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Monday, January 30, 2017

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, January 30, 2017

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

GENDER EQUALITY WEEK ACT

The House resumed from November 17, 2016, consideration of the motion that Bill C-309, An Act to establish Gender Equality Week, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be back in the House today and to speak in favour of the important legislation of Bill C-309, which would establish a gender equality week in Canada. This would provide a week to reflect on the importance of gender equality and the ongoing need to advance the cause of equality in Canada.

I am proud that our government will support the passage of Bill C-309, with amendments that will be brought at committee. I would like to thank my friend the hon. member for Mississauga—Lakeshore for bringing this important legislation forward.

This is an opportunity to remind ourselves of the work that still needs to be done to ensure greater gender equality.

We know that too many women are still facing systemic inequalities in the workplace. We need more women in politics, and we know that we need more women in the judiciary and more women in STEM professions.

We need to seriously address issues of sexual harassment in the workplace, and we have seen shocking examples recently of the harassment that women in public office face. It includes women in this chamber and women who have risen to become premiers of several provinces across this country, including mine. This is unacceptable, and we know that awareness and education are the most important tools in beginning to correct these issues. A gender equality week is a tool for spreading that awareness and bringing change in our country.

It is important to remember, as well, the importance of gender equality for our transgender community. As special adviser to the

Prime Minister on LGBTQ2 issues, I can state unequivocally there is much work that needs to be done in this area.

Our government has been clear that equality of transgender Canadians is a priority for us because it is a priority for Canadians. Just this last week, I had the opportunity to hold round table conversations in five cities in our country; it is critical for our government to make sure that both houses pass Bill C-16, which would extend rights to transgendered persons. However, there is so much more to do, and I look forward to working with members of this House and continuing to listen to the trans and non-binary community about further steps that need to be taken. However, we do know that there is a serious need for greater awareness and education surrounding the challenges this community faces. Bill C-309 gives us that opportunity.

There are those who argue that the bill is not necessary. There are some who dismiss Bill C-309 as merely a symbolic gesture on which we should not spend any time. After all, they argue, symbols do not matter. I disagree. Symbols do matter. Symbols send powerful messages, particularly when we are discussing equality and human rights. They rally people to press forward, and they give hope and inspiration to those fighting for a better world.

We should take a look at the symbol of Angela Merkel, female Chancellor of Germany. How many girls have been inspired to rise to the top of their professions, due not only to her amazing work but to the symbol that she provides to the world?

[*Translation*]

We must not dismiss the importance and impact of symbols. It would be a mistake to pit symbol against substance rather than recognize that they are intertwined. Symbols give rise to substantive change, and substantive change leads to more symbols.

Symbols are influential; they are forces of change. Symbols provide the hope and resolve that mobilize crowds and drive people forward. Symbols unite us in pursuit of a better world.

When we set out to establish a gender equality week, when we speak up for inclusion and respect, when we march for LGBTQ2 pride, when we honour the differences, identities, and genders of every individual, we are actively and symbolically recommitting to supporting rights and equality for all.

*Private Members' Business**[English]*

When we discuss our gender-balanced cabinet, we know it is both a symbol of equality and a sign of substantial action. Symbols lead to substantive change; substantive change leads to more symbols; and we know that every young girl in this country will be able to point to the symbol of gender balance in our executive council and know that, some day, should they want to work hard for it, they could also have a place at that table. That will also ensure substantive action on the changes we need and the different perspectives we need to take in all elements of Canadian society.

Equality is not something that just happens. Repression and discrimination do not just end overnight. It takes the work of activists and trailblazers. It takes time and self-reflection and tough questions. It often takes the support and leadership of government.

• (1110)

It takes the initiative of members of Parliament to be bold, as my colleague has done. Canadians elected the members of our Liberal caucus to show that leadership, and this is one of the many ways that we are bringing real change to Canada and to all Canadians.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, usually this would be a time when I would welcome everyone back and wish them a happy new year in my first speech of this session. Instead, I stand in the House devastated by the violent events that occurred yesterday.

Members of our Muslim community were killed and many were wounded in their sacred space of worship in Quebec. These violent deaths have rocked me to my core, and they hit hard the foundation of my Canadian identity.

When I worked at an immigrant-serving agency, I assisted many families from across the world to join our Canadian family. In my new role, I continue to do this work in a new way. These people continuously reinvigorate my Canadian pride. Working with them as they prepare for Canadian citizenship, and watching them as they receive it, makes me so proud of this country. This is what I know.

In Canada, we have generations of Muslim Canadians who have helped build this country. I am deeply saddened today. I want to thank my constituents for the many emails I have already received. I thank them for their support and immediate call to action. We will stand together to say no to this violence. We will stand together because, as Dr. Christina Hubert said:

We must not sit idly by as injustices abound around us. We have a voice, and we must use it.... We must advocate for those who no longer have a voice. We must love greatly.

Many constituents have shared with me that we are living in scary times since the inauguration of President Trump. Now when we look at our televisions and social media, we see tens of thousands of people standing up against hate.

On January 21, I was proud to stand alongside many inspiring women and men. I want to thank the Comox Valley women's solidarity gathering for making the women's march on Washington such a resounding success.

This truly historic march drew an estimated worldwide participation of 4.8 million. After the march, officials behind the organization

reported that 673 marches took place worldwide. In the United States, the protests were the largest political demonstrations since the anti-Vietnam War protests in the 1960s and 1970s.

Here I am today speaking on Bill C-309, an act to establish a gender equality week; a bill in which the title says it all. The bill aims to establish the first week of October every year as gender equality week.

It is important to raise awareness of the significant and substantive contributions that Canadian women have made and continue to make to grow, develop, and add to the strong identity of Canada. The NDP has been at the forefront and will continue to champion real gender equality. I fully support the bill at second reading and want it to be studied at committee.

As a legislator who takes her responsibility very seriously, I have to offer a cautious assessment of the bill and of this government's attitude in dealing with gender equality. Once again, we have in front of us a bill filled with billowing symbolism. By no means am I condoning investments in matters symbolic; by no means am I reducing the possibilities this gender equality week could have on our movement; and I know that 673 marches took place across the world, which demonstrates a powerful fact: actions speak louder than words.

When words are not followed up by action, emblems become tokenism, and then sincerity is put into question. I do not doubt the genuineness of the member for Mississauga—Lakeshore in bringing the bill forward. For a responsible lawmaker, context matters.

After more than a year in power, the government has failed to translate feminist rhetoric into real change. The best way to honour women is by matching words with actions, none of which are included in the bill. How many statistics and figures must we repeat in the House for just a little movement on this very important issue?

Rather than sharing figures, I will share advice for future bills that would bring the significant, substantive changes required to improve the daily lives of Canadian women. Hopefully, my colleague from Mississauga—Lakeshore can share them with the government.

How can women from coast to coast celebrate gender equality for a week when we know all too well that in a week they will earn only 74¢ for every dollar earned by men? This is both a chronic and a growing issue. The House sent the issue of pay equity to a special committee, which returned with facts that have been repeated many times in the House and in many other committees. Women are still being paid less money than men for the same work.

Private Members' Business

•(1115)

Then the government had the nerve to say this was something it would address in 2018. That is not good enough. How long do women have to wait? They have waited for 40 years and should not have to wait any longer.

Does the member for Mississauga—Lakeshore believe in a more gender-balanced Parliament? I am afraid he does not. He voted down the bill that would have done just that. The sad part is that he was not alone. Many Liberal MPs did the same thing, including the then minister for the status of women.

Increasing representation of women in Parliament would be in the type of bill we are looking for. These are the actions worth celebrating. These are the bills that would take words and transform them into real action.

How can we pay tribute when more than 500 women and children are turned away from shelters on a typical day? How can we pretend we have achieved gender equality when on any given day more than 4,000 women and more than 2,000 children will reside in a domestic violence shelter? The absence of a national action plan to end violence against women is making responses largely fragmented, often inaccessible, and inconsistent across Canada. New Democrats are pushing for more federal funding to support domestic violence shelter operations. I ask again. Where is the action?

