is for harm reduction, in terms of health.

We learned about vaping and vaping devices. There are many different kinds of devices. Some have evolved over time. There was a concern at one point about batteries exploding in certain devices.

We need to make sure that something is done with the vaping industry, because today the vaping industry is totally unregulated. In

fact, it is illegal. We have a lot of stores that have sprung up all over the place, but there is no governance or oversight to prevent them from selling these devices to young people or from selling marijuana at the same time. Definitely we need to see this industry regulated, so I am happy to see that regulations would be brought in with Bill S-5.

Quite a number of studies were presented to us by the Canadian Cancer Society. It is one of many health organizations that support this proposed legislation. I believe that 362 health organizations have come forward in support of this proposed legislation.

Of the 150 studies that have been done, there are eight countries that have been looking to implement plain packaging, and they have seen a reduction in the number of people smoking.

In terms of trying to make the bill better, we brought a whole bunch of amendments, but not a single one was accepted by the government. Therefore, I will spend a little time telling members about the amendments we tried to bring so they understand why I am disappointed that they were not received well.

First, if we look to Europe and the U.K., there is an additive called diacetyl, which is used for flavour. It gives a buttery flavour. It was found in the popcorn industry to cause something they dubbed “popcorn lung”. It is a very serious respiratory issue. This additive has been banned. It is prohibited in both the U.K. and Europe, and we felt that we should learn from their experience. They have been looking into the vaping side of things for 10 years now. We brought an amendment to prohibit that additive here, which, of course, was rejected. I cannot imagine for what reason.

Another issue we brought forward was something we heard from those in the tobacco industry. The tobacco industry is obviously going to eventually go out of business as people stop smoking, and there will be some job losses. However, more importantly, the plain packaging that was recommended as the solution is the old sleeve packaging we used to have. Those machines that manufactured that old packaging were all sold, in some cases to the people who are providing the contraband today. In terms of ordering new equipment, that equipment is obsolete.

There is not a good enough timeline in the proposed legislation, which calls for it to go into effect right away. There is not enough time for these people to purchase new equipment and get it established to comply with the proposed regulations.

● (1025)

For that reason, we brought an amendment that would extend the time of implementation by 12 months in order to allow time for businesses to come onside and comply with the legislation. That, of course, was also not accepted.

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We also were interested in making sure that people know about the harm reduction information that is available. There have been studies within the tobacco industry on the new technologies that the industry is bringing forward. In the U.K. there was a study on vaping that showed there was a 95% reduction in harm. It is important for people who are smokers to be able to get hold of the information that there is less harm in some of these products and that they can be an avenue for them to stop smoking, but the bill would not allow anybody except Health Canada or the Minister of Health to provide harm reduction information. We thought that doctors and folks involved in smoking cessation clinics should be able to pass on this information, so we brought amendments on that as well, which were, of course, rejected.

Another thing we wanted to address was the issue of contraband. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health indicated that it was not a problem in Australia, but we should point out that Australia does not grow tobacco. It has to import all of it. In Canada, we grow tobacco in quite a number of places, and the contraband problem that we have currently is quite severe. Thirty or forty per cent is the estimate across the country, and in some places like Ontario, 60% of the cigarettes are contraband. Contraband brings along with it organized crime and activities that we do not want. We are worried that implementing plain packaging would make it easier for people to produce contraband cigarettes, so we were looking at ways and technologies that could be used to mark the cigarettes or mark the cases to make sure that people are not able to counterfeit them.

Counterfeiters are very good at what they do, and we always have to keep ahead of the technology. We heard witnesses tell us that producers of contraband are even able to get hold of the CRA stamps that are put on government packages, or to copy them in some way. That was another amendment that we would have liked to see to make sure that those contraband protection technologies were implemented, but of course that was also not accepted.

In looking at all the different technologies, we wanted to make sure that the bill covered everything. Marijuana and marijuana-consuming devices were not really covered in the marijuana legislation, and in this legislation we did not cover marijuana at all, so there is a gap there. We should have made it much clearer as to whether we want people to vape marijuana. To my mind, that is still an outstanding question.

Overall, the bill itself had a lot to it. Many people came before us. The convenience store owners were really concerned. Today they do not participate in the vaping industry and they want a chance to participate, but they feel they may not be able to do that because of the way they are regulated. They have a good record in terms of making sure that young people are not buying cigarettes, so they already have a good protocol in place for doing that, whereas the existing vaping stores do not have that. We certainly want to make sure that the convenience store owners have the opportunity to participate and take advantage of all of this.

Some of the most interesting testimony that we heard was about how people are using vaping products. I mentioned that people are using them to get off smoking, but some other interesting ideas were also brought forward. I heard people talk about how those who are morbidly obese or diabetic and have cravings for sugar are actually

licking cherry-flavoured or pie-flavoured vaping products to control their cravings for sugar and lose weight. That was fairly interesting as well.

When I look into the bill and the amendments that we brought, I feel that overall this bill would result in reduced smoking rates in Canada. I think it would do that. Over a 10-year period, Australia saw a 3% reduction in the smoking rate. It is not a huge thing and probably not the only thing, but it is important.

● (1030)

One of the things that concerns me about with vaping was testimony that 30% of young people have tried vaping, and of the 30% who tried vaping, 50% are likely to start smoking. That is why it is so critical in this legislation to make sure that we are not advertising vaping to children under 18 and that we have good controls in place to make sure that children under 18 are not getting hold of vaping devices, because if they do, they are likely to start smoking, and then we are back to the problem that the Conservative government previously addressed in terms of reducing smoking by young people.

Although I am very disappointed that the excellent recommendations brought forward in amendments from the Conservative Party were not accepted, I feel that the bill overall will reduce harm to Canadians, and the vaping industry will be regulated. Therefore, we will be supporting this legislation.

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member opposite for her remarks and for the excellent work that she always brings to the health committee. I understand when amendments are brought forward that there is always a bit of disappointment and frustration if one's amendment is not agreed to. However, I would commend the work in totality of the health committee and all of the evidence that they heard.

The question that I would ask the member is this. Given the nature of her remarks, I am in complete agreement with her that we need to take every measure possible to reduce the availability of contraband tobacco. It is one of the reasons I am a little perplexed by her strong advocacy for maintaining contraband cannabis. Perhaps she could explain why she differentiates between the two.

● (1035)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, we did not spend a lot of time talking about contraband marijuana during the Bill S-5 discussion. We talked mainly about the huge problem that we have today with contraband cigarettes.

It is no secret that many of the contraband cigarettes are produced at reserves across the country. It is an enforcement issue, because the reserves have the right to produce cigarettes; the problem is that other people are coming to the reserve and purchasing them. From an enforcement point of view, one has to either arrest everyone as they come out of the smoke shop or not do anything. If there has not been a successful solution on contraband cigarettes, then I doubt that we are going to see any successful solution elsewhere.

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Contraband marijuana will be a significant problem. When we were doing the cannabis legislation, indigenous people testified that they will want the right to produce and distribute marijuana, so we may run into the same situation there. If there are no good solutions and none are found on smoking, then I do not think we are going to be successful in the marijuana area either.

[Translation]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Madam Speaker, the debate around contraband cigarettes is absolutely fascinating. Plain packaging will not make the slightest difference. I have been an MP for nearly seven years now, and convenience store owners and other stakeholders have been telling me about this problem for years.

In spite of the current packaging, contraband is already a problem. In my opinion, we need to focus on two key aspects, rather than just passing legislation, if we really want to go on the offensive. To those who have concerns about this legislation in relation to contraband, I will say that the problem is not plain packaging. Rather, the Canada Border Services Agency and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police need resources to tackle this problem properly, regardless of packaging and the legislation governing it.

Would my colleague support the idea of allocating more resources to the RCMP and CBSA to tackle the problem of contraband cigarettes?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

[English]

When it comes to contraband, I think that we need more enforcement activity, and more enforcement activity is going to require extra money. However, I think we need to think about what the strategy is going to be and how we are going to go about doing that. In my riding of Sarnia—Lambton, we have smoke shops everywhere. I know people are buying contraband cigarettes. It is a very common thing. It is considered normal.

I do not know how we can get the resources that are needed. An enormous number of people are purchasing contraband products, so enforcement will require quite a number of people, and what will the penalty be? Will that plug up the justice system, which is already beleaguered because the Minister of Justice has not appointed enough judges and there are so many different types of charges today?

I think it is something that we will need to put resources into and think carefully about.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciated my colleague's speech very much, as she does a tremendous amount of work on this file.

If she had the option of choosing just one amendment from all of the great amendments they proposed, which one would she say was the best amendment that could have been made?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, it is always hard to pick just one, but if I had to, I would go with the diacetyl one, because it was something that was experienced as a serious respiratory illness.

It is something that was studied and prohibited by the U.K. and the EU, so that one to me is probably the best.

My second choice would be the extension of time for all of the tobacco industry folks to be able to comply with the legislation.

[Translation]

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

I am curious to know if this debate has included any discussion of how the revenue from excise taxes is used in Canada, which is among the worst on that score. Tobacco manufacturers pay billions in excise taxes, and that money could be spent on prevention and education about the harmful effects of tobacco use. Currently, the federal government uses only a tiny fraction of the excise tax revenue for education. It is actually the provinces that are doing more in terms of education and advertising to tell people about the harmful effects of tobacco.

Is that part of the debate? Does my colleague think that is something we should consider in addition to what is in today's bill?

● (1040)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

[English]

When it comes to excise tax, the answer was not clear in Australia. When Australia implemented plain packaging, it increased the excise tax at the same time, so we are unable to say which of those two things caused the reduction in smoking or whether it was both of them. Definitely excise tax is a mechanism to try to discourage people from smoking, but it does drive people to contraband.

Interestingly enough, in budget 2018 there was very sneaky legislation that put an escalating tax on tobacco and cigars that will increase every year, in perpetuity, with the consumer price index. This is a tax without any voter input that will go on and on and up and up. Perhaps those extra funds could be used to good purpose, but I would prefer to be transparent with the public and allow the public to vote in who they want, based on their tax policy.

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Madam Speaker, I also want to thank the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton, not only for her speech but also for the wonderful work she does on the health committee. I too serve on the health committee with the hon. member, and she certainly is a strong contributor on the committee.

In her speech, she talked a bit about the amendments the Conservatives put forward on the bill and the fact that all of these Conservative amendments were rejected by the Liberal government. It is frustrating. Not only were they rejected with respect to this bill, but just the other day we brought forward numerous amendments to a another bill we are working on in the health committee. They were all rejected by the Liberal government. It is quite frustrating to work this hard to make the bill better and then have the improvements completely rejected every time. This is something I would like the hon. member to comment on. What do you think? Why do you think the Liberal government is rejecting our amendments? Is it because they are coming from the Conservatives?

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The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the member that he is to address the question to the Chair, and he might want to use the word “she” instead of “you”.

The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton has one minute to respond.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, when not a single one of the amendments we bring is ever approved at committee, it is clear to me that it is partisan politics at play. That is really disappointing because, as we can see from some of the amendments I was putting forward, they are very sensible, logical, fact-based improvements. After they are rejected here in the House and the bill goes to the other place, they have to study it, and they come up with exactly the same concerns, exactly the same amendments. It is a total inefficiency to government, because we have seen many times that when amendments come back from the Senate, they are rejected by the government. It is really not a good process.

I think the committee is the place where partisan politics need to go out the window and where we need to focus on providing good legislation that benefits Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, the NDP does not think this bill is perfect, but we are going to support it at third reading. It is important to remember that the purpose of this bill is to create a new legislative framework for regulating vaping products and to implement plain and standardized packaging. We have long called for effective, concrete anti-tobacco measures to discourage young people from starting to smoke. The NDP is clearly a leader on this front. We have long called for plain packaging and a regulatory framework for vaping products.

In 2009, the former health critic, the member for Winnipeg North, introduced a bill to close loopholes in the Tobacco Act by tightening requirements for the labelling, packaging, and sale of flavoured tobacco products. In the last election campaign, we promised to introduce anti-smoking measures, increase funding for anti-smoking strategies, implement plain packaging, and ban all flavoured tobaccos. We also talked about the need to initiate a federal review to strengthen Canada's tobacco control legislation and the associated strategy, which expires in 2018.

It is clear that our demands were heard because it is now illegal to use flavourings and additives in tobacco products. It is important to reiterate that smoking is the leading cause of disease and premature death in Canada. The annual health care cost per smoker in Canada is over \$3,000, which adds up to \$17 billion a year. If passed, this bill could save money by reducing smoking rates in Canada, savings that would benefit the provinces and territories. There is no doubt that tobacco causes serious illnesses and a number of problems that can lead to death. One Canadian dies from a tobacco-related illness every 14 minutes. That is unacceptable. This is why we are supporting this bill and urging the other parties to do the same, in spite of everything.

Anti-smoking groups rightly point out that the longer we wait to pass a bill like this one, the more people will start to smoke and the more people will die from the consequences of tobacco use. Although there are regulations in place, it is difficult to restrict access to e-cigarettes. There is no evidence as of yet indicating that

e-cigarettes encourage young people and non-smokers to start consuming nicotine. However, we still lack information on these and other vaping products, since they are new to the market. These products and their different flavours may seem enticing, especially to young people. If this bill is passed, the ban on tobacco sales to persons under the age of 18 will also be extended to vaping products, and it will also be illegal to promote vaping products. In addition, it will be illegal to use tobacco brands or information-based advertising to market vaping products to young people. Labels on these products must carry warnings regarding their nicotine content and the health problems they can cause. These measures are less restrictive than those applied to tobacco, since these products are considered less harmful for now.

Of course, some amendments could have been proposed. One of the downsides to this bill is the fact that vaping product manufacturers will be able to promote their products everywhere, which is bound to attract young teens. When bringing in regulations at the federal level, it is always important to consider provincial and territorial regulations. We have to bear that in mind every time we consider a federal bill.

Vaping products may help reduce tobacco consumption, but it is important to remember that using them does not break the smoking habit. Maison Alcôve, a well-known addiction treatment centre in Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot, made it clear that the only way a smoker will stop smoking is by breaking those habits, those daily rituals. Smoking an e-cigarette is still smoking. Using vaping products to reduce tobacco consumption has limitations we need to consider.

If this bill passes, manufacturers would be required to submit to Health Canada information on sales and the ingredients in the vaping products, to ensure follow-up.

● (1045)

The 2015 report on vaping released by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health, which did an excellent job, made 14 recommendations, including one to create a legislative framework for vaping products. This bill follows up on these recommendations.

This bill also contains other provisions. Indeed, the Non-smokers' Health Act, which seeks to protect those in federally regulated workplaces, will be amended to ensure that vaping products are subject to the same prohibitions as tobacco products.

Government Orders

Bill S-5 harmonizes compliance and enforcement authorities with those found in other modern statutes, including the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act. These authorities would apply to both vaping and tobacco products. This would allow inspectors to use telewarrants and enter private property in carrying out an inspection, while accompanied by any person qualified to conduct the inspection. They could also require manufacturers to keep records, and stop or move any means of transportation for the purpose of inspection.

I want to emphasize the fact that disadvantaged and marginalized populations are the easiest targets and, unfortunately, they tend to consume more tobacco than the general population. They are more likely to suffer from tobacco-related illnesses. For example, 40% of first nations people smoke, and 37% of people who are divorced or separated smoke. We can no longer allow these groups to be targeted. The end goal is to reduce the gap in health status between general and disadvantaged populations caused by serious tobacco-related diseases.

Youth are also affected by this. We know that young people usually start smoking during adolescence. They are an easy target because they are easily influenced and find the packaging appealing. This bill will make it possible to minimize tobacco use and nicotine addiction among young people. As a result, it will also reduce the percentage of smokers.

Passing this bill would be a step forward in reducing tobacco use and would improve the health of Canadians. We really need regulations and measures like the ones set out in Bill S-5 to successfully reduce tobacco use. However, we also need to make young people aware that they can choose not to use tobacco. We need to get them to think about what they are taking into their bodies and make sure that they know how to say no.