High-quality and affordable early childhood education helps women seek employment or improve their job skills and pursue careers, and it eases families' financial stress. Delays in the creation of a national child care strategy will perpetuate socio-economic inequalities for people in Canada. The NDP believes that the federal government should start tackling its fundamental responsibility to reduce inequality between men and women. In the 2016 budget, the government missed multiple opportunities to respond equitably to the needs of women and girls and to fully support the realization of their economic and social potential.

This bill has a very lofty preamble. To be fair, it addresses a broad range of issues, including the fact that indigenous women are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence and sexual exploitation. If the bill were passed, the preamble would evaporate into thin air and what would remain is reality, a reality in which all aboriginal women employed full time earn 26% less than non-aboriginal men. Even more devastating is the reality that aboriginal women with a university degree earn 33% less. Yes, that is correct: the gap actually increases the more educated they are. There is so much more, such as shelters, safe drinking water, and education.

This bill aims to raise awareness, and I encourage it. That is why I will support it at second reading. It is time to get to work and address some long-standing issues that would make a major difference in women's rights.

I am so proud of the work and leadership of our critic for the status of women, the member of Parliament for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

We will be proposing amendments at committee stage, arranging that the bill not enter into force before the government implements

proactive pay equity legislation and gender-based analysis legislation.

We should take real action to achieve gender equality. The NDP believes that, when women are no longer disproportionately affected by violence, inequality, and poverty, then we could legitimately have a celebratory week.

As the West Coast Leaf Association mentioned about the bill:

...legislation and other actions like Bill C-309...not only do very little to address inequality in the everyday lives of women in Canada, but they also create a risk of misleading the public into thinking that the federal government is taking substantive action when they have little potential to create meaningful change.

The women of Canada are looking for action. I hope we see it soon.

•(1120)

Mr. Gagan Sikand (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today to speak to the bill brought forward by my colleague and fellow member from Mississauga—Lakeshore.

Bill C-309, an act to establish gender equality week, addresses a very important issue. As the text of Bill C-309 states in its preamble, poverty and inequality disproportionately affect Canadian women, particularly the elderly, disabled, transgender, and visible minorities.

In Canada, women are more likely than men to be victims of gender-based violence, including sexual assault and intimate partner violence. Canadian women currently face barriers in pursuing and completing post-secondary education and pursuing careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. There is currently a wage gap between men and women in Canada.

When I read all of these facts, I find it hard to believe that I am describing life in Canada in 2017. Even though our government has taken positive steps toward reducing gender inequality since being elected, the fact of the matter is gender inequality still exists in Canada and more awareness needs to be raised. It is for this reason that I urge all members of the House to support this bill.

The bill would not only raise awareness of the issue of gender inequality, it would also create a platform to educate Canadians on the non-binary nature of gender. The bill would also encourage Canadians to recognize gender equality as a fundamental human rights issue linked to other policy areas such as health care, crime, poverty, discrimination, and inequality.

Private Members' Business

Throughout my life, I have worked with many intelligent, strong, and passionate women who have excelled and become leaders in their fields. This has not changed since I have become a member of Parliament. Every day, whether it is working with my staff or with my hon. colleagues here in the House, I am reminded of the exceptional abilities of all women across the country. Women are an important part of the work we do here in the House of Commons. Every day we debate and discuss a wide range of policies covering a variety of different issues and topics, and due to this fact, we have to ensure that we are looking at these policies and topics from the widest lens possible. In order for this to be ensured, the House must be as diverse as possible. It is for this reason that women's viewpoints are so essential to the work we do here in the House.

If I reflect back, I can confidently say the most influential people in my life have been women, whether she was my grade 7 teacher, my mom and her sister, or all of my cousins who are as close to me as if they were my sisters. It just does not seem right to me that these individuals could or would be treated any differently from anyone else. A gender equality week would be a tribute to these women and women like them all across Canada. While this may not eliminate gender inequality, it is definitely a step in the right direction.

It was in 1918 that Canadian women became eligible to vote in federal elections, and 1929 when Canadian women were considered persons under the Canadian Constitution. It is hard to believe that in 2017 we are still discussing gender inequality issues.

I speak at local elementary schools quite often and discuss gender inequality. I hope that by the time the students I speak to are old enough to occupy these seats they will no longer have to discuss the same issue.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak in favour of Bill C-309, but first I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Mississauga—Lakeshore for the substantive work he has put into preparing the bill. It is always a pleasure to see such passionate effort directed toward the ongoing challenge of achieving real gender equality in Canada.

Since 1992, October has been recognized as Women's History Month. I believe this bill which would declare the first week of every October gender equality week could serve a vital and complementary function to Women's History Month.

• (1125)

[*Translation*]

Women's History Month has long been used as a platform to recognize the contributions and efforts of women across the country and throughout our history to advance gender equality in Canada. It offers an opening for parents to teach young Canadians about the struggles of the Famous Five and many other remarkable Canadian historical figures.

[*English*]

Gender equality week would not only be a time to congratulate the women on whose shoulders we stand and who have accomplished so much, it would also be a call to action, an opportunity to take stock of how far we have come and how far we still need to go.

Gender equality week would be a time to acknowledge our ongoing struggles and the challenges that we still need to overcome, especially for women who are doubly marginalized. We know there is an intersectionality between gender and other identity factors, such as race, indigeneity, disability, sexual orientation, and others who still face double discrimination, higher instances of violence, and tangibly lower standards of living.

Gender equality week would be an opportunity to pause and to think about the work that we need to do today to ensure a better future.

[*Translation*]

We, here in this House, and all of our allies across the country still have so much work to do. Two-thirds of Canadians say they personally know a woman who has experienced physical or sexual abuse. One-fifth of men aged 18 to 24 do not fully understand the concept of consent. In 2014, a woman was murdered by her intimate partner every six days. As of last year, the rate of female intimate partner homicide remained unchanged. On any given night, more than 3,000 women seek shelter from an unsafe home.

Today there are still over 1,000 missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in Canada. This state of affairs is an unforgivable injustice and not only does it carry a profound social and cultural cost, but it is estimated that dealing with the ongoing struggles of violence against women and its aftermath costs Canada billions each year.

[*English*]

While we have come far, today women still account for less than a quarter of jobs in science, in large part because many qualified, passionate women find themselves driven out of their field.

In my own field and those of the rest of us in this House, when it comes to women's political representation, Canada ranks 61st in the world. We trail behind countries like Sudan, Iraq, and Cuba. Women have never held more than 26% of the seats in this House, and women's representation at all levels of government has not increased significantly in over 20 years.

[*Translation*]

Across Canada women continue to attain higher levels of education and higher levels of job experience, and yet they continue to earn less than men. Across the country women make 73¢ on the dollar of what men make. This inequality is exacerbated in the cases of women who are visible minorities, women who are indigenous, and women with disabilities. Women are more likely to be compelled into extensive periods of unpaid labour, such as caring for children or senior family members.

Even when a couple is cognizant of the historical and ongoing social factors at play that pressure women to take on these traditional roles, a couple's economic reality—the reality of the pay gap, of the various barriers women face in the workforce, and of the deficit of affordable alternatives—perpetuates the problem, too often making it the rational choice for the woman to forego her salary and job security to take on child care or other unpaid caregiving, rather than a male spouse.

Private Members' Business

To be clear, gender equality week would not be a time to wallow in doom and gloom, but rather to motivate both women and men to commit to do better. For my part, I am proud of work that has been done and continues to be done on all of these fronts.

This week the Standing Committee on the Status of Women will begin to draft its report on violence against young women and girls in Canada after hearing months of testimony. I am certain that this report will work in concert with the Minister of Status of Women's cross-Canada consultations to develop solutions to eliminate gender-based violence.