Parents also need to be educated about this, so that they stop trivializing smoking and realize that smoking is dangerous. An organization in my riding called Satellite and one in Acton Vale called Horizon Soleil are trying to educate younger kids about these issues beginning in elementary school. Education will have a stronger impact and must go hand in hand with passing Bill S-5 in order to effectively reduce the number of smokers in Canada.

I have discussed this bill with some of the stakeholder organizations in my riding, including the ones I just mentioned, Satellite, Horizon Soleil in Acton Vale, and Maison l'Alcôve, which start educating children in elementary school, as well as their teachers and parents, about the harmful effects of using tobacco and the importance of not using it in the teen years, and especially not in elementary school.

We really need to have a strict law, because young people are drawn to these products, with their colourful packaging and different flavours. We need to make sure that they never start smoking. We all know people in our lives who want to stop using tobacco. We know how hard it is. We need to focus on prevention so that they do not start using tobacco.

As I was saying in my speech, I have spoken with stakeholders and the director of Maison l'Alcôve, a very reputable addiction prevention centre in my riding. Every day they encounter people

who are trying to quit smoking. They were saying how hard it is to address this problem because that involves breaking daily habits.

It is important to acknowledge the work of national organizations in support of our legislative amendments to this bill. These organizations, including many medical and anti-smoking organizations, asked us to go even further.

● (1050)

Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada, the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Public Health Association, and the Association pour la santé publique du Québec, are some of the organizations that come to mind. Since I am from Quebec, I would point out the Coalition québécoise pour le contrôle du tabac, which does exemplary work on smoking prevention and awareness.

As I was saying earlier in my speech, we have to ensure that people do not ever start smoking. Of course we can work on helping them quit smoking, but I think that at the federal level our main job is to raise awareness. We have to do enough on raising awareness to ensure that smoking for the first time triggers an alarm in a person's mind and prevents them from starting in the first place. It is important. These organizations help us understand the balance between the need to protect non-smokers and the need to provide smokers with help to quit smoking.

For a long time, about a decade, the NDP put pressure on the Conservative government. It is now pressuring the Liberal government with bills. My colleague from Vancouver Kingsway has done excellent work with the Standing Committee on Health and strives to raise the government's awareness at every meeting. My colleague also works with all the organizations I named. As parliamentarians, it is important to listen to stakeholders. As critic, I am in touch with people on the front lines. Every day, they see the effects of decisions we make here. It is so important to listen to those stakeholders and their recommendations. They are eagerly awaiting this bill. We have to listen to them. These people work with tobacco users and educate people so they do not start smoking. That is what they do every day, and they say this bill is important. That is why it is so important for us to pass it.

The NDP supports this bill. We know it is not perfect and needs improvement, but it is a first step. We will keep pressing the government to do more. We will keep asking for more funding for prevention.

I worked in the health sector for decades, and spent some time working in prevention. In health care, 95% of funds are allocated to curative care. A lot of money is allocated to treatment, and the remaining 5% is allocated to prevention. These groups are telling us to invest more in prevention.

I have four children. With my youngest, I was introduced to energy cubes. Pierre Lavoie teaches us that we would have far fewer people in the hospital if we took care of our health every day, if we ate properly and did physical exercise. Smoking prevention is one of the healthy living habits that we need to instill in kids from a young age.

Statements by Members

I think that our role at the federal level is to allocate enough funds to promote prevention and healthy living. Anti-smoking measures are part of these healthy living habits that we must instill in children from a young age. At the federal level, we must allocate enough funds to ensure that discussions on health also address prevention, the importance of taking action before problems arise.

• (1055)

What often happens is that we react to problems, but in supporting this bill, I think we are taking an important step in combatting tobacco use.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): If the member has not finished her speech, she will have four and a half minutes after question period when we resume debate on this motion.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Madam Speaker, we can easily continue. I was looking for your guidance on the end of my speech.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

THE WAR AMPS

Hon. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, since 1918, The War Amps has made a tremendous contribution by improving the lives of countless Canadians. Headquartered in my riding of Ottawa South, it relies on donations from the public through its key tag service, which was started by war amputees in 1946. To date, more than 1.5 million sets of lost keys have been reunited with their relieved owners.

In 2018, The War Amps is celebrating its 100th anniversary. To mark this milestone, The War Amps recently unveiled a Canada Post commemorative envelope. The envelope depicts how The War Amps has been a special part of Canada's history and showcases how the key tags have evolved over the years.

I know all members will want to join me in congratulating The War Amps on 100 years of terrific service and wishing it every continued success.

* * *

• (1100)

[*Translation*]

DENIS JOBIN

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canada's many mayors work hard to improve our communities. When one of them passes away suddenly, it leaves a huge void.

Today I want to pay tribute to the mayor of Cap-Santé, Denis Jobin, who passed away on April 20, 2018, following a particularly aggressive illness.

Inspired by his leadership, town councillors will take up the torch and ensure their municipality continues to thrive long into the future.

The people of Cap-Santé were united behind their mayor, who did so much to contribute to the development of their beautiful town.

A talented musician, Denis could play almost any instrument and had a special affinity for the arts. What an inspiration to his grandson, Éli. Denis was also one of the instigators behind the proposal to develop the Fort-Jacques-Cartier-et-du-Manoir-Allsopp site.

Marie-Pier, Anne, Laurent, and Michelle can be proud of their father. He was a great man. He was loved, dedicated, sincere, and loyal.

He was a loving partner to Sylvie, filling her life with happiness and beautiful music, and I know she will treasure those memories.

I wish to extend my deepest sympathies to them all.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Kildonan—St. Paul, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today I rise to mark the National Day of Mourning, which is commemorated yearly on April 28. This is the day when we remember Canadian workers who have been killed, injured or suffered illness on their job site.

Organizations, such as Safe Workers of Tomorrow, are currently holding ceremonies across the country, including my home province of Manitoba.

In Canada, approximately two and a half deaths occur daily. In Manitoba alone, there were 24 workplace deaths due to accidents and illnesses in 2016, and that number rose to 27 last year.

Every worker has the right to come home safe at the end of the day. Today reminds us all that although we have made great strides over the last decade, there is more work left to be done. One life lost is one too many.

* * *

DRUG ADDICTION

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, April 24 marked the first anniversary of the tragic death of Ryan Hedican, son of John and Jennifer Hedican, my constituents in Courtenay—Alberni.

Ryan was one of over 4,000 Canadians who lost their life to opioid overdose in 2017, and this crisis continues. Every day this year in B.C. alone, four people will die due to fentanyl poisoning.

Ryan's addiction to opioids destroyed his life and affected everything and everyone he loved. No one wants to live like that. Addiction is not a choice; it is a disease.

The opioid crisis is a crisis of social isolation and bad drug policy. We must treat addiction as a health issue, not a criminal one. We must work to remove the stigma around substance abuse and addiction, so people can openly seek treatment without judgment or shame. We must continue to expand access to harm reduction services and treatment so people can get the help they need when they need it.

Statements by Members

We can honour Ryan's memory by working toward a Canada where help is immediately available and addiction is treated with humanity.

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[*Translation*]

PROMPT PAYMENT

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have good news. I am referring to our record on prompt payment for construction industry contractors and subcontractors. We intend to introduce legislation on prompt payment as our government, and I, as the member for Gatineau, believe that this is a crucial file that affects the contractors and subcontractors in my riding and across Canada.

In recent weeks, I have had the great pleasure of consulting stakeholders about this matter at such meetings as the Payments Canada Summit in Toronto, organized by the National Trade Contractors Coalition of Canada, and the annual meeting between the government and the Canadian Construction Association at Meech Lake. These meetings were an excellent opportunity for entrepreneurs and subcontractors to express their views on the issue and on the progress made.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my colleague from Humber River—Black Creek for her leadership on this very exciting file. We are very motivated.

* * *

• (1105)

[*English*]

MARTY BOOTSMA

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, today it is with a sad heart that I rise to honour the life of a friend of the entire community he lived in and served, Marty Bootsma, former mayor of Salmon Arm.

Anyone who got to know Marty appreciated his ability to carry on a respectful conversation with anyone about almost any topic. His wit and humour, along with his ability to tell a joke and take a joke, ensured lots of fun around the meeting rooms and coffee tables.

Marty also had a great sense of responsibility. He became accomplished at a number of occupations in Salmon Arm: construction contractor, baker, realtor, and, most notably, six years as city councillor and another two terms as mayor of Salmon Arm.

Marty's work in service clubs, such as the Rotary, also showed how much he cared about the people around him.

Marty will be missed by his large family, friends, and entire community. However, we can all be grateful for how he made our lives just a little richer. We thank Marty.

* * *

BILL TERON

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I stand here to honour the memory of a personal hero of

mine, Bill Teron, an Officer of the Order of Canada, and a man lovingly known as the “Father of Kanata”.

Bill Teron was quite simply a visionary, someone who led both the development of the Kanata community and the high-tech centre of excellence that flourishes today.

Bill was more than a developer. He was committed to creating communities. As part of the purchase agreement of homes that he built, homeowners were required to join the community association, thus creating the sense of belonging, which still thrives today.

As president of CMHC, Bill was especially proud of creating the assisted home ownership program, which allowed for those on a limited income to buy a home.

I offer my deepest condolences to his wonderful wife Jean, and the whole family. Kanata has lost a legend, but his vision and spirit will live on in the heart of Kanata forever.

* * *

WORLD WOMEN'S CURLING CHAMPIONS

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, while hockey and the Winnipeg Jets are very much on our minds today, on March 25, a record number of Canadians came out to watch the 2018 World Women's Curling Champions in North Bay, Ontario.

It fills me with great pride to congratulate Olympic and now world champions, Winnipeg's own Jennifer Jones and teammates Kaitlyn Lawes, Jill Officer, and Dawn McEwan from the St. Vital Curling Club on their impressive performances throughout each round of the competition, and a thrilling showdown against Sweden in the final.

Winning the world championship is an extraordinary achievement, but doing so on home ice, in Canada, is an extraordinary achievement.

I thank the Jones team for its exemplary representation of Canada and for inspiring a new generation of girls and boys throughout the country to take up what I am sure we can all agree is the greatest sport around, curling.

I congratulate Team Canada.

* * *

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, modern day slavery and human trafficking are horrific forms of injustice that are extremely profitable and growing in Canada and around the world.

Today there are 25 million people around the world who are trapped in forms of modern day slavery, including forced labour and sex trafficking.

In Canada, we know the majority of human trafficking victims are young women. While the most at-risk include indigenous women and youth, the fact is that anyone can become a victim of human trafficking.

That is why today I am honoured to announce the launch of Canada's all-party parliamentary group to end modern-day slavery and human trafficking. I have the pleasure to serve as co-chair alongside the member from Winnipeg Centre, the member from Abitibi—Témiscamingue, and Senator Dan Christmas.

Our group is also being launched in partnership with the Allard School of Law's International Justice and Human Rights Clinic and its director, Nicole Barrett.

We believe that by working across party lines, we can foster significant advances to end modern-day slavery and human trafficking in Canada.

* * *

• (1110)

[Translation]

SAINT-JEAN

Mr. Jean Rioux (Saint-Jean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the Haut-Richelieu Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Stéphane Legrand, and the organizers of the Gala de l'excellence for organizing an event that showcased the excellence of the stakeholders in our community.

The Coup de coeur award, which is chosen by the public, put the love in the Festival de la Saint-Valentin. Luc Bazinet was recognized for his vision and community involvement. Marina St-Tropez was given a special mention for the enthusiasm of three generations of women entrepreneurs. It is with emotion and pride that I also congratulate a former student, Steve Trinque, for being named business person of the year.

The riding of Saint-Jean can count on the talents of young entrepreneurs like Tommy Duval, organizations like Centre de partage communautaire Johannais, and businesses such as le Domaine Pourki. Congratulations to all.

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[English]

LEONARD GEORGE

Mr. Terry Beech (Burnaby North—Seymour, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to Chief Leonard George, a great man and inspiring leader, who passed away in December. After his passing, I asked the parliamentary poet laureate, George Elliott Clarke, to draft an elegy in his honour, and I am humbled to share that poem with everyone in the House today:

To act is not only to make pretend;
To act is also to make a difference,
To make change, to reform, and to amend:
It is to teach governors Governance.

Leonard George defined Action doubly well:
To act on camera, to dramatize roles,
To document Resistance, to excel
Also at inspiring a people's souls.

His Tsleii-Waututh Nation has prospered,
According to his vision, joining eco—
“Nomics” and “logy”: Neither word's absurd
When both prescribe how a nation should grow.

Statements by Members

North Vancouver activist Leonard George
Had no peer: The original broke the forge.

May my friend Leonard George rest in peace.

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SPRUCE GROVE SAINTS

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today to congratulate the Spruce Grove Saints on securing their victory in their fifth Alberta junior hockey league championships since 2010.

The Saints have overcome a lot of challenges this year. However, nothing could prepare them for the loss of former teammates Conner Luken and Parker Tobin in the recent crash in Humboldt. I know they would be proud of their former teammates today.

I want to take this time to thank the families that put in countless hours to support our players, particularly the billeting families that provide a home away from home.

The lads of the Spruce Grove Saints showed an intensity and determination that marked them as athletes of the highest calibre. They are the pride of our community, and I look forward to cheering them on today as they take on the Wenatchee Wild in the Doyle Cup.

Go Saints go.

* * *

WINNIPEG JETS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Winnipeg is experiencing a whiteout, and what a feeling it is. The arena is packed and the streets are filling as white is the colour and hockey is the game. The excitement is overwhelming as the emotions are charged. We are hoping, and in some cases even praying, that we will go all the way.

Our beloved Jets are now in round two of the Stanley Cup playoffs. We have incredible players who will do us proud, I am sure.

However, as much as I love the players, I am inspired by the fans. The people of Winnipeg are passionate, and they support their team. All we need to do is google search “Winnipeg whiteout” and we will better understand why Winnipeg hockey fans are the best in the world.

I would like to invite all hockey fans in Canada to get behind the Winnipeg Jets, and maybe even wear some white. Let us get behind our last Canadian team left in the NHL playoffs and cheer, go Jets go.

* * *

CRANBROOK FARMER'S MARKET

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise today to recognize the Cranbrook Farmer's Market in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia, which earlier this month was named Non-Profit of the Year at the local chamber of commerce's annual Business Excellence Awards.

Oral Questions

Now in its 10th season, the Cranbrook Farmer's Market has a mission to host a vibrant market event for local food growers, artisans, and their customers. Its indoor and outdoor markets make it the place to be on a Saturday in Cranbrook.

I congratulate Livia Lara and her team for this achievement. It is well-deserved.

Food matters, from farm to factory to fork. I am proud that my private member's bill, Bill C-281, which will designate the Friday before Thanksgiving of each year as national local food day, will have its first hour of debate next Tuesday. I urge all members of Parliament to support a national local food day and to celebrate the diversity of what local food means to each of them and to all Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

* * *

• (1115)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, my constituents are outraged. Many are highly skilled, highly talented, highly educated, unemployed energy workers.

Last week, they saw reports of the Prime Minister speaking in Paris and talking about phasing out the oil sands. That does not give them much hope. Of course, that was not the first time he said that.

This week my constituents learned that the government was using our hard-earned taxpayer dollars to provide summer jobs, not for students who do good work with seniors and others who are less fortunate in the community, but to protest against the Trans Mountain pipeline.

A number of students in my riding did not get summer jobs this year because faith groups would not sign on to the Liberal government's values test. Meanwhile, radical environmental groups are receiving funding so they can protest against a project that the government allegedly supports.

It is time for the government to quit supporting radicals who break the law and go back to supporting actual students who work for good jobs in the community.

* * *

[Translation]

DAFFODIL MONTH

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, for years now, the Canadian Cancer Society, Canadian communities, and the government have had public policies in place aimed at making cancer history and improving the lives of people living with this terrible disease.

During Daffodil Month, we wear a daffodil as a symbol of strength and courage in the fight against cancer.

[English]

Yesterday, the all-party women's caucus heard from a remarkable, courageous, and brilliant 12-year-old cancer survivor, Helena Kirk. When Helena was three, she was diagnosed with leukemia. After

181 days of chemotherapy and 650 procedures, Helena has overcome cancer, but not all her friends are as fortunate.

This brave, articulate young woman is speaking out to ask for more resources so children can access life-saving treatments regardless of where they live or their income. Using #HelenasHope, I encourage all members to support her in her dream to end childhood cancer.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, try as they might, these Liberals cannot silence our efforts to expose the carbon tax cover-up.

The cover-up began when the government provided me with documents that had calculated how much the average family would have to pay in new taxes under this scheme. The only problem is that it covered up the numbers. Ever since, I have been asking the Liberals to tell the truth, end the carbon tax cover-up, and tell Canadians what this tax will cost them.

Will the Liberals do that today?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in 2015, Canadians made a choice. They chose a government that believed in climate change, that wanted to take action on climate change at the same time as growing our economy.

I will give the member some numbers. Does he know how much it costs right now in insurance claims? We are now at over \$1 billion in insurance claims, claims by Canadians in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, the high Arctic, and across the country. We are seeing extreme floods, droughts, and forest fires.

We know we need to take serious action on climate change. Putting a price on pollution makes sense.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the minister seems to be arguing that this tax is worth the cost. However, how can we possibly know that as parliamentarians if we do not know the cost? She would not even answer how many greenhouse gas tonnes would be reduced as a result of the tax. Therefore, we do not know the cost, we do not know the benefit, yet somehow we are supposed to do a cost benefit analysis.

Why will the minister not come clean, end the carbon tax cover-up, and tell us what this tax will cost the average Canadian?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as the member opposite well knows, there are four provinces where there is a price on pollution already.

Let us take the case of British Columbia. It put a price on pollution, at the same time reducing emissions and putting the money back in the pockets of British Columbians. This was a choice that government made.

Oral Questions

We know that climate change is real, that there is a real cost to Canadians, and that we need to take action. I wish the Conservatives would accept that and join us. Tackling climate change should not be a partisan issue.

• (1120)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, if this scheme were really about ending climate change, the minister would have been able to answer, when she was asked about a half dozen times in committee, how many tonnes of greenhouse gases this tax would reduce. She could not, because she knows, which she is not admitting, that this tax is about one simple thing: cold, hard cash.

How much will it cost?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have one question for opposition members. What would they do to tackle climate change? The answer, nothing. They do not understand that we need to take serious action to tackle climate change, that we are all in this together, and that we are now in the clean growth century. There is a \$30 trillion opportunity for clean solutions. That is why we are taking action to tackle climate change and grow our economy.

I am extremely proud that we have the fastest growing economy in the G7. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 40 years. We will do this while we tackle climate change.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, there are two things we know for sure about the Liberal carbon tax. First, companies that are creating jobs and wealth will have to pay \$50 a tonne by 2022. Second, this tax is going to take \$10 billion out of the Canadian economy, as reported by the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

However, there is one thing we do not know. This tax is going to raise costs for a lot of people, but exactly how much will it cost each and every Canadian?

The government has this information. Why is it hiding this information from Canadians?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the opposition member is from Quebec. Maybe he could ask the Quebec government, which already has carbon pricing and has reduced emissions.

I was in Paris with the Prime Minister. There was a Clean Tech mission with companies from across Quebec that are developing clean solutions, creating jobs, and growing our economy.

We are going to fight climate change and grow our economy. I hope the party opposite will join us.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, of course I know Quebec's history. That is understandable since I am from there.

The Quebec National Assembly voted on that decision. It was not imposed by the Liberal government, like it is doing now. That is the difference.

There is one more thing. We want a very simple and specific number that the government has, but is hiding from Canadians.

How much will the Liberal carbon tax cost Canadians?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased that Quebec decided to do the right thing by putting a price on pollution. It made that decision on its own. It decided what to do with that revenue. It invested in electric vehicles and clean technology, and it helped to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

The party opposite does not have a plan to address climate change or stimulate the economy. We know how to do both and we are going to continue to do so.

* * *

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Madam Speaker, the number of irregular border crossings is quickly rising, but the government still does not seem to have a plan to address the needs of asylum seekers, border communities, and the organizations working to respond to this growing situation. For over a year, we have been calling for the suspension of the safe third country agreement to better protect the safety and security of both Canadians and asylum seekers by accepting claims at official border crossings. Will the government finally, after over a year, listen and present us with a real plan?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have invested in the Immigration and Refugee Board to make sure that asylum claims are processed faster. That is good for asylum seekers. It is good for provinces, and it is good for Canada, because the faster asylum seekers get decisions on their claims, the faster they can move on with their lives.

With respect to investments in the border ports of entry, I would point the member opposite to the UNHCR head, who said that Canada has adapted very well to the congestion at the border ports of entry.

[Translation]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Madam Speaker, we need to listen to what people on the ground are saying. The Customs and Immigration Union is asking the government for more resources so that border services officers can do their jobs properly.

The occupancy rates of temporary lodging centres in Quebec rose from 69% to 74% since the beginning of the week. For weeks now, the Government of Quebec has been asking for more money to provide shelter for asylum seekers and deal with this situation.

When will the federal government listen and give the Government of Quebec what it is asking for?

Oral Questions

• (1125)

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canada is an open and welcoming country to those in need of protection, but our government is committed to orderly migration.

[English]

We are working very closely with the Province of Quebec to address the real pressures Quebec is facing with respect to the increased number of asylum seekers going through Quebec. We have invested \$112 million more in settlement and integration in Quebec, and we have given Quebec an extra \$82 million as part of the Canada social transfer.

* * *

[Translation]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Madam Speaker, the ONE campaign challenged our feminist Prime Minister yesterday. In its video, it criticizes the fact that the Prime Minister keeps repeating that he is a feminist when, in fact, that is nothing but empty rhetoric. Rhetoric does absolutely nothing to tackle violence against women or lift women out of poverty.

What does this government plan to do to come up with a real feminist strategy?

[English]

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, Lib.): Madam Speaker, yesterday I attended the G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council, chaired by Melinda Gates. Feminist leaders from all over the world were praising Canada's record on gender equality. I would just remind the hon. member of budget 2018, where we made gender equality a priority. We have taken leadership to address the gender wage gap, and we have enhanced parental leave options. We are tackling gender-based violence and sexual harassment. We have introduced a new entrepreneurship strategy for women. We are doing good work, and there is much more work to do.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Madam Speaker, my question was about the ONE video. This question is going to be about the W7.

This morning, the W7 wrapped up its meetings here in Ottawa, and it will be presenting its recommendations to the Prime Minister next month. However, the W7 representatives are skeptical; they do not believe that the Prime Minister will act upon or even champion any of their recommendations. Therefore, I have a very simple question. Can the government confirm today that it will act upon those recommendations from the W7 summit, yes or no?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are making gender equality a key priority, because our government understands that we simply cannot move forward when half of us are held back. W7 delegates have an important responsibility to have their voices heard and to represent women globally. Women have been at the forefront of innovative solutions to some of the world's greatest challenges, and the W7 represents an opportunity for global leadership, which we are demonstrating.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, yesterday the B.C. NDP-Green coalition started a court reference to restrict the flow of oil through the province. The Prime Minister could have avoided this latest delay tactic by taking action sooner. The B.C. NDP always said it would kill it, but it took 10 months and a crisis for the Prime Minister to even meet with the B.C. premier about it.

The majority of British Columbians, Canadians, and all indigenous communities directly impacted by it support the expansion. Will the Liberals finally actually champion Trans Mountain by immediately applying for intervenor status?

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the TMX project, as we have said, is of vital strategic interest to Canada, and it will be built. Our government has initiated formal financial discussions with Kinder Morgan, the result of which will be to remove the uncertainty overhanging the project.

We are also actively pursuing legislative options that would assert and reinforce the federal jurisdiction in this matter, which we know we clearly have. Hundreds of thousands of hard-working Canadians depend on the project being built. Protecting our environment and growing the economy are not opposing values. On the contrary—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Lakeland.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals have not learned their lesson. They cannot wait on this. This crisis affects every single province in the country. The Liberals actively undermine Canada's energy sector and constantly attack Canada's track record of responsible energy development. They killed northern gateway and energy east, and they are paying for anti-energy activists to stop Trans Mountain. The world sees this crisis and uncertainty. Investors are leaving Canada.

Will the Prime Minister finally take action in the national interest of all of Canada and apply for intervenor status in the court challenge that is clearly designed to stop Trans Mountain?

Oral Questions

●(1130)

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let us talk about capital expenditures in the energy sector. By NRCan estimates, there are approximately 140 oil and gas projects under construction or planned in the next 10 years, worth an estimated \$400 billion in capital expenditures. When we consider the whole energy sector, including electricity, that number is nearly \$530 billion.

The energy sector has hundreds of projects and hundreds of billions of dollars in planned investment. The minerals and metal sector has planned projects worth tens of billions of dollars. Planned projects in the forestry sector are worth billions of dollars. The member opposite—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Edmonton West.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, the government claims it wants Trans Mountain built, and it claims it wants to help unemployed energy workers in Alberta, yet it funds a group that is committed to stopping all pipelines, especially Trans Mountain.

Do the Minister of Infrastructure and his colleague, the member for Edmonton Centre, support using taxpayers' dollars to fund protesters whose sole job is to stop the Trans Mountain pipeline?

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are the party that stands up for Canadians and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Surely the member opposite is not saying that the work done by the organization they reference is the same as the work being done by the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform. We will always respect Canadians' rights to free speech, reproductive rights, and the rights of LGBTQ2 Canadians, which are enshrined in the charter.

Let me assure the member opposite: The pipeline will be built.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals made a political decision to veto the northern gateway pipeline. They made last-minute changes to kill energy east. Eighty-seven billion dollars in investment has been driven out. Now they are funding professional protesters to kill the Kinder Morgan pipeline. Is this just the latest step in the Prime Minister's plan to phase out the Canadian energy sector?

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have been clear with Canadians. We will build this pipeline. We know that the environment and the economy go hand in hand, and that is the approach we are taking. Voicing opposition over an energy project is not comparable to the activities of organizations like the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform, which works to undermine charter rights.

On this side of the House, we will always stand up for charter rights.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, this week we confirmed what we always knew: The Liberals are opposed to building the Kinder Morgan pipeline. The Liberals' record is clear. They blocked northern gateway. They ran out the clock on energy east. Now they are actually funding protestors against the Kinder Morgan pipeline. Over \$80 billion has

been lost in the Canadian energy sector, along with all the jobs that go with it.

Will the Prime Minister admit that all his bluster is just a charade, and that his real plan is to phase out Alberta's energy sector?

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives had 10 years to build pipelines to ship Canada's resources to new global markets; they built zero. The Conservatives had 10 years to consult indigenous and local communities; they ignored them. The Conservatives had 10 years to rally the country around the need for new pipeline capacity to end the discounted and landlocked Canadian crude; they did not do that. The Conservatives had 10 years to address environmental concerns; they failed.

We will take no lessons from the Conservatives.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals are arrogantly ignoring Saskatchewan's successful emission reduction plan and are forcing a carbon tax on us without consultation or approval. Just this week, the Province of Saskatchewan announced a court challenge to stop the Liberal carbon tax and protect Saskatchewan's economy. This challenge is overwhelmingly supported by the people of my province.

Why do the Liberals insist on inflicting their "Ottawa knows best" scheme on our Saskatchewan families?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have had many conversations with the Premier of Saskatchewan. In fact, he was the former environment minister. I explained to him exactly why we need to put a price on pollution, because in Saskatchewan there are draughts impacting farmers. There are new technologies in Saskatchewan that are creating good jobs. We can still get our resources to market. We can protect the environment, and we can grow the economy.

The Government of Saskatchewan is well within its rights to determine how it wants to put a price on pollution and what it wants to do with the revenues. It can invest in innovation, or it can invest in putting money back in the pockets of Saskatchewanians.

Does the party opposite believe climate change—

●(1135)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. The hon. member for Sherbrooke.

*Oral Questions***TAXATION**

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, with the G7 summit just around the corner, Canada continues to lag behind the rest of the group, and the government still has no plan to force multinationals like Netflix to charge GST—

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member for Lakeland that somebody else has the floor, and she should ensure that she allows that person to speak.

The hon. member for Sherbrooke.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Madam Speaker, even a Liberal-dominated parliamentary committee has called for this. One of the only people in the entire world who is hesitant is the Prime Minister of Canada. That is unbelievable, more so because the issue is not that complicated. It is simply a matter of making the rules the same for everyone. Quebec realized this a long time ago, and Netflix announced that it will be charging QST.

Will the government finally wake up and force web giants to pay GST?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we know that taxing web giants is a very important issue, but it is also a very complex issue. Argentina's finance minister and his OECD colleagues recently committed to taking a collaborative approach to reviewing the rules with respect to web giants. Our goal, as a government, is not to take a piecemeal approach, but rather a cautious approach that ensures we have a fair system.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADA POST

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand announced that she would introduce a bill to reinstate postal banking services in all 30,000 post offices in the United States. Here in Canada, hundreds of municipalities and organizations support postal banking, because they know it is not only viable and profitable, but essential for smaller and remote communities abandoned by big banks. Because postal banking would also support local economic development, it is a real and positive step.

Will the government support Motion No. 166 and consider postal banking for Canada Post?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government has introduced a brand new vision for Canada Post. Unlike the old vision, it would serve us front and centre and fulfill its platform commitment. Part of that vision includes reinvesting profits in Canada Post services, innovations, and, of course, employees. We certainly encourage Canada Post to expand its partnerships for the benefit of Canadians. We have heard loud and clear from the Canada Post review that it is a cherished service, and we will continue reinvesting in Canada Post.

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister has no intention of fixing the gaping hole at the border in Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle. This explains why he and his government are working on settling people who cross the border illegally in different provinces. His plan is not very complicated. He hopes the provinces will manage the crisis so he does not have to.

Does the Prime Minister believe that our immigration laws should be obeyed?

Does he have the courage to enforce them, yes or no?

[*English*]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member opposite should not speak about courage and border security in the same sentence, because the Conservatives cut \$400 million from border security. They did not respond to refugees and asylum seekers when they were in power. They did not invest in processing immigration cases. Families and spouses and children had to wait in line for years under the previous government.

It is very rich for the member and that party to talk about border security and immigration processing when they left us with an abysmal record in both those categories.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would remind the minister that I was in the Canadian Armed Forces for 22 years, so I do not want to hear anything from him about courage.

The Prime Minister has suggested that Canada's treaties with the United Nations are preventing his government from enforcing our immigration laws. I would remind the Prime Minister that Canada has never relinquished its sovereignty to anyone. Canada has never abdicated its right and its responsibility to protect its borders.

Does the Prime Minister not realize that Canada has a Constitution, as well as immigration laws that he has a duty to enforce?

[*English*]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the party opposite has no credibility on this issue. We have invested \$117 million for more border security operations and we made a \$74 million investment in the Immigration and Refugee Board for faster processing of asylum claims. The party opposite has absolutely no credibility on this issue.

What have the Conservatives proposed? They have proposed turning the entire 9,000-kilometre border into an official port of entry without extra resources. They have even suggested that we commandeer a barn at a port of entry. They are not serious.

Oral Questions

• (1140)

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, every day I hear from individuals in my riding who are trying to immigrate to Canada legally through the proper channels. These cases can take years.

Last week I visited an English as a second school in Owen Sound and heard first-hand from many of them how long the process can be. They are frustrated to see the Liberals allowing individuals to cross the Canada-U.S. border illegally.