I was proud a few months ago that the Minister of Status of Women announced \$90 million in funding for transitional women's shelters. When I chaired the Special Committee on Pay Equity, all parties worked together to draft a substantive report with broad agreement on all the principle priorities. Pay equity is a human right.

• (1130)

[English]

To solve the issues that are so deeply rooted in our culture as misogyny and gender inequality requires more than legislation. It requires dialogue and the ability to share experiences across the country. Gender equality week would be a springboard for that dialogue. It would provide a logical opportunity for schools to introduce teachable moments, for governments to bring forward public awareness campaigns, and for our ongoing issues to enter public awareness and the popular dialogue. Gender equality week would be a stepping-off point for inclusive dialogue and a contemplative thematic preamble to Women's History Month's historical focus.

[Translation]

I am proud to be a member of this House alongside so many other strong women and men who call themselves feminists. I am proud that the Prime Minister is leading the way on gender equality, that we have a gender equal cabinet, and that we recently formed an all-party women's caucus to move these issues forward. I am especially proud of my colleague from Mississauga—Lakeshore for bringing this important bill to be debated today.

I look forward to joining with all of my honourable colleagues and with Canadians next October to celebrate gender equality week.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Resuming debate. Seeing no one rising on debate, I invite the hon. member for Mississauga—Lakeshore to provide his five-minute right of reply.

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, welcome back to you and all of my colleagues. It is indeed an honour to speak on the first parliamentary day of 2017, the year of our 150th anniversary.

To start off, I would like to thank my colleagues in the House for their interest in Bill C-309, an act to establish gender equality week, for their important contributions to the debate at second reading, and for their support. I would also like to thank the members of my incredible team for their tireless efforts, and the stakeholders, community organizations, and Canadians from all walks of life who shared their views with us. In particular, I want to thank Rachelle

Bergen and the Strength in Stories team for their ideas that helped bring us to where we are today.

This effort is about building a more inclusive society. We think about gender equality week as an opportunity to rally all Canadians around a very important issue and to generate additional momentum for social change. It is not an occasion to celebrate accomplishments, but as reflected in the paragraphs in the preamble, gender equality week seeks to raise awareness of the most profound remaining challenges and offers a platform to work collaboratively on concrete solutions.

To be absolutely clear, I am very proud of what we as Canadians are already doing to achieve gender equality and equity. In November 2015, our Prime Minister formed Canada's first cabinet with female and male parity. Our government has launched an inquiry into Canada's missing and murdered aboriginal and indigenous women, and the Minister of Status of Women is developing a federal strategy against gender-based violence.

[Translation]

The Government of Canada introduced Bill C-16, which protects Canadians of minority gender identity and expression by adding gender identity and expression to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act.

• (1135)

[English]

In early December 2016, the Governor of the Bank of Canada, the Minister of Finance, and the Minister of Status of Women announced that Nova Scotia businesswoman and civil rights activist Viola Desmond will be the very first Canadian woman to be featured on a Canadian banknote. However, important as these and other actions are, there is more work ahead of us than there is behind us, and to close the remaining gaps, the government will need the advocacy, support, and commitment of Canadians.

Bill C-309 recognizes that need and issues a call to action to all Canadians to become involved: men, women, Canadians of minority gender identity and expression, children, students, educators, civil servants at all levels of government, young and established professionals, new Canadians, indigenous peoples, Canadians in law enforcement and our armed forces, and seniors. Involvement in gender equality week could take a wide range of forms, including town hall discussions, university and college colloquia, music, plays, literature, film projects, workplace round tables, the formulation and presentation of academic research, public rallies, fundraisers, and social media, radio, and television events and campaigns.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Our consultations with various groups, organizations, and different levels of government helped us develop a substantive preamble that gives Canadians a fuller perspective of the challenges that lie ahead. The challenges posed by gender-based violence and the gender wage gap were identified as particularly critical hurdles that we, as Canadians, must address and overcome. Through active engagement, Canadians can achieve real progress on these fronts.

[English]

I look forward to working on Bill C-309 with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle of the House in the days, weeks, and months ahead. I encourage my fellow members to support the bill, as the time to act is now. It is only through concerted, sustained action that real and lasting social change can become a reality.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division is deferred until Wednesday, February 1, 2017, just before private members' business.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Assistant Deputy Chair (Mr. Anthony Rota): The House will suspend until noon.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:38 a.m.)

● (1200)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12 p.m.)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

There have been some consultations among the parties, and I believe you would find agreement for the following motion:

Motion

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Statements by Ministers, pursuant to Standing Order 33, shall be taken up at 1:15 p.

m., later this day, and that a representative of the Bloc Québécois and the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands also be permitted to comment briefly thereon.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

STATISTICS ACT

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.) moved that Bill C-36, an act to amend the Statistics Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted and pleased today to rise to discuss Bill C-36, an act to amend the Statistics Act.

As members well know, statistics play a critical role in democratic societies. Information is essential to understanding ourselves, our past, and our future. Businesses, civil society, researchers, the public, and the government itself rely on the integrity and accuracy of data.

[Translation]

High-quality data is needed for planning services, improving social conditions, and helping businesses expand. That is why statistical information produced by the government has to be of good quality and satisfactory to its users.

[English]

Impartial data is essential for making informed decisions about the services upon which all Canadians rely. I am talking about issues around housing, education, public transportation, and skills training, among other things, because these services touch every Canadian from coast to coast to coast.

Our government believes that decisions regarding official statistics should be made exclusively on professional considerations. Indeed, there is widespread agreement internationally that statistical agencies must operate with a high level of professional independence, in day-to-day operations, from direction and oversight by the government.

What do we mean by independence?

[Translation]

We mean that national statistical agencies must be guided exclusively by professional considerations on decisions related to their operations and data-gathering methods. The same goes for every other aspect of statistics production. These agencies must also be free of interference from the government or interest groups.

Government Orders

[English]

That is how Canadians can be confident that the statistical information produced on their behalf is impartial and of the highest possible quality.

Internationally, approaches to independence vary. For example, the Netherlands, Ireland, and New Zealand have explicit provisions on independence in their legislation. The United Kingdom Statistics Authority is a non-ministerial department that reports directly to Parliament. Meanwhile, Statistics Netherlands is an autonomous body.

Regardless of how countries around the world define independence, they all follow a common set of principles.

Canada endorses two documents that outline these international principles. These documents are the United Nations' "Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics" and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's "Recommendation of the OECD Council on Good Statistical Practice". These are the two principles we follow.

I am proud to say that the proposed amendments to the Statistics Act are aligned with these documents.

● (1205)

[Translation]

These amendments will ensure that data produced by Statistics Canada continue to be accurate, reliable, and of the highest quality. They will also help ensure that Canadians remain confident in the impartiality of the information gathered on their behalf.

[English]

The first point I would like to mention is the need for formal independence. Currently, Statistics Canada is treated, by convention, as an arm's-length agency, with little direct involvement by the minister overseeing it. That is the current practice. However, the agency's independence is not formally legislated, so it is more by convention and not by legislation.

The previous government's decision to replace the 2011 mandatory long-form census with the voluntary survey exposed a vulnerability in the Statistics Act. This is an issue we heard about often, at times, when we were at the doors during the campaign. The legislation allowed the government of the day to make a key decision on a statistical matter, and the decision was made with very little openness and transparency.

[Translation]

Replacing the long-form census with a voluntary survey compromised the quality and accuracy of data about Canadians. Several small communities did not have access to information that was important for local decision-making. The decision to eliminate the long-form census was condemned by Canadians who use statistics.

[English]

The proposed amendments in Bill C-36 would enshrine in law the long-standing convention of independence in statistical matters conferred on Statistics Canada. Again, we would take the convention

and put it into law. These amendments would safeguard the quality and impartiality of the information produced by Statistics Canada.

Let me outline the proposed amendments contained in this bill, because details matter.

Under the current act, the minister responsible for Statistics Canada has overarching authority for decisions about the agency's operations and methods for gathering, compiling, and producing statistical information. In practice, this authority is delegated to the chief statistician. The bill would amend the act to formally make the chief statistician responsible for all operations and decisions related to statistical products. That includes the long-form census.

As part of the amendments in the bill, the minister would retain the authority to issue directives on statistical programs. Again, the minister would still be responsible for what statistics and information were needed. For example, in the context of our government, as members know, we are investing a great deal of time, effort, and energy in clean technology. If we needed information about clean technology and about companies and growth in the market, we would say that is what we need. How that information was obtained would be the responsibility of the chief statistician.

The bill would ensure greater transparency around these directives as well. It would empower the chief statistician to publicly request written direction before acting on the minister's directions for a statistical program. In addition, should the minister deem it to be in the national interest to make a decision that directly affects matters related to operations, or even data-gathering methods, it would have to be authorized by the Governor in Council and also tabled in Parliament. That is the key component of the open and transparent aspect of this particular legislation.

The bill also proposes to create a new Canadian statistics advisory council, which would replace the existing National Statistics Council. The new advisory council would focus on the overall quality of the national statistical system. That includes the relevance, accuracy, accessibility, and timeliness of the statistical information produced. The goal of this new council would be to increase transparency and ensure that Canada's statistical system continues to meet the needs of Canadians. The council would provide advice to the minister as well as to the chief statistician. To continue to improve transparency, the council would publish an annual report, accessible to all Canadians, on the state of the national statistical system.

In anticipation of the bill's passage, I would like to thank the members of the National Statistics Council for their service. They should be proud of the important contributions they have made over the past 30 years to the work of Statistics Canada, so I thank them once again.

The bill would also change the appointment of the chief statistician, and this is another important detail. This appointment would be for a renewable term of no more than five years.

Government Orders

•(1210)

The appointment would be made through an open, transparent, merit-based selection process in accordance with our government's new approach to Governor in Council appointments. This is the process we would follow with respect to the selection of a new chief statistician.

The chief statistician will serve during good behaviour and may be removed by the Governor in Council for cause. It is based on merit and performance. This change will strengthen the independence of the chief statistician in his or her decision making.

It is also important to highlight that the minister would remain accountable to Parliament for Canada's publicly funded statistical agency. As the minister presently responsible for this agency, I will be personally responsible, and so will my office, for the accountability of this agency.

The amendments to the Statistics Act have been drafted to ensure the responsibilities of the minister and the chief statistician are more clearly defined than they are currently.

[*Translation*]

The bill also has provisions concerning Canadians who refuse to complete the census and other mandatory surveys. The general consensus is that a prison sentence is a disproportionate penalty for the offence. The bill would amend the act to eliminate prison sentences for Canadians who refuse to answer mandatory surveys.

[*English*]

Canadians who do not comply will continue to face the possibility of fines of up to \$500. The updated act will also the transfer of census records after 92 years to the Library and Archives of Canada. That will apply to all censuses of populations conducted from 2021 onward. For censuses taken in 2006, 2011, and 2016, and the 2011 national household survey, the records will be released, where the consent has been given, to the Library and Archives Canada after 92 years.

We will respect the previous censuses and the information provided by the individuals who fill them out, and also ensure we protect their privacy. This change in the act will make a rich source of information available to historians, genealogists, and other researchers. It is so important that we understand our past if we are to understand and appreciate the possibilities going forward.

[*Translation*]

Amendments would also update the language of the act in order to reflect technological changes to data collection methods, which include the use of electronic surveys rather than paper surveys.

•(1215)

[*English*]

The amendments in Bill C-36 will better align Statistics Canada with the guidance of the UN and the OECD. They will ensure that Canadians can continue to rely on the integrity and accuracy of the data produced by their national statistical agency.

I also want to highlight the outreach presently taking place with respect to this bill as well, because it has a key component. The

amendments in the bill were developed based on consultations with many Canadians, as well as with international experts and bodies. They include the OECD, as well as the former heads of statistical offices in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia.

The government also conducted a review of statistical legislation in six countries. They include, again, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, United States, Netherlands, and Ireland. These consultations allowed us to consider various approaches to international norms. We also worked closely with stakeholders across the country as well.

Statistics Canada consulted extensively with the National Statistics Council and the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Consultative Council on Statistical Policy. The agency also engaged with 16 other federal departments that are major users of its information. We really wanted to get a sense of the information, and the concerns and the viewpoints from the users. They all support the proposals contained in the bill.

I also want to take this opportunity to highlight some of the actions already taken by our government. Reinforcing the integrity and independence of Statistics Canada is a key priority of this government. It is something on which we campaigned, something we put in our platform, and something we are delivering on.

My first official act as Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, and I vividly recall this day, was to restore the mandatory long-form census. Canadians have responded overwhelmingly to the return of the long-form census. I am proud to report that the 2016 population census was the most successful in our country's history. After I made the announcement, I had the opportunity to go out into my constituency, knock on doors, meet with Canadians, and talk to them about what our government was doing. They all mentioned this issue to me because they were paying attention to the news and really cared about this issue. That was reflected in the overall response rate as well, with more than 98% of people responding, which was higher than 2011 and 2006. Frankly, it was the highest response rate in the history of the census.

[*Translation*]

I also have to say that the response rate of almost 98% was the highest ever reported. These impressive results show Canadians' commitment to the census program. They prove that Canadians believe that it is important for decision-making to be based on accurate and reliable data.

[*English*]

Our government has also taken steps to reinstate the University and College Academic Staff System survey. I met with individuals from academia in the lobby who were so proud of this decision. This survey provides up-to-date information about the composition of faculty members at Canadian universities and colleges. Data compiled through the survey will be used to recruit faculty who reflect Canada's diversity.

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[Translation]

This survey supports the government's innovation agenda, which was implemented in order to establish favourable conditions for economic growth, create well-paid jobs, and grow the middle class. Encouraging diversity and inclusion in Canada's knowledge institutions is key, because an economy based on innovation needs good ideas from people of all backgrounds.

[English]

The amendments contained in Bill C-36 also support our government's commitment to promoting innovation. By making decisions that are informed by reliable and accurate data, Canadians can turn information into useful insights or solutions that benefit everyone. This is a key part of our government's innovation and economic agenda as well.

In conclusion, we live in a world where knowledge drives innovation, and innovation depends on the free flow of reliable, accurate, and up-to-date information. I am proud that this bill reflects that direction and our government's desire to follow through on a campaign commitment to end political interference with respect to our statistical agency.

• (1220)

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the great things about Canada is our diversity, and we celebrate that in many ways. However, this bill causes me some concern. It would replace the existing advisory council, which currently has representation from each of our 13 provinces and territories.

Members have travelled the country as I have and know that the issues of primary concern in Nova Scotia may be quite different from those of primary concern in Yukon. The council with which the minister is proposing to replace the original council does not have 13 members; it only has 10. In other words, three of our territories or provinces would be excluded on the assumption that the others would be evenly dispersed.

First, why is the minister replacing the old council? Second, if he is so big on diversity, then why is he excluding three of our 10 provinces or territories on the structure of the new council?

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Mr. Speaker, I am glad my colleague was paying attention to the various details I outlined. That is one proposed change in the bill. That change does reflect the fact that we want the new Canadian statistical advisory council to have a strong mandate to not only provide advice to the chief statistician but to the minister as well. That is important.

The composition of the advisory council would be done through the process that this government has promoted, a Governor in Council process, which will be merit-based and will look at diversity and geography. It would also ensure that we would have individuals with the skill set to provide good reliable advice to the minister and to the chief statistician. I am confident that the composition of the committee and the individuals on the committee will provide the diverse aspects, the diverse ideas that are needed for the agency to move forward in a robust and productive way. I can assure the member opposite that the concern she has raised will be addressed in this process.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is on privacy and the census. The census first started to have difficulty when the Paul Martin administration decided to outsource census data collection to Lockheed Martin, which is essentially an aerospace manufacturer that was also involved in census operations in other countries. This public outsourcing created issues under the Privacy Act. As a result of that, we had a number of census issues relating to the public's confidence in the privacy of personal information. The census then went through a series of controversial measures, resulting in it being made a short-form census, which has now been returned to the long-form version. The outsourcing of information to the private sector that included exposure to the United States was an essential part of the problem.