Could the minister please tell me how it is fair for those who cross the border illegally to get priority processing, while those who follow the rules have to wait and wait?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member opposite is a classic example of that party's efforts to pit one group of immigrants against another. That is exactly what the Conservatives are doing.

The member opposite knows full well that refugees and asylum seekers are processed by the Immigration and Refugee Board, while other immigrants and resettled refugees, as well as family class immigrants, go through the regular immigration stream. To pit those two groups against each other is irresponsible and inflammatory, and that is precisely what they are doing.

Even when it comes to immigration processing—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister has made a mess of the immigration system. The number of people crossing our border illegally has reached critical levels, and the Liberals have no plan. The fact is that it is the Prime Minister who has created this mess. Because of what he said, more people are crossing the border every day, and those who are trying to enter Canada in the right and legal way keep getting forced further and further back in the line.

Why is the Prime Minister showing contempt for good people who want to just follow the rules?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives showed contempt for legitimate immigrants. Live-in caregivers provide a valuable service to Canadians. How long did they have to wait in line to rejoin their families under that party? It was five years. Spouses had to wait almost three years under that party.

The Conservatives have no credibility on this issue. We have increased and improved processing for legitimate claimants and we have also invested in border security operations and the Immigration and Refugee Board.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, B.C. coastal communities are very concerned with the foregone conclusion made on Kinder Morgan. The government says it consulted first nations on the expansion project, but we now know it was being completely disingenuous. Internal documents show senior political staff were directed to

conjure up legal arguments for the pipeline expansion. Meanwhile, the Liberals were promising first nations that no decision had yet been made.

Will the minister now come clean and table all internal relevant documents relating to their predetermined Kinder Morgan decision?

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this review was the most exhaustive in the history of pipelines in Canada. What we actually did were additional steps that made the process more rigorous. In fact, we extended the consultation process to ensure that we were meeting and exceeding our responsibility to consult with indigenous peoples. That is something, of course, that the Conservatives failed to do.

Our ministerial panel heard from 650 Canadians at 44 public meetings in Alberta and B.C., with 24 hours of consultation in Burnaby South alone. This project will be built.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Madam Speaker, even after UNESCO has threatened to add the Wood Buffalo National Park to the list of world heritage sites in danger, the government has failed to require environmental assessments for all proposed developments within our national parks. This week, Melody Lepine of the Mikisew Cree told the environment committee that even though industrial activities are putting a national park at huge risk, there may never be another federal assessment as Bill C-69 is currently drafted.

Will the government commit to ensuring environmental assessments for all developments as a part of protecting Canada's national parks in the future?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for his long advocacy for parks in protected areas. We are absolutely committed to ensuring that the ecological integrity of our parks is a top priority. I am looking forward to announcing soon the findings of the minister's round table, wherein this is emphasized.

In terms of Bill C-69, we understand that the environment and the economy go together and that we have to rebuild trust in environmental assessments. That is exactly what we are doing.

Oral Questions

●(1145)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Kildonan—St. Paul, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are immense social and economic gaps in indigenous communities. Indigenous peoples face challenges in accessing quality and culturally appropriate health services close to home.

Aside from the investments made in the recent budget to improve health indicators in indigenous communities, can the hon. Minister of Indigenous Services please share the work under way to ensure that indigenous communities have the care they need when they need it?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am grateful for the question from the hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul. I believe that all members of this House are pressed with the urgent need to address health outcome gaps that exist between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians.

The member may know Jordan's principle. Up until our government came into office, there were no cases approved, but since we came into office, there have now been over 70,000 requests approved under Jordan's principle.

I believe the member may also be aware of the fact that we recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Niagara West.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Madam Speaker, our farmers want the Liberals to close the TPP deal without delay. Canada's trading partners are already taking action, and Mexico already has. The longer Canada waits, the more farmers lose out on our first mover advantage in key markets.

The Prime Minister has not given any timeline on ratification. When will the Liberals finally table legislation to implement this agreement so that we can get quality Canadian exports to market?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Niagara West. I have enormous respect for him, and he is a great member of the committee. I thank the member for his question, because we are very much interested in expeditiously bringing the CPTPP to ratification.

I urge all members in this chamber to work with us to do that, because we have entrepreneurs, we have farmers, we have fishers in each and every one of our ridings in Canada who will benefit from the larger market. We are taking about 500 million consumers, or 14% of the world economy.

Let us work together to make that a reality for people in Canada.
[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, grain, beef, and pork producers are all urging the government to ratify the comprehensive and progressive agreement for trans-Pacific partnership.

Canada must be among the first six countries to ratify the agreement if it is to benefit from a market of 500 million people. The early bird gets the worm, as they say. The TPP was signed two months ago, but since then the Liberals have announced nothing about implementing the agreement.

Will the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food finally get a move on this, get his colleagues on board, and ratify the TPP as soon as possible?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his newfound interest in international trade.

I can assure him that we will be actively seeking to implement the TPP. We know this. I appreciate his passion. I know there are people in his riding who are waiting for this agreement, which is good for every riding in this country. We will work with my colleague to make this agreement a reality for Canadians in every single riding.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, taxpayers now report that the Liberals are withholding benefit payments to seniors and applying them to taxes owing before the April 30 deadline.

The revenue minister has attacked diabetics, single moms and dads, and employee lunches, and now she is targeting seniors. These seniors were just following the rules, and the Liberals are now treating them like cheaters before the taxes are even due.

Will the Liberals stop attacking vulnerable Canadians?

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, improving services at the CRA is our top priority. That is why we are making it easier this year for Canadians who file their returns by paper, by sending the necessary forms directly to their homes.

We are also launching “file my return”, an automated telephone service that allows eligible Canadians to file their taxes by answering a series of simple questions.

I encourage all Canadians to file their tax returns on time, by April 30, to make sure they have access to all the credits and benefits to which they are entitled.

●(1150)

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary is encouraging Canadians to file on time, yet when they do so, the government is clawing back needed benefits from seniors. These are benefits that they rely on.

The Minister of National Revenue seems to relish the opportunity to make life harder for Canadians who are already struggling to get by.

Oral Questions

Will the minister finally call off her tax collectors and give Canadian seniors the respect they deserve?

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are wholeheartedly committed to ensuring that eligible Canadians receive the benefits and credits to which they are entitled.

The community volunteer income tax program is an important way for volunteers to help people in their communities access benefits, such as the Canada child benefit.

Last year over 2,800 community organizations and approximately 17,000 volunteers filed over 768,000 tax returns for eligible Canadians. The funding in budget 2018 will allow agencies to better support and promote the CVIT program, leading to ensuring that we help even more Canadians.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, nine years ago, five Nuu-chah-nulth first nations reconfirmed in court that they have the aboriginal right to catch and sell fish.

The court recognition was supposed to protect their rights. Instead of working with the Nuu-chah-nulth to implement this right, the government spent \$19 million fighting them in court. Finally, just last week, the court said Canada has not acted according to its obligations.

Now that the courts have recognized their rights, will the government start respecting and acknowledging these rights through meaningful negotiations?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government fully supports reconciliation and cares deeply about a renewed relationship with our indigenous partners.

In fact, the minister and I just visited the leadership of the five first nations in their territory just a few weeks ago. We were pleased to offer additional licences and quota for groundfish, salmon, and shellfish.

The Nuu-chah-nulth court decision will inform the broader process, which seeks to provide stability and predictability around the management of fisheries and oceans resources. I thank the member for raising this very important question today.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRIFOOD

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, I represent an agrifood technopole, and agricultural producers are worried about the threats to our supply management system.

Supply management is a pillar of economic development in Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot. For the Liberals to simply claim that a Liberal government created the system is not enough; we need assurances that supply management will be preserved in its entirety. As we have seen, it has been undermined in recent trade agreements. Tonnes of

European cheese has been flooding in at the expense of local producers.

Will the government guarantee that supply management will be kept off the table in its negotiations with other countries?

[*English*]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's question and concern. We do support supply management, and we support the dairy industry by implementing a program to make sure that the dairy industry remains on the cutting edge, with \$250 million going to the producers and \$100 million going to the processors.

We have and will continue to make sure the supply management system remains strong in this country.

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FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, this morning the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard blew off concerns from lobster fishermen in Atlantic Canada.

According to the minister, his actions represent “an inconvenience” and the fishers should just go elsewhere. He went on to add that he was just protecting them from themselves. I guess Liberals always know best.

The minister went on to say that the fishermen have to be careful not to end up vandalizing their own industry. Really?

When will his Liberal colleagues from the east coast stand up for the fishers and help educate this arrogant and smug minister?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to taking all necessary actions to help prevent North Atlantic right whales from future harm.

The majority of management measures announced for this year's southern Gulf lobster fishery are identical to those announced for the snow crab fishery. The department will continue to work with industry to develop appropriate systems for lobster rope and buoys for future years. The measures take into account the best available science and input from stakeholders, including industry, fishers, and indigenous people.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, lobster fishermen in Atlantic Canada were blindsided by a decision to close off the Acadian peninsula near their homes despite having no evidence that lobster fishers endanger marine wildlife in the area. The local knowledge of Atlantic fishers is being ignored by the fisheries minister. Lobster season is set to open in three days, and we have not heard a thing from Liberal Atlantic MPs.

Why will Atlantic Liberal MPs not stand up to the Minister of Fisheries and defend the interests of their region?

Oral Questions

•(1155)

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member knows full well that all decisions made by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans are based on the best science. We consult fully with indigenous peoples and local fishermen. We take into account not just traditional knowledge but local knowledge in every decision we make. We work hard with all members of the Atlantic caucus to make sure that opportunities are provided to every single area, and we protect the economies of local communities.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, that is why the Liberals are facing so much backlash today on every “consultation” they do.

There is a common theme with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and that is the lack of concern and understanding for the hard-working families in coastal communities. He has arbitrarily shut down the New Brunswick lobster fishery a week before opening the season, and he has awarded a lucrative surf clam quota to his Liberal friends and family. He is killing jobs on the Rock and jeopardizing jobs in his own province.

Why are the Liberal MPs from Atlantic Canada not standing up to this minister?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, since I just gave two answers about the lobster decision, I think we should talk about the Arctic surf clam.

The member opposite knows full well that if we go back in time to three years ago, the previous government went through a process that was exactly the same as what is going on now, except for the fact that the Conservatives forgot to include indigenous people. We are proud that our robust process included indigenous people and that we selected the best proposal to benefit the most Atlantic Canadians, including indigenous people from five provinces.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George was afforded the opportunity to provide his question without interruption, and I would recommend that he do the same when he gets his answer when someone else has the floor.

The hon. member for Mississauga—Lakeshore.

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[*Translation*]**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the children of military families that make that most unique of sacrifices. Indeed, April is the month of the military child.

According to the Vanier Institute of the Family, 75% of military couples have children. There are currently 500,000 children of military members or veterans in Canada.

Would the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence tell the House how the government is fulfilling its responsibilities to these military families, who make a tremendous contribution to the Canadian Armed Forces?

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): I thank the member for Mississauga—Lakeshore for his question, Madam Speaker, and for his work on the Standing Committee on National Defence.

The Canadian Armed Forces' most valuable resources are their staff and families. Our government is committed to improving support for military families, for example through new investments of \$6 million a year in military family resource centres.

In so doing, we acknowledge how important it is to make services available to military children across the country so that we can contribute to their present and future success.

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[*English*]**JUSTICE**

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, hard drugs like heroin, cocaine, crack, and crystal meth tear families apart, lead to criminal behaviour, and destroy lives. Will the justice minister commit that the Liberal government will not decriminalize hard drugs?

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government recognizes that we are in a national public health crisis, and our government is deeply concerned about the tragic events happening across the country as a result of opioid deaths. We have taken very significant steps, including significant investments and additional measures, to help address the opioid crisis.

We have been equally clear that our government is in the process of legalizing and strictly regulating cannabis to do a better job of protecting our children and to fight organized crime, but we are not decriminalizing or legalizing any other drug.

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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Madam Speaker, by any measure, Canada is one of the world's most charitable countries. In 2016, we ranked fourth in the World Giving Index, and last year, more than 80% of Canadians aged 15 or older donated their time or money to a charitable or non-profit organization. Could the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development please tell the House how this government is recognizing our country's giving spirit?

•(1200)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canadians are truly a giving people, and I would like to thank the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour for making that very clear. Canada's volunteer awards are there to recognize the important contributions volunteers make from coast to coast to coast. I am very pleased to announce that nominations for these awards are now open. I would therefore like to invite all members in this House to share that good news and to keep encouraging our hard-working volunteers, who make it possible for this country to be the best country on earth to live in.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary just said that the government will not legalize hard drugs. I hope this is true. However, if they will never legalize these drugs, does the Liberal Party's Minister of Justice have a specific plan to prove that it will not legalize crack, heroin, or any type of hard drugs?

[English]

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me be very clear here. We recognize that while decriminalization would not ensure quality control of drugs, we have taken very significant steps to make it easier for health professionals to provide access to opioid substitution therapy, and we have made significant investments to continue to develop innovative approaches.

As I have stated, this government has no plans to legalize or decriminalize any other drug, but we are not afraid to look at evidence and to continue to examine and conduct research on these issues to address the national public health crisis that currently confronts our country. We will continue to work for the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Repentigny.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, GPQ): Madam Speaker, the Montreal metropolitan area represents 4 million people and has unanimously condemned the Chalk River nuclear waste dump plan. The community is rightly concerned about potential contamination of the Ottawa River. Supporters of the waste dump and the government defend the plan by hiding behind technical rhetoric, but they are forgetting about the most important thing.

Why does the government not step up and argue that it clearly makes no sense to have a nuclear waste dump along the largest river in Quebec?

[English]

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government is dedicated to ensuring that safe solutions are in place for managing radioactive waste. Under the federal policy framework, waste owners are responsible, in accordance with the polluter pays principle, for the funding, organization, management, and operation of disposal and other facilities required for their waste. Environmental assessments include several opportunities for the public, indigenous peoples, and interested parties to provide input and to submit comments, up to and including a public hearing.

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Michel Boudrias (Terrebonne, GPQ): Madam Speaker, in January, the government started negotiations with Davie on a contract for four icebreakers. This was the absolute minimum to make up for the job losses caused by this Liberal government, as I have said.

Three months later, the only thing that has happened is that more jobs have been lost. So far, 900 jobs have been lost, and hundreds of these employees are currently losing their unemployment benefits.

What is the government waiting for? Is it waiting for Quebec to lose all its skilled workers in this leader of industry in the province?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague opposite that Davie is a major shipyard. We recognize that Davie workers are highly skilled.

We are indeed negotiating with representatives of this company. We are determined to ensure there will be icebreaking services for our country, the St. Lawrence River, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. These negotiations will not happen in public, but I assure the member that they are happening.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, GPQ): Madam Speaker, the negotiations are not progressing very quickly.

Donald Trump's tariffs on our aluminum are harming Quebec's industry and the 10,000 jobs in the province. However, when I met with elected representatives from Congress and leading industry representatives in Washington, they all seemed to be against these tariffs. Even the U.S. Department of Commerce is saying that free access to our aluminum is of strategic importance. Nevertheless, we may be hit with these tariffs as of Tuesday.

Can the government assure us that our aluminum will be permanently exempt from tariffs before May 1?

● (1205)

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Madam Speaker, workers and industries in Quebec and Canada deserve fair rules and stakes. Yesterday, we announced new measures to prevent the transshipment and dumping of unfairly cheap foreign steel and aluminum in North America. That includes over \$30 million more in funding for enforcing trade law and new powers for the Canada Border Services Agency. We will always stand up for Canadian steel and aluminum workers.

*Government Orders***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[English]***PETITIONS**

FOOD SECURITY

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased today to be presenting a petition that was started by one of my constituents, Kit Moore. He has done incredible work raising awareness about the need for greater food security, particularly for youth, and a need for a food policy to address this. In particular, he flags that in a 2017 UNICEF report card, Canada ranked 37th out of 41 wealthy countries on the issue of food security.