What guarantees can the minister give us that he and his administration will not outsource more public jobs related to data collection for the Canadian census in order to instill public confidence?

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the issue of privacy, this is a concern to our government and to me. I can assure the member that privacy, reliability, and accuracy of data are the reasons why we are proposing the bill.

The day-to-day operations of how the data is collected, how the integrity of the data is maintained, and how operational matters are determined will be subject to the chief statistician and Statistics Canada. They have the professional independence and the ability to proceed without any political interference. At the same time, I am also the minister responsible to the House and accountable to the House. I can assure the member opposite that both of these aspects are addressed in the bill.

The chief statistician will have the understanding and the know-how at an operational level to deal with issues around privacy and how data is collected to ensure it is accurate and reliable. The chief statistician and individuals in Statistics Canada are professionals. They know what to do and how to do it. We trust them in these matters. That is why they are responsible for the how and, as the minister, I am responsible for the what and ultimately accountable to Parliament.

I can assure the member that if any of these issues do come up, he has the ability to ask me about them in the House or he can call me any time. I am accountable for that.

The bill would enshrine that convention into law and would ensure that the operational know-how and the issues that my colleague raised around privacy and data collection would now be done by professionals, individuals who have the skills and the ability to do so in a proper manner.

• (1225)

[Translation]

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development on his speech and on the important bill he introduced. I also want to say how excited I am about working with him as his parliamentary secretary.

Government Orders

[English]

Why do we need good data? What in the context of good governance, what in the context of the current economic situation, necessitates this bill, necessitates the collection of accurate and reliable data?

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Mr. Speaker, I too look forward to working with the new parliamentary secretary of innovation, science, and economic development. He did a tremendous job as the parliamentary secretary for international trade. Her loss is my gain, and I look forward to working with him on these important matters.

With respect to the question he asked, why good quality data is important, it has such an important impact on the lives of Canadians. Good quality, reliable data will allow, for example, municipalities and our communities to plan better, particularly in my riding. For example, in Mississauga—Malton, and the surrounding regions, there has been an enormous change in demographics and population. To plan for schools and housing, those types of changes require good quality data so we can provide better services and outcomes to Canadians.

That is why our government is so committed to advancing the strengthening of the professional independence of Statistics Canada. That is why our government reintroduced the mandatory long-form census to make sure we have good quality, reliable data. It is part of our government's overall economic agenda as well. Good quality, reliable data is essential for innovation, economic development, and developing our communities. That is why this data is so essential for today and for generations to come.

The changes we are proposing are designed to end any type of political interference, because it is important that Canadians, frankly, have trust in their institutions. Statistics Canada is such an important institution, with a storied history when it comes to collecting data, producing that data in a very reliable manner, and that data has an enormous impact on the day-to-day lives of Canadians.

I would like to thank the member for the question and assure him that our government is committed to good quality, reliable data.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the words the minister has put on the record. Perhaps he could reflect on the civil service that has been administering the census over the years.

I think it is known virtually around the world how high the Canadian civil service is held in esteem for the fabulous work it does. As the minister pointed out, there are many different stakeholders out there. Non-profit and private groups and governments of all different levels are very dependent on Statistics Canada doing a good job. That is what it does, day in and day out. It is done that way because of a highly motivated, dedicated group of civil servants.

Could the minister provide his thoughts in regard to the civil service and the role it plays with Statistics Canada?

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my remarks, the public service was obviously essential in the outreach we had designed in terms of being able to look at users and some of the concerns and issues they had. Not only did it help me put

together this very important piece of legislation, but we also consulted 16 different departments that use this data. We asked what they use it for, what kind of quality assurances they are looking for, and what type of data are they looking for. That enables me to make decisions on what data we are trying to collect and what we need the information for, because it is very important to understand it from a user perspective. The role of the public service has been essential in this.

One other area I would like to highlight as well is, when we worked with the public service, in general, one of the changes we discussed in the bill was eliminating and removing prison time. That is very important as well because it was disproportionate to the offence. We have been very clear about that in the bill as well. We would still have the fines.

I can assure the member that the public service played a critical role in developing this legislation, and it is also a user of good quality data.

• (1230)

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since this is my first opportunity to speak in the House since the start of the new year, I would like to welcome back all of my colleagues. I hope that they and you, Mr. Speaker, had a wonderful break and are charged up and ready to go for this new session.

Before the House rose in December, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development introduced Bill C-36, an act to amend the Statistics Act. The bill proposes a number of amendments to the Statistics Act that are intended to provide more independence to Statistics Canada and to the chief statistician, at least that is the claim. However, in order for us as members of the House to properly debate these changes, I think it is important to first list all of the sections of the act that would be modified or added.

First, these changes would give sole responsibility to the chief statistician, or the CS, to decide, based on his or her professional opinion, how to carry out the methods and procedures of all statistical programs. This includes the collection, compilation, analysis, abstraction, and publication of all statistical information.

The chief statistician would have full authority over the content within statistical releases and publications issued by Statistics Canada and how and when this information is circulated. What is more, the chief statistician would be responsible for all operations and staff at Statistics Canada, and would be appointed for a fixed renewable term of five years.

The bill would establish the Canadian statistics advisory council, which would be comprised of only 10 members and would replace the National Statistics Council, which has been functioning since the mid-1980s. The new council would advise the chief statistician and the minister, whereas the National Statistics Council solely advises the chief statistician, which is a key difference. The Liberals are saying that they are giving the chief statistician more independence, and yet they would increase indirect supervision by the council through the minister.

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Within its mandate, the Canadian statistics advisory council would focus on the quality of the national statistical system, including the relevance, accuracy, accessibility, and timeliness of the statistical information that is produced by Statistics Canada. It would also be required to make a public annual report on the state of the statistical system.

As well, Bill C-36 would allow for the transfer of census information from Statistics Canada to Library and Archives Canada after 92 years, without the consent of Canadians. Once transferred to Library and Archives Canada, this information would be made available to all Canadians.

Finally, the bill would repeal imprisonment as a penalty for any offence committed by a respondent, and it would amend certain sections to make the language more modern and eliminate discrepancies between the English and French versions of the act.

After reading the bill at length, it has become evident that there are many aspects that could be of concern and possibly should be of concern to Canadians and that merit further discussion.

As Her Majesty's official opposition, it our duty to critique and highlight any issues that we find evident in all legislation put forward by the Liberal government. As such, I will be shedding some light on some of the concerns that I have regarding Bill C-36.

Our Conservative Party supports the work that Statistics Canada does and the key statistical data that it produces. We know how important this information is for governments, public policy-makers, and the research and academic communities. It is essential for anyone who uses Statistics Canada data for any purpose, be it businesses, not-for-profit organizations, or individuals, that they find the data relevant and reliable. In other words, everyone needs to know that they can trust the accuracy and quality of the data.

However, the privacy of Canadians is also fundamental, and fostering an environment that builds trust between Canadians and Statistics Canada is therefore crucial. The Liberal government must ensure that the right balance is struck between protecting the privacy rights of Canadians while collecting good quality data.

• (1235)

In the past, Canadians have expressed concern with the questions asked of them in response to the census, particularly the long-form census, and in surveys conducted by Statistics Canada. They found questions such as the number of bedrooms in their house, what time of day they leave for work and return, or how long it takes to get there to the intrusion of their privacy, and indeed in some cases, they perceived the cumulative answers as a risk to their very home security.

With the changes that the Liberal government has proposed in the bill, the minister would no longer be able to issue directives to the chief statistician on methods, procedures, and operations. This means that the chief statistician would have sole authority to ask any and all questions that he or she deems fit on the census or survey, including those that Canadians could find intrusive.

As a result of that, it could potentially result in the creation of distrust and cynicism between Statistics Canada and the public,

which would then of course hinder the quality of the data that StatsCan receives from those being surveyed.

With the abdication of responsibility from the minister to the chief statistician, who is responsible for answering to Canadians when they raise concerns regarding the methods used? This is an important question, and quite frankly seems to be the opposite of the open and transparent government that the Liberals keep touting.

In addition to this, I would like to touch a bit further on the section of the bill that amends the responsibilities of the chief statistician. The current changes state that the chief statistician will:

...decide, based strictly on professional statistical standards that he or she considers appropriate, the methods and procedures for carrying out statistical programs regarding (i) the collection, compilation, analysis, abstraction and publication of statistical information that is produced or is to be produced by Statistics Canada.

As a member of the official opposition, it is my duty to highlight any implications that a bill may have, regardless of intent. Even though it may not be the intent, the bill authorizes Statistics Canada to house all of its data wherever it chooses. If the chief statistician would like to move the private information of Canadians to a third party, it would have the ability to do so if the bill became law.

This could be quite concerning. The security and safety of Canadians and their private information should be a top priority for the government. Any use of a third party to house this data could create security concerns, and again damage the view that some Canadians have of Statistics Canada.

The Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development has also suggested that a Canadian statistics advisory council be created to replace the National Statistics Council. As I mentioned earlier, this new council would be comprised of 10 members, and would focus on the quality of the national statistical system, including the relevance, accuracy, accessibility, and timeliness of the statistical information provided.

For those who do not know much about the National Statistics Council, which is already in place and has been since the mid-1980s, I will provide a brief background, so that we can complete a full comparison of what is in place with what the government is proposing to change it to.

According to Statistics Canada, "the National Statistics Council advises the Chief Statistician of Canada on the full range of Statistics Canada's activities, particularly on overall program priorities." The council was created in 1985 under the Mulroney government and currently has representatives from all 13 provinces and territories.

While the new council would provide insight to the chief statistician and the minister, as opposed to only the former, and would produce annual reports on the state of our statistical system, it would no longer have representation from right across Canada. This could result in one area of the country being favoured over another, which certainly would not be fair to Canadians in those parts of the country without representation.

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●(1240)

As an example, if there is no representation for many of the east coast provinces, the council could fail to advise on potential questions simply because it does not have a strong knowledge of the area and of what matters most to Canadians who live there. As a result, we could miss out on important data that is crucial for making good quality decisions on behalf of Atlantic Canadians.

I have to ask why the Liberals would decide to create a council that does not fully represent Canada as a whole when we already have one that does instead of simply altering the mandate of the National Statistics Council, which already provides insight from all parts of Canada.

We have already seen the Liberals give out benefits to their friends, especially if they are Chinese billionaires or can pay \$1,500 for access to government. Perhaps this council would be another way they could appoint and reward their friends, because quite frankly, I do not understand why the government would actually choose to create in legislation an advisory body that does not represent all Canadians.

As Canadians, we are extremely fortunate to live in a democratic society where the rights of citizens and the protection of those rights are treated with the utmost importance. Canada has enshrined those rights in law and without them, our society and Canadian way life that we cherish would cease to function as it does today. Some of these rights include the right to freedom of speech, the right to privacy, and the right to consent. The main job of any government is to make sure that these rights are preserved and protected.

Since the government has a crucial role to play in the conservation of these rights, I have a hard time understanding why the Liberal government would choose to remove certain rights from Canadians. I am speaking here of the right to consent. As I stated earlier, the Liberals want to take away the ability of Canadians to decide whether they want their personal census records made available to the public after a period of 92 years. Canadians should always have the right to consent to the transfer of any personal information obtained through the census. As a government that claims to be open and transparent, frankly, I see this as yet another failed attempt.

Canadians should have the comfort of knowing that their privacy is being respected and have the opportunity, if they so choose, to make their information public. It is not the right of the current government or indeed any government to decide what information should remain private and what should become public and when. The Liberals say that they are attempting to generate a system that is more accountable to Canadians, but by giving more independence to the chief statistician and passing off their responsibility, they are in fact creating a system that is less accountable to Canadians.

Finally, this bill would repeal the imprisonment consequence for not responding to a mandatory question or for giving false information while maintaining the established fines. These fines include up to \$1,000 for not completing a mandatory census and up to \$500 for providing false information. Canadians have always believed that jail time for not completing a census or for giving false information on a census because they felt uncomfortable was an extremely harsh punishment for this type of offence.

When the previous Conservative government consulted Canadians on issues surrounding requests for information from Statistics Canada, this was a main concern. That is why the Conservatives revoked the criminal punishment from all censuses and surveys that were not mandatory from 2011 onward. Further to this, in 2015, former Conservative member of Parliament Joe Preston proposed a bill to repeal the jail time associated with all mandatory surveys, which all members of the House voted in favour of. Unfortunately, because of the 2015 election, the bill was killed before it could reach royal assent.

In closing, there is no doubt our society relies on information that it receives from the work done by Statistics Canada. It is important work, but the private lives of Canadians should never be put in jeopardy. Canadians, in their personal and business affairs, need to be able to trust the data that they give and get from Statistics Canada, and betraying that trust does not promote a stable environment where quality data can be obtained.

●(1245)

The Liberal government must ensure that it has the right balance between the rights of Canadians and the collection of data. It must be answerable to Canadians for its decisions, such as the decision to create another statistics council instead of altering the mandate of the council that already exists. It is crucial that we continue the debate around this bill to make sure that it protects the rights and the interests of all Canadians.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member made reference to the idea of open and transparent government. We have taken that issue quite seriously. Since taking office, we have seen a national government here in Ottawa being just that: open and transparent. I would add that it is a government that has confidence in the public sector. It is a government that believes in the importance of statistical information for many different stakeholders, whether it is the different levels of government, the private sector, or the non-profits. Having statistical information is critical to making good policy decisions. This is something in which this government believes. The Harper government did not do that. It did not have the same confidence in the importance of the civil service or statistics. We saw that in the policy decisions that were made back then.

In order for governments and others to make good decisions, it is incredibly important that statistical information be there and be accurate. With this legislation we will see a more independent StatsCanada which will in fact enhance Canada's credibility in collecting statistics that are necessary to create good, sound policy decisions that will have a positive impact on Canada's middle class and all Canadians going into the future. Would the member not agree?

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Hon. Diane Finley: Mr. Speaker, before I had the great honour of representing the good people of Haldimand—Norfolk, I was in the private sector and also in the public sector for many years. Large parts of most of my jobs included doing a lot of research whether it was to develop a new product line, whether it was to predict sales volumes and demographic changes, and I was a very reliant user of Statistics Canada. Not only that, but I was the minister of human resources and skills development for over five years. That department was the largest user, the largest customer of StatsCan, so I am extremely familiar with just how important it is that StatsCan has good, reliable data.

My concern is that without the appropriate oversight representing the full scope of our country, without the appropriate accountabilities, there is an opportunity for things that we saw happening a number of years ago where the census questions and survey questions being put out by Canada created a disturbance. Many of my constituents told me that Statistics Canada was asking too many questions that were of concern to them. They did not mind one or two, but when all of them were put together, a picture formed and people were getting worried. People said it was none of the government's business. They told me that they were lying on their census forms. That is not going to create good quality information. That is not going to create the quality of information that we want to see, need to see, and expect to see from StatsCan.

My concern is about the appropriate accountabilities to make sure that the rights, privileges, and privacy of Canadians continue to be respected.

• (1250)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there has been consistency and inconsistency with the census over the last decade with all the changes that have taken place from the long form to the short form, and the Harper administration was very much a part of that. Now new legislation is being introduced. We are dealing now with a situation where we are asking public servants, many of whom were maligned in the past when it comes to how they were treated by the previous administration, to actually fix this and to go forward with further changes.

It was the Harper regime that created the Phoenix pay system which is now a debacle under the Liberals. What does her party have to say about this situation where public servants, including the employees at StatsCanada, who worked for her and her colleagues to get legislation passed and get other things accomplished for their constituencies, are not being paid on a regular basis?