I really would like to commend him on his hard work, and I look forward to the government response.

VETERANS

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions today. The first is from a number of Canadians who wish to draw the attention of this House to the fact that there used to be a Canadian Volunteer Service Medal. It was presented to Canadians who served voluntarily in the Canadian Forces. This honourable and noteworthy acknowledgement of volunteerism by our veterans and troops stopped abruptly in March of 1947.

Veterans Affairs Canada considers any former member of the Canadian Armed Forces who releases with an honourable discharge a veteran. Therefore, the petitioners are asking the Government of Canada to recognize, by means of the creation and issuance of a new Canadian military volunteer service medal, to be designated the Canadian Military Volunteer Service Medal, those who have volunteered for service in the regular forces, reserve forces, and the cadet corps, as a way of showing our appreciation to those who have served.

BANKING SERVICES

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, the second petition is in regard to postal banking. Nearly two million Canadians desperately need an alternative to payday loan lenders. These are people who are crippling the poor and marginalized with usurious interest rates.

There are 3,800 Canada Post outlets that already exist in rural and remote areas where there are no banks or credit unions. Canada Post already has the infrastructure and the ability to bring forward postal banking. These petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to enact my motion, Motion No. 166, to create a committee to study and propose a plan so we can indeed have postal banking for Canadians in all communities.

GATINEAU PARK

Hon. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I rise today to table a second petition regarding Gatineau Park. The petition was organized by CPAWS, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, and was signed by many local residents. I am pleased to table this petition, and I look forward to the government's response.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise again to table a petition on behalf of constituents of Courtenay—Alberni from Ahousaht, Port Alberni, Tofino, and Courtenay. They are calling on the government to work with the provinces, municipalities, and indigenous communities to finally develop a national strategy to combat plastic pollution, which is an urgent issue in our region around aquatic environments. It would include the following measures: regulations aimed at reducing plastic debris discharged from stormwater outfalls; industrial use of microplastics, including and not limited to microbeads, nurdles, fibrous microplastics, and fragments; consumer and industrial use of single-use plastics, including but not limited to plastic bags, bottles, straws, tableware, polystyrene, which is a huge issue, cigarette filters, and beverage containers; and a permanent, dedicated annual fund for community-led projects to clean up plastics and debris on our shores, banks, beaches, and other aquatic peripheries, education and outreach campaigns on the root causes and negative environmental effects of plastic pollution in and around all bodies of water, and cleaning up derelict fishing gear.

Furthermore, they are calling on the Government of Canada to adopt my motion, Motion No. 151, to establish a national strategy to combat plastic pollution.

* * *

● (1210)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[Translation]*

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill S-5, An Act to amend the Tobacco Act and the Non-smokers' Health Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, to conclude my speech I will recap what I said before question period.

In a bill like Bill S-5, it is important to strike a balance between protecting non-smokers and helping smokers to quit smoking. It is important to develop prevention tools and invest in preventing people from smoking in the first place. If a person starts smoking, then one day they will want to quit, and we know how hard that can be. We have to invest in prevention to ensure that we have everything we need to make people aware of the risks of using tobacco.

Government Orders

I also mentioned the importance of targeting groups that are more likely to smoke. Again, 40% of first nations people smoke, as do 37% of people who are divorced or separated. Young people are also a target group. Often people start smoking when they are teenagers. I would add that troubled youth are particularly targeted. What is more, people with mental health issues, whether it be a minor depression or a more serious problem, represent 20% of the Canadian public who will be affected at some point, and some statistics point to an even higher rate.

Therefore, it is important to focus on these groups and to help the organizations that support these people in particular. We should help organizations such as Satellite, in Saint-Hyacinthe, and Horizon Soleil, in Acton Vale, which work on prevention with elementary school children, their parents, and teachers so that they know how to handle a situation where they might start consuming. Earlier, I spoke about Maison l'Alcôve, a well-regarded organization that does excellent work when it comes to treating all addictions. It treats its clients in the enchanting surroundings of an old monastery, which is ideal for treating addictions.

I am also thinking of several organizations that are affected. I was the long-time director of a community housing organization, Auberge du coeur Le Baluchon. We provided housing for troubled youth, and most of them were users and also smokers. They were only allowed to smoke outside the house, and so the balcony became their meeting place. This organization's mission is not to help prevent smoking, but that is still a concern.

I am also thinking of all the mental health organizations. I worked for the Contact Richelieu-Yamaska crisis centre, where most of the people with mental health issues were also smokers. Then there is MADH, Maison alternative de développement humain, and Centre psychosocial Richelieu-Yamaska, which do the same kind of work.

As the federal government we are responsible for providing the funding to promote healthy living to Canadians. Whether we are talking about nutrition or physical exercise, a healthy lifestyle can help prevent people from smoking, which is the purpose of Bill S-5.

•(1215)

[*English*]

Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am proud of our government's proactive role with respect to nicotine addiction and vaping. The member spent some time talking about prevention, which is extremely important. I wonder if the member could expand upon the role other levels of government can play with respect to prevention. Is there a role for the municipal and provincial levels to play? How does the member see that?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

That is true in many areas. I got into federal politics because of the six years I worked as a city councillor. I have been a member of the NDP for 10 years. What brought me in was the NDP's core value of working together.

All levels of government must work together to combat smoking and vaping. The provincial and territorial governments have an

important role to play in health. They must invest in prevention. Public health organizations in every province are important in the work to prevent smoking and the fight against tobacco. At the municipal level, rules must be enforced, such as those regarding places where smoking is permitted or prohibited. That is important. Every level of government must work together toward the goal of a society that is smoke free and a better place to live.

[*English*]

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Madam Speaker, the hon. member's speeches are always well researched, well organized, and very well delivered.

Back in 1974, I lived in Winnipeg, and I wrote a letter to the *Winnipeg Free Press* requesting that cigarette smoking be banned in all bars and restaurants in Manitoba, and hopefully in Canada. We finally got there with cigarette smoking. Does the member believe that where currently cigarette smoking is banned, the smoking of electronic cigarettes or vaping should also be banned and that when it comes to the legalization of the recreational use of marijuana, it should also be banned in any areas where smoking is currently banned?

•(1220)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

In my speech, I said that the NDP has been involved in the fight against smoking for a long time. My colleague backed that up by saying that we have been taking action on this issue for over 40 years.

If we want to promote healthy lifestyles, the same strict rules must be applied to the use of all these products.

As I said in my speech, vaping must not be seen as a safe alternative to smoking. We must therefore have the same strict rules in place for vaping or the use of any other such products.

The rules we have established for tobacco must be applied to the use of other products as well, whether it is vaping or marijuana. It is important that the government show leadership to set the tone for and support other levels of government in enforcing all these rules.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think it is worthy of noting, as we see the industry growing, that there is always concern in terms of the impact it might have on young people. It is one of the reasons government needs to be involved.

Often we do not give enough credit to young people nowadays, in particular when we look at our high schools. I think of high schools in my own riding, such as Sisler, Maples, Children of the Earth, R.B. Russell, and St. John's. They are high schools that have fantastic youth education programs, such as on drinking and driving, and in the past, on smoking. One of the things we need to do is support youth in their initiatives to ensure that there is education among young people.

Government Orders

I wonder if my colleague would provide her thoughts on how important it is that our young people continue to play a role in healthy living.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I spent a couple of decades working closely with high schools in my region, so I know how important it is to support prevention programs in our schools. In my riding, Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, an organization called Jeunes en santé is doing amazing work in youth health promotion. It is helping schools and organizations teach healthy life habits. Unfortunately, funding for organizations like Jeunes en santé tends to be precarious. We have to support organizations that work on the front lines.

My colleague mentioned stakeholders. Stakeholders played a major role in drafting Bill S-5, which will soon become law; they indicated what kind of amendments were needed. They were the ones who insisted that social media advertising targeting young people should be prohibited. The federal government must ensure that our laws protect people who are targeted and who are more likely to start using tobacco. We have to listen to front-line stakeholders. In my speech, I mentioned organizations such as the Coalition québécoise pour le contrôle du tabac, Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada, the Canadian Medical Association, and the Canadian Public Health Association. Every one of those organizations is prepared to show us the way and tell us what needs to be done.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague has done a little more research on this and so I would like to ask her the following question. Last week, a tobacco company representative whose name I shall not mention appeared before a parliamentary committee. Although we were discussing another matter, he decided to lecture us about plain packaging. He said it makes no difference because every pack of cigars or cigarettes is already out of sight in convenience stores and other points of sale.

How would the member respond to that argument? It seems somewhat naive to think that just because they are out of sight, school children do not talk about or see these packages that youth might find attractive. This argument put forward by representatives of the tobacco industry seems rather naive. It could even be argued that they are being willfully blind.

• (1225)

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I think the tobacco companies will continue to react to what we want to do to curb their sales. I would answer that, yes, the packs are hidden; at least, they are when you buy them. After working with young people for nearly 20 years, I can say that once they purchase a pack, they have it on them. I do believe that plain packaging and packaging with prevention messages does send them a message. Then, on a daily basis or every time they have a pack in their hands, they see the message that the product it is harmful to their health. Plain packaging sends the message that what they have in their hands is not appealing and not good for them. I think plain packaging is crucial, which is why Bill S-5 talks about it. I think every tool we can use to help people quit smoking is crucial. We need to use all of these tools combined if we want to tackle smoking.

[*English*]

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am always very happy to stand in the House to represent the people of my riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook. I describe the riding as a half-circle around the two big cities of Halifax and Dartmouth.

The riding has a very large population of veterans and military members. I am extremely proud to represent those individuals. Those veterans and military members make up 23% of the population, which is the highest in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia has the highest number of veterans and military members per capita in the country. Members can well understand why I am very proud to represent those individuals.

There is also a very large number of seniors in the riding. When I visit the various seniors groups, the work they do is quite impressive. Not only do they do all kinds of great things when it comes to volunteering, but they also have all kinds of events and activities taking place daily in their communities to support seniors. That is important.

There are fishing communities, like Eastern Passage. There are urban and rural communities. There is a good mix in my riding. I always want to underline those key issues and concerns.

I am pleased to speak to Bill S-5, a very important bill that came through the Senate. The bill would amend the Tobacco Act and the Non-smokers' Health Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

It is important to note that we have done some really good work on prevention when it comes to tobacco. In the last number of years, we have seen a decrease in the numbers of smokers in Canada, from 22% to 13%. That is because of the various strategies we have used, including the markings and packaging, which I will talk about as well. However, we need to go further.

When we start to talk about vaping products, I have to be honest I do not have a lot of experience in this area. I have asked myself questions on many occasions, when driving or walking down the street and I see people using these vaping products. I have asked myself if these products include nicotine or tobacco. Sometimes I smell an odour like when someone is smoking a pipe. This allowed me to a little research to learn more about this product.

This bill focuses on two major areas. The first is a new framework for unregulated products. As I have said, the product is out there, but there are no regulation on it. We need to put some regulations on that.

The other aspect of the bill that I want to speak to is the plain packaging, because that is crucial. I believe we are heading in the right direction. When I hear “plain packaging”, I think about branding. So many things in the country and in the world if branded and marketed the right way will influence people to purchase it or try it.

Government Orders

Branding is so important. I think about James Curleigh who spoke last week about Levi's and the main strategies used to brand a product and make people want to purchase and use that product. That is why plain packaging is crucial. We have to take away the influence branding has. That is extremely important.

I believe we are the 10th country looking at changing branding and moving to plain packaging.

• (1230)

When we say "plain packaging", the colour is gone, which is good. It is not as attractive. Perhaps the shape has changed and that may stop people from purchasing and using the product. It is not as flashy, but we can still put the necessary warnings on the packaging to show the other products it may contain.

The consultation that took place on the bill allowed 58,000 Canadians to speak about packaging, how they felt about plain packaging, and if they believed this was what we should be doing. A large majority of people supported it. I am extremely happy about that. I just shared with the members what branding and marketing could do. Therefore, if we take that away, we reverse the table on it, and we then head in the right direction. However, the consultation was crucial.

The next step is to put a committee together to work on setting the rules and regulations. Once that is set, then we will go back out and consult again. It is important to ensure we are in partnership as we move forward on this important bill.

I will now touch on vaping products. Again, my experience is limited in this area, but vaping has been going on for eight or nine years. As members know, once a new product comes online and the industry gets involved, it will continue to find ways to make the product more attractive, different, and we will see all kinds of versions out there.

This is where we need to ensure we are regulating, and there are two areas we will look at to do this. The product could fall under the Food and Drugs Act, which would mean for therapeutic use only. If it does not meet the therapeutic criteria, it would automatically fall under the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act. Therefore, we have two areas where it could be regulated.

• (1235)

[*Translation*]

The objective here is to ensure that young people do not have access to this product. We will set the limit at 18 years. The other reason we want to act on this vaping product is that adults already use e-cigarettes. I agree that information is still unclear and we do not have all the scientific evidence, but some facts clearly show that this product is much less harmful than cigarettes themselves. As a result, this strategy to establish regulations may allow people who smoke to use this product, and then to eliminate this type of product entirely. This is another strategy.

The other thing we need to really look at is the whole issue of public health. We know how much money we spend on health. Provincial governments and the federal government spend a lot of money on health. There are waiting lists for our hospitals. This is

very important. If this can help reduce the pressure on our public health system, we should consider it as another success.

[*English*]

Let us look at some of the key provisions in the bill. The first, as I mentioned, is the age limit of 18 years or older, which is an important factor.

The second one is what we call machine dispensers. We have come a long way with machine dispensers. I do not remember, but some people who are older than I am have told me that they existed for beer at one time, way back when. We could get beer the same way we get pop. That was available. Then we had them for cigarettes, of course, but we will make sure that they are not permitted for vaping products as well. We are starting in a much further area or space than we did with other products that were also very damaging.

Other provisions have to do with mailing and delivery if people order online. We know that ordering online is a big thing now. I know my kids order a lot of things online. It has become another method for people to purchase products without having to wander around in malls and spend their day in different shops.

That is one way of purchasing a product, but when products are sent and delivered, it will be crucial to ensure that the person who is receiving the product at the delivery point is older than 18 years. Therefore, when people are purchasing, they may have to have a Visa in their name. I do not have all of the specifics, but when it is being delivered to the homes of people, we must make sure that the person who is receiving the product is over 18 years old. That is crucial.

Another restriction is with respect to promotion. When it is being promoted, companies would be able to use some promotion strategies because the risk is less. However, there are some limitations in that area as well that are crucial.

Another area that is also important is prohibiting flavours that are attractive to kids, such as candy flavours, and I would like to share something that speaks to that. While we do not propose to limit the flavouring ingredients that may be added, we do not want to see those flavours identified or promoted as things that are appealing to kids. It will not be permissible to offer e-juice, cotton candy, popcorn, candy cane, or other flavours that appeal to kids.

As we can see, those are some of the strategies that the industry could come forward with that could cause great problems.

With respect to the second category and the Consumer Product Safety Act, of course vaping products that do not have therapeutic claims would fall under this category and all of the regulations that come with it for tobacco, etc. It will also require the industry, if there are any malfunctions, fires, or explosions associated with the product itself, to report them to Health Canada so that Health Canada can also recall the product.

Government Orders

As members can see, we are definitely heading in the right direction. This is much better than what was out there, because there were no controls. These regulations will help us.

In conclusion, together these measures will help protect the health and safety of all Canadians, including the people who choose to use vaping products.

Bill S-5 is a critical piece of our government's tobacco control agenda and will help address one of the most challenging and enduring public health problems. Bill S-5 strikes a balance between the harms of vapour products that may entice youth and others to develop a narcotic addiction and the potential public health benefits that could arise from reducing tobacco-related deaths and diseases.

I urge all colleagues in this House to support the bill at second reading and to move it quickly to committee.

● (1240)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Madam Speaker, I salute my colleague. I am always happy to hear him speak here in the House. He is doing amazing work, and I also have the privilege of working with him on the Association parlementaire de la Francophonie. He is doing a great job as president of the Canadian branch.