Hon. Diane Finley: Mr. Speaker, I have to correct the hon. member on his statement. In fact, it was the Liberal government that authorized the go-ahead for the Phoenix pay system. The way it has performed is indeed completely and totally unacceptable. I do need to correct the member on that statement.

It is important that we rely on the public service. They are professionals who are trained to do their jobs. They give their service to Canadians, just as we do. I have had the privilege to spend many years in this House, and I have had the opportunity to work very closely, co-operatively, and indeed very productively with a wide range of public servants from a wide range of departments. It has been a great privilege to work with them.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Questions and comments. I want to remind hon. members that they have to be at their seat in order to be recognized to speak in the House.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I was intrigued by one of the responses the member made to my question. She implied that many Canadians were lying on their census forms because they were getting frustrated with the number of questions. To what degree does the member believe that was a problem, or was that purely speculation on her part? How did she become aware of that serious issue? If that is the case, has the member advanced her concerns to Statistics Canada?

Hon. Diane Finley: Mr. Speaker, when we are not sitting in this chamber, we are often back in our ridings meeting with people. We hear from our constituents, whether it is on a formal basis in our office or at events that we attend.

Usually at the time year when census forms come around, people bring that up in conversation. It did disturb me that so many of my constituents and people from whom I heard had concerns about the scope of the questions, and about what they perceived as the invasion of their privacy with those questions, particularly when the questions were taken in the aggregate.

These are anecdotal stories, but they are enough to cause me some concern. I do hear them. I have heard them over many years. That is something we need to be very cognizant of whenever surveys are being designed; otherwise, the quality of the data just will not be there.

We have to make sure that Canadians are encouraged to provide full, complete, and accurate data so that in turn when they need it for business decisions or personal planning, they will have access to good quality data that is relevant, reliable, and accurate.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I just want to bring the member's attention to a story that was in *Maclean's* in 2015, which talked about the small town of Melville in Saskatchewan, where fewer than 50% of the one-third of people in that town actually completed the voluntary census. As a result, it became a statistical ghost town. They knew how many people lived there, but not how many people were unemployed, who lived in poverty, who were immigrants, single, divorced, and so on.

The member talked about the fact that we need to have all this reliable data, but it was her government's actions that resulted in this town becoming a ghost town. We did not know anything about it. I appreciate the member's support of statistical reliability now, but I am just wondering how she meshes that with the previous government's actions that resulted in this actually happening.

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•(1255)

Hon. Diane Finley: Mr. Speaker, we always want to make sure that we have good quality, reliable data, but we also need to protect the rights, the privacy, and the privileges of Canadians. That is our objective here today, to make sure that any changes in this bill are going to pursue those objectives, and not just pursue them but achieve those objectives.

We have to have good quality data. If we do not, then we will be in trouble in a whole lot of ways.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise again to talk about the Canadian census. There have been several debates on this issue over the last number of years, and Bill C-36 is the latest machination of that.

Basically, the census is a particularly important piece of information gathering that is critical for our economic, social, and societal planning. It is important to note that information collecting through the census is important for not only its particular use but also for other surveys and other types of public opinion research that are done on a multitude of issues, where the census is used to backstop those types of surveys, whether on agriculture, economics, public housing, or transit. As well, the census is important for our democracy. The fact is that it helps generate the information necessary for everything from locations and geography of where and how people live to the distribution of seats here in the House of Commons, as well as ensuring that different population-analysis requirements are looked at; for example, on issues of urban transit planning more recently, but also the use of land in Canada.

There is no doubt that there are dozens upon dozens of Canadian professional associations that support a solid, robust census: one that remains independent, protects personal privacy, and can be valuable, as well patterned so we can look at historical changes in all of the areas I mentioned before.

The challenge we have had in the previous Harper administration, the current one now to some degree, and more importantly, the past Liberal regimes has been the inconsistencies and anomalies from playing politics with the census.

The first I would mention is the ideological drive by the Liberals to outsource public service jobs. That was essentially the first attack on the census, in the sense that we had one of the best-recognized information gathering and census distribution systems in the world. In fact, I participated in the year 2000 complete count as a city councillor, because the area that I represented often had a lot of people with different languages, some of them had not become Canadian citizens at that time, and others were not part of the community because of university and college during the full time of when the census was distributed and when it was returned. As well, we had the fact of absentee and other landlords who decided not to respond to the census. That was during the Chrétien regime, and there was an attempt in a number of small areas, ones that I represented as councillor, to improve that so we did not miss out on opportunities to improve the interaction and activity with government. Then the Right Hon. Herb Gray represented the riding, and it was a good indication and a good measure of working together with the city and with me as a councillor on how to improve the response rate, which was less than 50%.

All that connects to Bill C-36 and what has taken place since that time, because I come from a time when it was not politicized. We saw that when the Martin regime of the Liberals wanted to privatize the census, it disrupted the long-standing and secure foundation that was set up nearly two decades before that, with regard to its implementation. In fact, Canada was often touted as one of those places to examine for census improvement.

However, the outsourcing to a private arms manufacturing company that was doing other privatization measures across the globe created certain problems when it actually went to implement that. First was the intervention of the Patriot Act in the United States. The Patriot Act breached Canadian privacy regulations because under the Patriot Act, U.S. companies are not allowed to tell clients that they are actually giving their information to the federal government of the United States.

•(1300)

Therefore, when the attempt was made to outsource this to Minneapolis, if my memory serves me correctly, there was a long battle that took place in this House of Commons, with us as New Democrats, to retain that information in Canada. In fact, the contract ended up having to be amended so that the information was retained here.

Then we entered into the age of this outsourcing, which clearly became a problem for the many Canadians who were not supportive of it. However, we did not have the census in headlines until that time.

If we move forward to the next set of governments under the Harper administration, we quickly go through a number of different problems that emerged, the first and foremost being the move to a small census that was not mandatory. The challenge there and the outrage that we heard from a number of different scientific-based organizations, universities, and colleges with research capabilities was not only that the census information was at risk but that there was no doubt a break in the lineage that could be used to make further assessments and the continuity that was not there because we moved away from a long form stable census to that of a short-term short form one that certainly did not cut the mustard in any way, shape, or form. It became a controversy in the House of Commons for a number of years, eventually leading to the resignation of Munir Sheikh, who was the previous census chief executive officer. We have had other resignations since because there has been quite a connection between the political office and that of the census office.

I think that something of primary importance to Canadians is the recognition that we have—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order please. Although it is nice to see everyone back from our break and wanting to speak, all of the excitement is causing me a little difficulty in hearing the person who is speaking. Therefore, I want to remind everyone that there is someone speaking, and if they are having a conversation, to take it outside or into the lobby unless they are whispering.

The hon. member for Windsor West.

Government Orders

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I think everyone will be enthralled by my speech and will remain in the House, hopefully, to participate in debate.

It is important to note that, on the issue of the transition and politicalization, it was a challenge for our country, and it has been a loss. Here is where I would give the previous Liberals some credit. It was a co-campaign, as New Democrats and Liberals fought about some of these things. There were lots of shiny things thrown out there to follow. Most important is the one being addressed in Bill C-36, jail time. It was certainly one of those things that was seen as raw meat on the issue, thrown out by the Harper administration, quite embarrassingly, because we found that the facts did not basically matter in that debate. Bill C-36 would get rid of jailing individuals for non-completion and non-compliance with the census.

When we think about all the court cases and issues that we are dealing with right now and the challenges, we see there are several issues that I will not get into but are highly complex. However, the reality is that we have a serious issue with them. Trying to send someone to jail for not filling out a census form is not the appropriate use of public enforcement or our court system, and in general, not an appropriate way to convince people that the census is a value added for them, their families, and our country. I support wholeheartedly the elimination of that distraction and shiny bauble that is thrown out from time to time. It really was quite an interesting situation.