First of all, we strongly support this initiative. We are impressed by the philosophy and the process that led to a consensus. I would like to remind the House that under our government, the smoking rate among Canadians hit an all-time low of 16%.

Now I would like to ask my hon. colleague why the Liberals did not take inspiration from that process and from that work, which was done collaboratively and in Canadians' best interests, to produce a marijuana legalization bill that might have met with a better response.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague. The work he does on the APF is always impressive. His speeches are always interesting, and so are his questions, as we can see.

As my colleague mentioned, all the parties support this bill, which shows that we are on the right track. There is no question that the marijuana issue is another crucial file. I do not know the details yet, but it is highly likely that packaging will have to be consistent with the amendments that could be made to the legislation and that there will be strict rules to make packaging less appealing.

Let us hope that this will not encourage people to consume these products and will instead ensure that things are done properly.

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I made this point earlier in the debate, but I would like to make it again because it is an important one. It is about the need for more independent research on e-cigarettes and vaping. We hear concerns. On the one side, some people think that this method of ingesting nicotine is safer or healthier. On the other side, the industry, especially, and retail outlets are saying that this is great way for people to kick the habit and that it is healthier.

I am wondering if the government will commit funding for independent research not tied to the industry that would help answer these important questions. Will the member commit to that?

● (1245)

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, my colleague's question is very important. As I said throughout my speech, I do not have a lot of experience in vapour products, but so far we know that they are less harmful. The question is how much less.

As we move forward, we will need to do much more research, but at least the regulation now would force the industry to clearly stipulate or show evidence of how this is going to fall under the Food and Drugs Act and how it is therapeutic. The research will need to continue, as with any other product. This product has been out there for eight or nine years without regulations. Now we are bringing in regulations, but the real question will be to what extent the risk is less. Is it 80% less, or 20% less? That may force other changes.

I agree with my colleague that we would need to invest in research in this area. Who is investing? Those are discussions that could be had through municipal governments, provincial governments, and the federal government.

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to advise the member and the member opposite that the government has dedicated \$15 million in new funding to advance our knowledge on vaping products. We recognize the importance of making investments in research and identifying evidence upon which future decisions could be made around these products. In light of that investment, I would ask the member if he believes that our commitment to research is an appropriate one.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, there is no question that the investment is crucial. We must start somewhere, and we cannot make legislation without having financial support behind it.

Is it only our investment? Again, we are a government that is evidence-based, and that is crucial, so we will not only invest here but we will also possibly have discussions with provincial ministers of health about how we can do this research and share all of the best practices. As members know, we have 10 provinces and three territories, and we all have our strengths. There may be some provinces that have a lot to share in research and information.

Also, we are one of 10 countries that are moving strongly on the packaging. There are lots of good-news stories out there, and we will definitely work with all partners to make this better.

Government Orders

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member opposite mentioned a balance in the bill between the benefit and maybe the disadvantages, if we can put it that way. Would he be able to name three areas where the bill is most beneficial, and another three areas that he would like to see come into this bill, but which we regrettably do not see in the bill as it has been presented?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, as far as we know, packaging is going to be a big benefit. We have seen enormous change in the last 10 years in tobacco products because we have made some changes. When we go to plain packaging, people are not even going to know the product. It is not going to be able to be included, so the packaging is going to be powerful.

On the other side, if it stops people from smoking, then we have accomplished something. If it also stops young people from going to tobacco products or maybe not even to this product, it is also a success. There are a lot of good things, but we will have to continue to keep close watch on this product, because I know that the industry will come out with all kinds of variations that could cause us to make some changes based on those questions.

• (1250)

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, considering the impact that tobacco has on the health of Canadians and the direct and indirect impacts on our society, would the member commit an additional \$10 million in annual funding to combat tobacco and control tobacco, and would he commit to a licensing fee that Health Canada could impose on tobacco manufacturers to recoup those costs?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I do not have that \$10 million in my pocket, for sure. Again, those are very important questions. There is always more that can be done, and funding is an important part, but there is also how we do things. Maybe we can do things differently and be more effective as well.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill S-5, a bill first introduced in the Senate.

I am good friends with my friend from Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook. My wife's family lives in Fall River.

I did note, with interest, one of his responses, in which he said that the government was an evidence-based government and that it made decisions based on evidence. It appears that does not apply to the cannabis bill. Its rush to legalize, to keep the Prime Minister's very ill-conceived promise, has been contrary to evidence provided by the Canadian Medical Association, pediatricians, and so forth.

My speech will be based entirely on evidence. That needs to be brought here. I would also like to speak for a moment on how members of Parliament do their jobs, both in their constituency and in Ottawa. We do not talk about it enough. We know that Ottawa is full of government relations representatives, lobbyists, consultants, communications people, and we hear from people and groups on bills and legislation, which is important. We have to be informed. In many cases, we will call them to committee as well to give expert evidence and testimony.

I want to thank a constituent in my riding who brought very thoughtful and informed advocacy to me on Bill S-5. His name is

Craig Farrow. He is a store owner in Bowmanville, and has been an owner of a store that sells vaping products. That is one of the elements contained in Bill S-5. Craig met with me and gave a very detailed presentation on how, when it came to smoking cessation, vaping products had helped up to a million Canadians leave smoking. In fact, in Craig's own experience of guiding and informing people in Bowmanville, he told me that in the five years his store had been open, he had helped 4,000 people transition from smoking to that e-cigarette or that vaping product.

Why this is important is that studies have shown, including a number of them in the United Kingdom, that vaping, and the nicotine included in the vaping fumes, is 95% less harmful than the tobacco delivery of nicotine. When we talk about the bill, we have to recognize there are some smoking cessation benefits to some of the products that will be regulated under Bill S-5. I want to thank Craig Farrow and store owners like him across the country who met with MPs, whether in Ottawa or in their ridings, and made the case that they should not be included.

The challenge is that they are included in Bill S-5. What I would have preferred to see was a separate bill on measures to prevent smoking, because I think we all support that. I would have preferred the marijuana and cannabis discussion to be a little more extensive in Ottawa. Then, vaping, which is totally different, but worthy of regulation and attention, should have been treated differently. However, they are not.

I will speak about why I and my Conservative colleagues support Bill S-5. We are disappointed the government has tried to bring a lot of things in with it. It is a bill that amends the Tobacco Act, the Non-Smokers Health Act, and consequential amendments. It is kind of another example of a Liberal-promoted omnibus bill.

There are good elements in the bill that evidence has shown has led people to stop smoking. We have known for decades now that smoking can have numerous health impacts, including cancer. That is why governments, since 1980s, have tried to make measures to curb smoking, particularly with young people.

Bill S-5 has, as its centerpiece, the plain packaging issue, when it comes to tobacco sales, promotion, and advertising. Plain packaging measures have shown a marked increase, in jurisdictions that have adopted it, to prevent people from smoking.

We can look at the jurisdictions, which I looked did, of Australia, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand, our closest allies, I am well known for advocating working even closer with those allies under a program called CANZUK. Those countries have already implemented plain packaging and have had tremendous results.

Government Orders

• (1255)

The post-implementation review in Australia of its plain packaging legislation has estimated already, within the span of 18 months to two years, that almost 110,000 people have stopped smoking as a result that legislative measure.

In the United Kingdom, David Cameron's Conservative government brought forward similar legislation. It is estimated that this plain packaging move will take 300,000 people away from smoking, reducing the health impacts, the cost to society, and the toll on families.

In New Zealand, John Key's government also brought in similar legislation.

Therefore, with this part of Bill S-5, we are very in line with what our closest friends and allies have done. Unlike the Liberals who talk about evidence-based decision-making, I am trying to review the benefits that some of our friends have already had. We can review their evidence, especially the post-implementation review in Australia, to show this will have a benefit. Even though there are a lot of things in Bill S-5, plain packaging is the centrepiece.

I would also like to mention why the Conservatives support Bill S-5, despite its omnibus nature.

Since the government of Brian Mulroney in 1988, and the tobacco products act it brought in with Bill C-51 at the time, there has been a non-partisan approach to smoking cessation legislation in the House. I am glad, despite some of the issues and despite the Liberals' voting down our worthwhile amendments at committee, that we are still advocating and supporting them on this. We see the benefit, much like governments since 1988 saw with the legislation from the Brian Mulroney Progressive Conservative government. Subsequent changes were made by Liberal governments. Now we are trying to bring that same non-partisan approach to a public health issue on how we can get more young people to stop smoking or not get into it at all.

I would also like to thank the great advocacy work of physicians of the Heart and Stroke Foundation and a number of other great groups that have been at the forefront of some of these smoking cessation pieces of legislation. As I said at the outset of my remarks, we are trying to be non-partisan here, but I am very partisan. I would like to see the same approach in listening to physicians, health care professionals, and families in many cases to stop the rush with respect to some of the measures on the Prime Minister's pledge on marijuana. I guess I can hold out hope that showing all-party support on a bill like this perhaps will have the Liberals revisit their approach to public health policy.

The final part in my speech goes back Craig Farrow, store keepers, and e-cigarette or vaping shop owners who have concerns about Bill S-5. There needs to be regulation in that space as well.

Before coming to Parliament, I was a lawyer for Procter & Gamble. At times, I was a toothbrush lawyer. In fact, some of its electric toothbrushes were medical devices, so they were already regulated. Therefore, the vaporizers that heat up the liquid and produce the vape are medical devices. It is a class II medical device. To be eligible for sale in Canada, a part of that industry are already

being regulated. They need a device licence and an establishment licence for the facility that creates the vaporizing product. Why? Because these items Canadians use on their body or in their body. Therefore, we have to have faith that they are properly regulated, that they are safe and fit for use. That is why there is already regulation. I would like to see the same regulation applied to the sale, promotion, and labelling of products involved in vaping.

Certainly, when I met with Craig and a lot of the owners, they already do not list products with candy-sounding names and things like that. However, it is important for us to have regulation in place to ensure that it is consistent and to ensure there is not an outlier that would allow children to be enticed into it. While, studies show that it is better for people and can be an aid in getting people off smoking tobacco, there are health impacts, and people deserve to know that. It is also a \$27 billion industry globally now, and it is growing. Therefore, it is appropriate for the Government of Canada to regulate it.

• (1300)

As I said at the outset, I would have preferred separate legislation as opposed to an omnibus-type bill approach here, but nonetheless the smoking cessation measures within the bill are positive.

I think the vaping industry will also take positives from the bill. Vaporizing in general will be used already by cannabis manufacturers. They are already getting their device licences approved for the delivery of a vaporized cannabis once the Prime Minister's cannabis regime is in place. What the vaping stores can look to is that in the future not just ingredients like nicotine can be part of devices. There is the potential, with proper regulation, for some types of over-the-counter or low level health benefit products to be part of delivery by vaporizer. If we bring regulation certainty to this area of public health, it will actually help Craig and his industry in the future.

It has been my pleasure to speak for a few minutes on this and to once again show that responsible shop owners and industry associations, by bringing their issues forward, are helping make public debate better. They are helping us improve legislation. They are also improving our overall awareness of the risks, but also the positives, when it comes to smoking cessation, of new products like e-cigarettes and those sorts of things.

Parliament is meant to talk about the good and about the bad. In areas where we can get young people off smoking, it is important to have all-party support like we have had with Bill S-5.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is interesting to hear the hon. member mention the fact that he was a toothbrush lawyer. Therefore, I trust he will not bristle at this question.

There is always that fine balance between legislation and regulation. Could the hon. member give us a sense of where he would see things being legislated versus left to regulation, which might be more changeable over time?

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, on a Friday afternoon, as we are winding down a week, the humour of the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells did not bristle; it was welcomed. I was a very proud toothbrush lawyer, toothpaste lawyer, and a whole bunch of things when I was with P&G.

The best thing we can do is to give the public information and education about the products they use. The Conservatives generally agree that the individual, particularly once they are an adult, can make choices and can make choices responsibly, but they have to do this by having the proper information.

When it comes to the issue of vaping, having certain ingredients listed, certain claims about any positive health benefit or any positive benefit of stopping smoking, those claims need to be substantiated by science and reviewed if they are a health type of claim.

When it comes to tobacco, the health and science is clear, and has been clear for two generations now. Bill S-5's thrust is the plain packaging. While there are a number of other issues in there, which we have all spoken about today, the evidence is clear. For countries that have adopted plain packaging, it has had an added impact.

Under the Conservative government, Canadians hit an all-time low in overall levels of smoking in Canada, but the bill has elements in it that can get that number even lower. People who choose to smoke, whether regularly or occasionally, have to be informed so they know the choices and they can make informed decisions on their own.

• (1305)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I was happy to hear the member's support for programs like plain packaging, with the data we have on how successful that is, and his support for evidence-based policy-making. He mentioned some of the claims from the industry, substantiated and unsubstantiated, with regard to e-cigarettes. Would he support a prohibition on unsubstantiated claims in that industry until we get the independent research that would answer those questions?

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay certainly seems to be well informed on this issue and may have personal knowledge of issues or concerns. What I would suggest to him is that Canada already has that regime. We have the Competition Bureau and the Competition Act, which regulate misleading advertising. This was actually my area of specialty when I was a lawyer. I reviewed advertising claims, from online to television. If advertising has any health-related aspect, there needs to be substantiation behind it. There needs to be science. Certain health claims are also regulated and have to be pre-screened by Advertising Standards Canada before they go on television.

If any Canadians have concerns about a claim being made that they think is misleading and is enticing people to make a purchase or maybe even try something out, they can bring that issue to the Competition Bureau. We have that regime in place.

What Bill S-5 would allow is a much more orderly process when it comes to packaging and to the promotion of the liquids involved in an emerging vaping industry. As I said, we need public health education and regulation. We can also recognize that these products are less harmful than tobacco products, but Canadians need to know

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that they might be 99% less harmful, but there are potential risks involved.

I think the public information and regulation in the bill is fair. I would have liked a separate bill, because this is a new and emerging device, but at the very least, Canadians can be assured that there would be more effective regulation as a result of Bill S-5.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Resuming debate.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. member: Agreed.

Some hon. member: On division.

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I would suggest that there might be unanimous consent to see the clock at 1:30 at this time so we could begin private members' business.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1310)

[*English*]

INFANT LOSS

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC) moved:

That the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities be instructed to undertake a study of the impact on parents who have suffered the loss of an infant child, including in the case of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), to consider, among other things, (i) ways to improve the level of compassion and support for parents who have suffered the loss of an infant child, (ii) ways to ensure that parents do not suffer any undue financial or emotional hardship as a result of the design of government programming, particularly from Employment Insurance Parental Benefits; that the Committee hold a minimum of six meetings to hear from witnesses that include parents who have lost an infant to SIDS, organizations who advocate for SIDS families, experts in the area of grief counselling, as well as officials responsible for the Employment Insurance Parental Benefits program; and that the Committee report its findings and recommendations to the House within six months of the adoption of this motion, and that it be instructed to request a comprehensive government response to its report, pursuant to Standing Order 109.

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He said: Madam Speaker, it is my honour to rise in this House today, on behalf of far too many grieving families, to speak to Motion No. 110, which would call on the human resources committee to study the impact on parents who have suffered the loss of an infant child.

[*Translation*]

It is an honour for me to move this motion in the House on behalf of these families. It calls for more compassion from the government.

[*English*]

The motion would make a huge difference in the lives of so many Canadian families touched by the tragedy of losing an infant child. The birth of a child should be a magical and wonderful moment, and despite the sleep deprivation that follows, the first years of a child's life are truly a blessing. Too often, all of that goes wrong for many Canadian families.

Motion No. 110 will hopefully be the first step in helping to improve the compassion shown for families in these situations. This problem first came to my attention when I was contacted by the Cormiers, a family in my constituency, who shared their story with me. Sarah and Lee welcomed their daughter Quinn, a beautiful baby girl, into the world in 2014. Tragedy hit only four months later, when Quinn fell asleep and never woke up. She passed away from sudden infant death syndrome, which is more commonly referred to as SIDS.

Sarah and Lee were struck with disbelief, shock, and obviously with overwhelming heartbreak. Amidst their deep grieving, in the aftermath of one of the most difficult times any parent could imagine, the Cormiers' parental benefits were immediately cut off. A Service Canada agent informed the Cormiers they would need to pay back the money that was given to them during the week after Quinn's death. One can only imagine how they felt when that conversation happened. What is even more shocking is that this is not an isolated incident.

It is far too cruel for parents who are going through their darkest hours. The government should be leading the way, standing shoulder to shoulder with parents like Sarah and Lee. These parents are not asking for help beyond what has already been committed to them. They are simply asking for compassion, for understanding, and for time to grieve and heal without needing to worry about financial burdens.

Since that conversation with Sarah and Lee, I have been to rallies and memorial events all across Canada, and I have heard far too many similar heartbreaking stories far too many times. At one of these events, I remember encountering a woman who shared her story with me. She talked about how after her infant child had passed away, she was told that she had to go to the bank in person—it could not be done online, only in person—and organize a reimbursement to Service Canada. This was merely weeks after the tragedy had occurred.

She told me of her anguish. She told me how she drove to the bank, sat there in the parking lot overcome with grief and this terrible emotion, and simply was unable to bring herself to go into the bank and explain the situation to them. Who can blame her? Why would parents be forced to fill out needless bureaucratic paperwork,

personally visit Service Canada locations, and have to be forced to share their stories with government agents over and over again when they are simply not ready to do so?

In no way is this healthy or beneficial for the parents. Those who force themselves through these ordeals often end up traumatized, and it affects their ability to properly heal. In light of this, many parents have turned their sorrows into action, taking opportunities to advocate for other families and for better support and compassion for the thousands who are affected every year. They raise funds, organize walks, and speak up, courageously sharing their stories.

Of course, this also ensures the memory of their child will never be lost. The Cormiers, whom I mentioned earlier, founded Quinn's Legacy Run as a way to commemorate their daughter, as well as all the children who are gone too soon, and provide financial support for families in Alberta who have suffered the loss of an infant to SIDS.

I have attended Quinn's Legacy Run in the past. The turnout is fantastic, and Sarah and Lee have done an incredible job at raising awareness and ensuring that their story is heard and that Quinn's legacy is remembered.

I have had the honour of attending numerous other events, such as the Edmonton Baby Steps Walk to Remember, the Calgary Walk to Remember, the No Foot Too Small Awareness Walk in Saskatoon, the Sherwood Park Baby Steps Walk to Remember, the Vaughn's Memorial Color Run, and many others like it. The work these organizations are doing all across the country is important, because too many Canadian families are suffering in silence every year.

In Canada, approximately 15% to 20% of pregnancies end in miscarriage and over a thousand pregnancies every year end in stillbirth. Furthermore, almost 2,000 infants in Canada die before the age of one every year, over half of which are lost to SIDS or to unknown causes. Pregnancy and infant loss is not an issue across our borders or somewhere overseas; it is an issue that is hitting home right here, right now, and it hurts. It hurts a lot of people. I guarantee each member in this House of Commons has constituents who have suffered the tragedy of infant loss.

• (1315)

[*Translation*]

Under our current system, if a pregnancy ends in miscarriage or stillbirth, the mother is not entitled to any supplementary maternity benefit because the purpose is to give her time to recover from childbirth. If the baby dies during the mother's maternity leave, benefits are immediately cut off. Also, if a baby dies while the mother or father is on parental leave, benefits end immediately. When the baby dies, the support ends. In some families, that might mean that the mother or father has to return to work the week after their child's death.

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[English]

The emotional turmoil that a family must be going through when they discover that their newborn has passed away is certainly difficult enough. However, we then force these parents to file paperwork, visit Service Canada, and make numerous calls to banks and other institutions to figure out what is available to them or what they have to do. That is clearly a flaw in our system. Families who have lost an infant are in need of our compassion. Studies show that parents who lose their child experience the most intense and often enduring stress.

As a father, I cannot even begin to imagine the pain felt by parents like the Cormiers, who lost their daughter Quinn. Fortunately, there are many great organizations devoted to helping families that have suffered infant loss. Groups like Gardens of GRACE, Cradles for Cuddles, the Pregnancy and Infant Loss Network, Hazel's Heroes, the Butterfly Run, the Vaughn Sawchuk Foundation, Empty Arms perinatal loss support services, A Walk to Remember, Baby's Breath Canada, and the October 15 campaign all advocate to raise awareness of infant loss and offer support to care for bereaved families.

The October 15 campaign holds an annual walk to remember the children who were gone too soon. Cuddle Cots for Canada allows parents to spend more time with their child after the child has passed. Hope boxes of support materials are sent to grieving parents across the country.

Paula Harmon from Gardens of GRACE in Nova Scotia, Annick Robinson from Cuddle Cots based in Montreal, Rachel and Rob Samulack from the Butterfly Run in Ottawa—Gatineau, and Sarah Cormier from the Quinn's Legacy Run Society are all here. We have with us other advocates as well. They are here in Parliament this week to support this motion as it is being debated in the House of Commons.

A number of provinces across this country, New Brunswick, Manitoba, the Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Ontario, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan, have all issued proclamations. Numerous municipalities across the country have also declared proclamations in support of these families and in support of remembrance.

● (1320)

It is time that we, as parliamentarians here in this House of Commons, joined in helping families who have suffered the tragedy of pregnancy and infant loss. I believe that we can do more to stand up and find better ways to support Canadian families by listening to parents who have lost an infant.

I want to thank a number of people, because this is a motion that has been brought forward in the greatest spirit of non-partisanship in an attempt to give all parliamentarians on all sides of the House an opportunity to work together to make a difference in the lives of these grieving families.

I want to particularly thank some of my colleagues: the MP for Elgin—Middlesex—London, who is the opposition critic for children and families, for her efforts and support on behalf of this motion; the NDP critic, the MP for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, for her support and efforts in helping to push and advance this forward; and

so many other colleagues I have spoken to about this, colleagues on all sides of the House and in all parties who have expressed their support and their interest in trying to do something to try to help these families.

I also want to thank all of those who have written letters, signed petitions, and called or met with their MPs to encourage them to support this motion. There are so many people all across Canada who have done just that. It gives us all an opportunity to understand and put a personal face on the stories we have heard, to really understand the impact this has on so many Canadian families, and to know that we have the ability, here in this place, to do something about it.

That is what we are seeking to do today: pass a motion that will have a study by a committee of the House of Commons to look at these issues and to hear from parents and families, to hear from those who advocate for those parents and families, to hear from grief counsellors, to hear from medical experts, to hear from all of those who could help us find a way to give these parents an opportunity to grieve without imposing extra financial or emotional burdens on them at the bureaucratic level when there is no need for that.

We need to be there to support them, not to add extra trauma at a time when they are going through something none of us could even begin to imagine.

Most importantly, I would like to thank the parent advocates all across this country who have had the courage—and I can only imagine the immense amount of courage—to share their stories of grief and heartbreak in order to try to help others. If they have the courage to do just that after what they have faced and what they have been through, then it is incumbent upon all of us as parliamentarians to have that same courage and that same compassion and to step forward and do something that is very easily within our power to do to fix the situation.

There cannot be excuses. There cannot be any excuses. There is no reason for excuses. This is simple. It is easy to fix. It is the least we can do. I certainly hope that all members of this House of Commons will join with me in standing shoulder to shoulder with these families in their darkest time and do something to ease that burden and make that load a little lighter. It is totally within our ability to do so.

That is why I encourage all members of this House to vote in favour of Motion No. 110. May we support Canadians with not just our words but with our actions. We need to show some compassion for grieving parents.

● (1325)

Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for making his speech today. I really appreciate his passion and his conviction. It is great to see him demonstrate the passion and conviction he has on this matter.

It is an important matter. I come from a family that has in fact suffered the death of an infant child. I am wondering if the member could expand a little and go beyond what the study would look like to describe the specific action he would envision the government could move forward on.

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Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. I think it is an important one. It is one I have obviously spent a lot of time considering and that I know many people have spent a lot of time considering. We deliberately chose to bring forward a motion to have the committee look at this issue and study it. I do not pretend that I have all the answers, and I do not think any of us does. If we could hear from families, advocates, grief counsellors, and others who have the expertise, we could come up with a solution. There are great models in other countries. The U.K. has great support for these families.

I will say that we need to allow the families a little time to grieve without having to worry that they might have to return to work because they have a financial burden placed on them, with benefits being cut off the day the child passes away. We should give them a little time to grieve.

Whatever we do, whatever that looks like, whatever comes out of this committee, the key thing is to make it something that is consistent and automatic. What we do not want is to put families through a situation where they have to tell their story over and over to the Service Canada agents, or where they have to contemplate going into the bank in person and repaying benefits and fighting and hoping that they might get some other type of benefit that might cover that.

At the end of the day, there are far too many families who are faced with a situation where they have to make a choice between dealing with their emotional well-being when they are trying to grieve and their financial well-being and being forced to go back to work far too soon. Whatever it is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but I do have to allow for other questions.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and his kind words.

I must admit that I had an easy enough time selling this motion to my NDP colleagues and getting their support. It is hard to oppose compassion and solidarity. In 2009, 2015, and more recently in 2016, some of my NDP colleagues—the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue in the last two cases—introduced what I would call related legislation seeking to establish a national perinatal bereavement awareness day.

Can my colleague explain why he is asking for five meetings of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development, and the Status of People with Disabilities? We know that this committee has a full schedule and might not get to this motion for some time.

Why five meetings and would it be just as effective to have fewer meetings?

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, I believe the motion calls for six meetings. However, in the spirit of trying to make sure that

there is an opportunity to get this accomplished, if there is a need to look at that number, based on the committee's feelings, I am certainly open to that. I have spoken with the chair of the committee as well about this matter.

At the end of the day, what I am here to do, and what I hope we are all here to do, is to try to take action to support these families. If that requires us to have some conversations about the number of meetings the committee would study this for, then I am fully prepared to do that. However, at the end of the day, what I cannot accept is that we would not move forward with a study and some action from the government to address these issues. That is key.

● (1330)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak to this important motion. It is a pleasure to reconnect in a sense with my colleague from Banff—Airdrie. I say reconnect because we had the opportunity to work together on a more contentious issue, yet always in a collegial way.

I would like to congratulate the member on his eloquent speech. He described the issue very clearly and brought it to the attention of the House and those watching, and no doubt to those who work in the department or the minister's office. He underlined what we might call a gap in the system. No doubt his speech and the content of this motion have been noticed at the upper reaches of the government.

The motion calls for the House, through the human resources committee, to study how the federal government could make EI more compassionate toward those who have suffered the loss of an infant, as the hon. member said, an unimaginable loss, including losses through sudden infant death syndrome and other circumstances. According to Statistics Canada, there were approximately 1,800 infant deaths and 3,200 stillbirths in 2014.

Motion No. 110 comes from a non-partisan place. As such, it is a reminder to all of us of what we are really doing in the House representing Canadians. We are sent here to solve important problems on behalf of people. We are here to sometimes modify the system, and by the system, I mean those impersonal rules, procedures and elements that are required in a modern society for it to function in an efficient and orderly way. However, I am sure all of us would agree that we are here to make the system work for the people. We are not here to make people work for the system.

The emotional toll of losing a child makes it almost impossible for those who have suffered that loss to return quickly to work, and if they cannot return to work, they also may suffer financial loss, for example, if their company for whatever reason is not in a position to compensate them and extend some kind of paid leave to these parents. Some businesses are very small and perhaps they cannot. Other businesses may be able to. However, those who have already suffered this emotional loss, often must suffer a financial loss. That is what the member is attempting to address through this motion.

The member also mentioned there were groups out in the community that helped bereaved parents deal with the tragedy they had faced. That is what gives hope in our country and our society. Yes, there is a bureaucratic system, a set of rules and procedures, laws and regulations that govern modern day life, but outside of that, there is community. It is community that comes together to help people, in this case Canadians, in multiple ways.

My community has a constellation of community groups that support citizens who are dealing with a whole array of challenges. It is community really that supports all of us as community members and as Canadians.

The member mentioned a group called Baby's Breath, which was established in 1973. It is a research advocacy and peer-to-peer bereavement support group. I am told there is also a group in the member's riding called Quinn's Legacy.

As I mentioned, we are here to make the system better. I know we all believe it, but it is also a core value of this government that we can always make things better. The Prime Minister mentions this often.

• (1335)

As a Liberal, this is why I am here. I believe that any system, regardless, is always imperfect. It always needs reform, because circumstances change and aspects of that system may not be adapted to current circumstances.

I would like to take a moment to say how the spirit of reforming our EI system is one that has guided our government. I believe that the member's motion is dovetailing with that approach or ethic of our government. For example, budget 2018 has instituted a take-it-or-leave-it five weeks of extra parental leave for those parents who decide to share parental leave so as to maximize the possibility of career choices after a child is born. That is one reform our government has brought in.

In budget 2017, our government also brought in some other changes to make the employment insurance system more flexible and compassionate. Staying with the theme of parental benefits, budget 2017 added some flexibility to the system, allowing parents to have extended parental leave over 18 months instead of the standard 12 months.

It also introduced a new family caregiver benefit, which allows people to take time off to care for a critically ill adult, and not necessarily one in a terminal phase, as with the compassionate care program. It could be someone who is critically ill. It is not necessary for the person taking time off to be a family member per se. It could be someone the sufferer considers a close and supportive individual.

Our government also improved the family caregiver benefit for children. It used to be available to parents only. Now, as a result of measures introduced in budget 2017, it is available to someone who is not a parent but who is obviously close to the child or is in a position to help.

These are changes our government has brought in. I believe the issue the hon. member has brought up, as I said before, dovetails with the government's concern for making the system more flexible

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so that it can better serve people. I believe that the motion is in that spirit.

I must congratulate the member on the work he has done. I was not really aware of how extensively he had been consulting across the country. He mentioned that he had been across the country meeting with multiple groups that help support parents who have lost an infant. He mentioned that many of those groups had representatives here this week on Parliament Hill.

I believe it is a very important gesture the member has made in raising an issue that perhaps those with decision-making powers, with respect to the employment insurance system, had not been aware of or had not properly considered.

The core of the motion is good. I believe another hon. member brought up the fact that six meetings may not be needed to study a problem that appears to be extremely clear-cut. That will be the object of discussions between the hon. member and others in this House. I think he has brought to bear a very important issue, and I again congratulate him and commend him for the dedicated work he has put into the substance of this motion.

• (1340)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to debate Motion No. 110. The purpose of this motion is to consider ways to improve the level of compassion and support for parents who have gone through one of the worst tragedies imaginable, the death of an infant.

Losing a very young child is a terrible emotional shock to parents. That is why Motion No. 110 would ensure that parents do not suffer any financial hardship on top of being struck by personal tragedy.

As a New Democrat, I believe that compassion and solidarity are essential values. This motion is the right thing to do, and there is no question that I will wholeheartedly support it. I would just like to remind the House that my NDP colleagues have put forward a number of similar bills, including two bills recently introduced by my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue. This motion gives us an excellent opportunity to be responsive to the needs of families after they have lost a child to sudden infant death syndrome.

The NDP believes that the federal government has a duty to ensure the well-being of all our constituents. That is why the NDP promised in the last campaign to extend eligibility for the compassionate care benefit. The NDP knows that many of our constituents care for a sick family member while also having to meet their professional and family obligations. That is why the NDP is more determined than ever to improve compassionate care leave, which is related to my colleague's motion.

I think we can all agree that losing a child is certainly one of the worst tragedies there could ever be. That is why we need to take all necessary means to ensure that parents who experience such tragedy get as much support as possible through such trying times.

Private Members' Business

I would like to point out the hard work and resilience of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot's many organizations that help parents in need after the birth of their first child or because they are traumatized by the loss of a child, especially in cases of sudden infant death syndrome. I am thinking of such organizations as Les Amis du Crépuscule, Centre de la Famille St-Pie, Urgence Vie, Maison de la Famille des Maskoutains, Fédération de la famille Richelieu-Yamaska, and many others.

Every day, these organizations help people in need and improve lives in the communities of Saint-Hyacinthe and Acton Vale. I would like to congratulate and thank them for their incredible work giving these families in need a little bit of comfort and helping them to cope with situations that are often very difficult.

I strongly believe that the federal government should be paying more attention to these community organizations, which play a very important role in all our ridings. Their hard work should set the example for government action and open the Liberal government's eyes to the many reforms still needed in this country.

The NDP is committed to a comprehensive employment insurance reform to help all Canadians and end the many injustices that still exist in this country. It is all well and good to talk about improving certain aspects of the EI system, but let us not forget that six out of 10 workers are not eligible for EI even though they pay into it every week. The four out of 10 workers who are eligible get benefit rates of just 55%.

What is more, in recent months, 16,000 more workers have had to go without an income for a number of months because of bad EI reforms. The first major reform that slashed the EI system occurred in 1996, when the Liberals completely perverted the system.

• (1345)

Then the Conservative government came along and consolidated that reform. That is what needs to change if we want to help the parents who are dealing with the situation outlined in Motion No. 110.

During the last campaign, the Prime Minister himself promised to scrap the Conservatives' reform, which penalizes many workers and their families. Nearly two and a half years later, it is obvious that the Liberals have not taken enough meaningful action to back up their promises and truly change the reality of employment insurance.

It is time to take action. Hundreds of families across the country go without income, often for a number of weeks. We need to do more to help them. The NDP, its partners, unions, and unemployed workers' groups have been calling for a much-needed, comprehensive employment insurance reform for far too long. We keep warning the government that this reform is needed to better take into account the new realities of the labour market and the realities faced by parents who lose an infant. To date, the government has failed to listen.

Our country needs major legislative changes to ensure that 60% of workers and their families no longer have to live in precarious situations. I remind members that workers and unions continue to call on the Liberal government to bring in real reform. The NDP is calling for better access to employment insurance. A simple way to do so is to create a universal eligibility threshold of 360 hours for all

workers. The government must restore the five-week supplement for seasonal workers.

This issue seriously affects a number of regions, and it is even worse when they go through tragedies like the ones highlighted in Motion No. 110. This is really a time when lip service is no longer enough. Now is the time for action. The problems with EI are on several levels. One, for example, has to do with the length of sickness benefits awarded to individuals who are sick. Often, the parents that are addressed by Motion No. 110 have just one opportunity to extend their benefits when their parental benefits are cut, and that is sickness benefits. However, I remind members that sickness benefits last just 15 weeks. This is not enough, especially for people who have serious health problems or for parents who have just lost a child.

Incidentally, I want to remind this government that more than one-third of claimants today need far more than the 15 weeks granted by this program. That is a far cry from the small minority that the parliamentary secretary hinted at in response to my late show question.

In late 2016, the Prime Minister himself and the minister said that they would extend the benefits period. However, more than a year and a half later, nothing has changed. That is unacceptable. It is high time that this government kept its promise to make this change, which so many of our constituents have been calling for.

Again, I want to acknowledge Marie-Hélène Dubé, from Rivière-du-Loup, and Christine Roussel, from Quebec City, both of whom are fighting to get the EI sickness benefits period extended. Now more than ever, I salute the courage of these two amazing women and the thousands of other people fighting to allow sick workers to recover with dignity.

Improving EI sickness benefits would help parents who are coping with the loss of a child. I think it is time for this government to make sure that EI works for all Canadians and that every person in this country can live in the best conditions possible.

I strongly believe that motion No. 110 is a step in the right direction, towards solidarity and compassion, and that it shows the Liberal government what true progress looks like.

• (1350)

[English]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I would like to start by commending my hon. colleague, the member for Banff—Airdrie, for putting forward this compassionate motion on behalf of his constituents and all Canadian families from coast to coast. I offer congratulations. This motion is exactly the type of thing we should be looking at as parliamentarians.

Private Members' Business

I want to share with everybody what this motion truly is. It is an opportunity for us to grow together, an opportunity to make sure that we can work together to do what benefits our Canadian families.

The motion states:

That the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities be instructed to undertake a study of the impact on parents who have suffered the loss of an infant child, including in the case of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), to consider, among other things, (i) ways to improve the level of compassion and support for parents who have suffered the loss of an infant child, (ii) ways to ensure that parents do not suffer any undue financial or emotional hardship as a result of the design of government programming, particularly from Employment Insurance Parental Benefits; that the Committee hold a minimum of six meetings to hear from witnesses that include parents who have lost an infant to SIDS, organizations who advocate for SIDS families, experts in the area of grief counselling, as well as officials responsible for the Employment Insurance Parental Benefits program; and that the Committee report its findings and recommendations to the House within six months of the adoption of this motion, and that it be instructed to request a comprehensive government response to its report, pursuant to Standing Order 109.

I think we have to go back to why we are all in this House in the first place. Our roles are to be members of Parliament, and our role is to serve Canadians. This motion provides an opportunity for us to serve Canadians to the best of our ability. This motion focuses on people—not government, but people—and how federal government programs impact families at extremely difficult times in their lives.

This motion is not about asking the federal government to spend more money. It is not about partisan policy. It is about Canadian families and how we can serve them at an extremely vulnerable time.

When the member brought this motion forward to discuss further, I started to think about my own constituents in Elgin—Middlesex—London and the struggles that our families go through. Now add to that a significant event, the loss of an infant child.

This House will have the opportunity to begin to understand how federal programs can negatively impact families going through a crisis at a time when families need compassion and the support of the government.

The member for Banff—Airdrie has not only shared his motion but has also provided an opportunity for every member in this House to sit down and speak to families that have been affected. I would like to personally thank him for that, because having a face to an issue makes it real, and this motion and this issue are real for Canadian families.

I will share something with the House. Any time a member is giving a speech, we want to know what we are talking about. One of the things I did was refer back to the information from Statistics Canada. I would like to share the information, according to Statistics Canada in 2014. At that point, in 2014, there were a total of 1,794 deaths of children under the age of one. Most striking for me was the total number of deaths of infants between zero and 27 days of age. This staggering number is 1,395.

Just imagine a mom or dad waiting for that miracle to be born after a gestation period of 280 days, but they may only have one or two days, sometimes even just hours, with that miracle.

In Canada 1,395 parents have lost their child within 27 days. That is something we must recognize. As a parent, and I know there are many parents in this House, we all know what it is like to anticipate

the birth of a child. It is a time when we become excited. We are out there shopping, buying Pampers, buying cribs, and doing all of those things. Just imagine: 1,395 children are lost in the first 27 days. That is 1,395 parents impacted because of this, and it is not just the parents: we also have to consider the grandparents, the siblings, and everybody around them.

We need to make sure that we are growing a support system. Our government can be part of that support system.

There are a number of causes of infant death, from sudden infant death syndrome to neonatal hemorrhaging. I would like to share a story that I read while compiling my research on this motion. It is from the *Toronto Star*, dated October 24, 2016, by Lauren Pelley.

This story has not so much about what the government must do; rather, it shares the story of a woman and her husband who had lost their child.

• (1355)

From this, I hope members see how important it is that we recognize the emotions that are going through a family:

Gillian Cooper was 38 weeks and two days pregnant when she realized something was wrong.

On that October morning in 2011, the nearly full-term baby inside her wasn't moving. Cooper didn't feel the little one's typical kicks later while she was running errands, either. She came home and put her 3-year-old son Jackson and another child she was babysitting down for a nap—and still didn't feel any movement. She drank a cold glass of milk. Nothing. Then a glass of juice. Still nothing.

Cooper got nervous.

She went to the hospital with Jackson later that day and met her partner Jay, her stepson, and her friend Carady, and the whole group settled in for a lengthy wait.

When a nurse finally brought Cooper in to check for a heartbeat three hours later, she could only pick up Cooper's, not the baby's. An intern doctor and an ultrasound machine arrived next.

"We don't know the sex yet," Cooper recalls telling the doctor.

"It isn't going to make a difference," she recalls the doctor curtly replying.

Cooper's own doctor came by shortly after to confirm the heartbreaking news: Cooper's baby had died, less than a week before her scheduled C-section.

"I held [Jackson] tight and tried to stand up. They got me a wheelchair. The screaming and crying—I've never, and probably never will again, be that upset in my life," Cooper recalls.

Still in shock from the loss, Cooper had to make a quick decision: Would she deliver the baby, or go with the C-section she'd originally planned?

"The thought of pushing a dead baby out of my body..." Cooper trails off, speaking to the *Star* from her home in Toronto. She opted for a C-section.

Since losing the baby—a 7-pound boy named Carter—because of a knot in his umbilical cord, Cooper has been sharing her story of the pain and heartbreak that accompanies a stillbirth, a rare but devastating outcome during pregnancy that remains hush-hush despite its emotional toll on women and their families.

I want members to take the story of Gillian Cooper and imagine what she and her spouse are feeling, imagine what Jackson is feeling, and imagine the pain and devastation to this family. I have provided this information. Although fewer than 2,000 children die under the age of one, we have to recognize the impact it has on Canadian families. It is not rare for these sorts of things to happen, and we also have to realize that it is extremely traumatic.

Private Members' Business

What happens next is what we as parliamentarians can discuss. We can take a story like Gillian Cooper's and think about how we can be part of the solution to help make things easier for someone like Gillian Cooper. We have an opportunity to think about how federal government programs impact these families, which have gone through a horrific experience.

I want to share some things that we as members may not be aware of.

If a child is ill, a parent can take up to 35 weeks off during the child's illness through Service Canada under the critically ill benefit, but this is not extended beyond the date of death. For instance, if a child has been ill for 34 weeks and then passes away, the parent's employment insurance critical benefits cease at the time of the child's passing. Some members may say that there is a simple solution, which is to switch it over to sick benefits. Sure, it sounds fine, but there needs to be an advocate. There needs to be somebody there on behalf of this family. There needs to be somebody advocating and making sure the family is getting the customer service that this government and all governments should be providing, which Service Canada has the ability to do.

What would we do to help a family? Is there a way we can adjust this to make sure that transitions are smoother for these families? Should this be an automatic transition from one type of benefit to another? This is exactly what this study would do. It would look at these benefit programs and how we as parliamentarians can look at these sad times and make a difference in somebody's life.

How about someone who is on maternity leave? A person is eligible for 15 weeks of maternity leave, but let us say that the child passes on week 14. Do members of Parliament know that the person on maternity leave is granted only one more week? The mother is given only 15 weeks of maternity leave, meaning that she is expected to go back to work after her 15 weeks, after the loss of her child.

I just want to remind everybody that this is an important motion. There is not a lot of time for these families, but we need to make sure that we give them the time. We must make the time. I ask members to vote in support of this motion so that we can study this in committee and make a difference for the families that need us, when they need us most.

• (1400)

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to begin by thanking my colleague from Banff—Airdrie for giving the House the opportunity to address this very important issue through Motion No. 110.

The sudden and unexpected loss of a child is a tragedy, and our heart goes out to any parent who has to endure such a horrible experience. Our government stands in support with all those families experiencing such unimaginable nightmares.

Motion No. 110 orders the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, HUMA, to undertake a study of the impact on parents who have suffered the loss of a child and explore new ways

to support these parents. While the motion's goal is admirable, I have to express some concern with the wording.

In the past, there was no issue with the previous government about determining or disregarding the independence of committees. We have really tried hard to make committees more autonomous. There is a challenge in the way that Motion No. 110 dictates guidelines and timelines to HUMA. It is challenging in more than one way, and it would also be a challenge to enforce. However, we do agree that Motion No. 110 tackles a very serious issues. It shines a light on a topic that may not be discussed as much as it deserves.

Our government sympathizes with Canadians who lose an infant child to sudden or unexpected causes, including the case of sudden infant death syndrome, and we fully recognize the challenges these families face. While we understand no amount of benefits could fully heal the pain of losing a child, it does bear mentioning that there are a number of existing supports available for these parents, and I understand the challenge they are facing. These supports include paid bereavement leave under the Canada Labour Code, employment insurance, maternity and sickness benefits, and corresponding leaves under the code, as well as community-based and employer supports.

For example, EI maternity benefits could support a mother's physical and emotional recovery for up to 15 weeks surrounding child birth. These benefits continue to be payable in the tragic event that a child passes away. Grieving parents may also be eligible to receive up to 15 weeks of EI sickness benefits should they be unable to work following the death of their child. However, as important as these benefits are and as strong and effective as our EI program is, there is still room for improvement.

We need an EI system that is flexible enough to accommodate the unique and different needs of every Canadian. We know Canadians want options when they are trying to balance work and life responsibilities, whether it is caring for a sick family member or, indeed, grieving the loss of a child.

That is why our government introduced changes to EI maternity, parental, and caregiving benefits, as well as corresponding leaves under the Canada Labour Code, that makes the system more flexible and more inclusive.

That is why we introduced new measures that would allow new parents the option of choosing between a 12-month benefit period or receiving benefits spread over 18 months at a lower benefit rate when caring for a newborn or newly adopted child. It is why we are also allowing eligible pregnant workers to start receiving maternity benefits earlier.

We have also changed the system to help families that are going through difficult times.

Private Members' Business

We created a new EI caregiver benefit of up to 15 weeks to care for and support an adult family member who is critically ill or injured. We have also replaced benefits for parents of critically-ill children with an enhanced employment insurance family caregiver benefit for children. It expands the eligible support network to include all family members rather than just parents. We have also simplified the application process for EI caregiving benefits by allowing medical doctors and nurse practitioners to sign medical certificates.

• (1405)

In each case we have made corresponding amendments to the Canada Labour Code to ensure that employees in the federally regulated private sector can avail themselves of the enhanced caregiving, parental, and maternity benefits without the fear of losing their jobs.

We have also amended the code to help employees find a better balance between work, family, and other personal responsibilities. This includes making bereavement leave more flexible. The code currently provides employees in the federally regulated private sector with paid bereavement leave of up to three days following the death of an immediate family member. There will be new changes coming into force. These employees will be entitled to up to five days, the first remaining paid.

Amendments to the code will also give employees the right to request flexible work arrangements from their employers, such as flexible start and finish times and the ability to work from home, and it will also create new unpaid leave for family responsibilities, to participate in traditional indigenous practices, and for employees who are either victims of family violence or the parent of a child who is the victim of family violence.

In budget 2018, we also extended the working while on claim provisions to maternity and sickness benefits. This change will allow mothers and those dealing with illness or injury to have greater flexibility in staging their return to work, while also keeping more of their EI benefits.

Once these changes come into force, they will provide families with more support when they need it most. In particular, they will

benefit the very same people that Motion No. 110 aims to help: parents grieving the painful and unexpected loss of a child.

We will continue to deliver on our promise to all Canadians to improve the social safety net so that they can get the help they need when they need it. As always, our government welcomes input and discussion across party lines, both inside and outside of the House, to make sure that we are giving the best support possible to families who have endured the tragedy of losing a child to a sudden or unexpected cause.

No parent should have to endure that loss, and our government sympathizes and stands in support of any families experiencing such grief. We must work together to ensure that the proper supports exist and that they are accessible by all.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have two minutes before we have to end, but I will allow the member for Flamborough—Glanbrook to start his speech, and he will be able to finish it the next time this issue is before the House.

The hon. member for Flamborough—Glanbrook.

Mr. David Sweet: Madam Speaker, I wonder if you seek it, if you would find unanimous consent to see the clock at 2:30 and give me the full time at the next reading of this motion.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Do we have unanimous consent to see the clock at 2:30?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is 2:30. [Translation]

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

[English]

It being 2:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:08 p.m.)

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