The problem we have with the census is still the independence issue, and we will see it at committee. One of the things I have raised at committee is the insinuation that there is a 92% response rate. I have not had a satisfactory response to the 92%, and we are still waiting for information on it. That would be helpful, coming from either the census or the minister's office. As I understand it right now with the system we have in place, essentially they could be counting full census applications, returns, or notes saying "no, I do not want to participate" stuffed in an envelope and sent back. We do not know the full extent, but at least there has been a high participation rate.

One of the other things is an understanding of privacy and when the information is released. That is critical. There is going to be a release after 92 years, and there are rules with that. That may sound irrelevant upfront, but I know from speaking with a lot of the community that there are people who are worried about their privacy and the use of that information. Having confidence is very important, so the 92-year set example is critical for us to ensure that. This way, there is no distinguishable difference. People will understand that, if they want to change the 92 years, there has to be amendment to legislation, and if there is amendment to legislation it would require a process in the House of Commons, a separate bill that would have to go through the Senate as well. There would at least be some stability there and some protection. Even though it might sound trivial, there are a lot of people concerned about the 92 years.

I mentioned that one of the troubling aspects we still have is around the concentration of power to the minister. It is diminished in the bill to some degree, but it would not separate it from Shared Services. It would accumulate and dominate any information sharing out there. We would like to see the preservation of the census independence. Shared Services Canada is one of the reasons Mr. Smith, the latest chief statistician, has decided to leave the position.

Therefore, at committee we will be looking at an amendment or change to continue to improve that type of independence.

● (1305)

As New Democrats, we value the public service, not only in terms of saying that but also in delivering on that. It is the central backbone of how we actually do business and operations.

I have been at committee when we have had chief executive officers complain about not getting their subsidies, because they want this incentive from a program or this other tax break or this other measure in place.

It is interesting. A lot who often complain that the government has to get out of the way are often the first to come and ask for something. In fact, I cannot remember a lobby situation by any business in my office or at committee that did not have a request attached to it. That is fine. That is fair, but they had also been actively lobbying about the elimination of the so-called fat in the public service, and they were complaining that they could not get stuff done, because there were not enough people. I question the fact that they had been champions of diminishing this group, and now that they could not get their paperwork done without assistance, their tactics were shameful.

This connects, very importantly, to the Phoenix situation we have right now. In this Liberal administration, there is disdain and a lack of concentration by a government that is more worried about where it goes, how it parties, and how it plans its next wave than about actually paying employees. There is no doubt that the Phoenix situation has gotten worse under the current administration, but there is a connection to the Conservatives. They cannot get out of that.

● (1310)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I just want to make sure everyone understands that there is a presentation being made. Someone is speaking in the House, and out of respect, if members do not mind, I would like to hear what that person has to say. If members want to have a conversation, either whisper or take it into the lobby. Thank you.

The hon. member for Windsor West.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I know it is a sensitive matter when we, as a government, do not pay our public servants for the work we are trying to have them do. I can appreciate that sensitivity on the other side of this debate. They have allowed the situation to fester. That is the reality. We are continually asking our public service to work on legislation like this, including Statistics Canada people, organizers, and workers who have not had their proper pay.

I notice some Liberals are laughing right now at this. They are making fun, probably, of it. I do not think it is fair that people who have to send their children off to school, make plans, and go into work every single day and who have signed a contract of agreement on remuneration are not being paid.

Routine Proceedings

Their continued laughter about this is sad. It is sad, because those are real lives. They are asking them to help contribute to the organizational structure and disbursement of income in Canada. The laughter is continuing. It will not distract me from the fact that Liberals are responsible for making sure that this situation has not improved. Is that the way they want to operate and conduct themselves, by laughing at public servants not being paid?

I just heard the word “bull” something. Apparently I do not even have the attention of the Speaker right now. I just heard foul language from a member of the Liberals over there, the word “bull”. I can finish it if you like, to get attention. I would be happy to do so.

The Speaker: I encourage all members to exercise restraint in the language they are using.

The member for Windsor West has the floor.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I do not care if foul language is used against me. I do not care if people are laughing at me on the other side when I talk about workers and their not getting paid. It will not bother me. It will not stop me from talking about these issues in the House of Commons.

We should not have to do that in this place. It should not be the case, but I cannot even get the attention of the Speaker, as is the case right now.

I will just continue, basically, because the microphone is on, to talk about other things until we actually get a resolution to the sad state of affairs in this House right now, which I have never seen in, basically, the 15 years I have been here.

The fact of the matter is that when “bull s” is said to me on a regular basis, and we have continued laughter from the Liberals about me, infringing on my privilege and my time to discuss something very important, and we have no intervention of seriousness from you, it is a disgrace to democracy.

In fact, I think that the tapes of this should be used and should be looked at, and the conduct, on a regular basis, because I can barely speak in this manner. I have been totally using my time for the last five—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Windsor West will take his seat for a moment.

The member referred to a comment from the other side, but he did not indicate who allegedly made this comment. I did not hear the comment. We can review *Hansard* for this or the blues. I certainly did not hear it. I call upon members very seriously to restrain themselves in their comments.

We have come to the time to move on to the next item.

It being 1:15 p.m., according to an order made earlier this day, the House will now proceed to Statements by Ministers. The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

●(1315)

[*Translation*]

SHOOTING IN QUEBEC CITY

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was with shock and sadness that Canadians heard about the devastating terrorist act that happened last night in Quebec City.

According to official reports, six people worshipping at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec have lost their lives, with many others seriously injured. These people were targeted for practising their faith. This was a terrorist attack. It was an attack on our most intrinsic and cherished values as Canadians: values of openness, diversity, and freedom of religion.

Our hearts go out to the victims. These people were our fellow citizens, ordinary Canadians. They were brothers, uncles, fathers, and friends. These were people of faith and of community. In the blink of an eye, they were robbed of their lives in an act of brutal violence. I know that there is a deeply personal connection between the community and their member of Parliament. The member for Louis-Hébert knows them well and has joined them at the centre many times. He is with them as we speak.

I want to remind each and every one of my 337 colleagues that we are all leaders in our communities. It is at times like these that our communities need our leadership the most. It is at times like these that we must live up to the honour that we have been given to sit in this House and represent Canadians. We need to reach out to our friends and neighbours; we need to bring our communities together; and we need to be there for the people we represent. They need us.

I want to say to those who were injured, the victims' families, the people of Quebec, and all Canadians that we will get to the bottom of this. Such an act of violence has no place in Canadian society.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to the first responders and thank local police, municipal authorities, and the Government of Quebec. I want to assure all Canadians that we will work very closely together over the next few days.

I would also like to thank the many political and religious leaders from around the world who have reached to us out since last night's events. Their thoughts and condolences have been greatly appreciated.

●(1320)

[*English*]

Canada has long been a diverse and accepting nation. We are kind, we are generous, and we embrace one another not in spite of our differences but because of them.

It is in tragic moments like this that we must come together in order to move forward. Canadians will not be broken by this violence. Our sense of spirit and our sense of unity will only strengthen.

Routine Proceedings

The people who commit these acts mean to test our resolve and weaken our values. They aim to divide us, to sow discord and plant hatred. We will not close our minds. We will open our hearts.

Mr. Speaker, my friends, my fellow Canadians, let us strive to be the best version of ourselves in these dark hours.

To the more than one million Canadians who profess the Muslim faith, I want to say directly, we are with you; 36 million hearts are breaking with yours. Know that we value you. You enrich our shared country in immeasurable ways. It is your home.

• (1325)

Last night's horrible crime against the Muslim community was an act of terror committed against Canada and all Canadians. We will grieve with you, we will defend you, we will love you, and we will stand with you. Over the coming days, let us take solace in one another. We will mourn this devastating attack and we will heal together as one community, as one country, and as one family.

Canadians will not be intimidated. We will not meet violence with more violence. We will meet fear and hatred with love and compassion, always.

[Translation]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to speak today.

Although debates in the House can often get heated, I know that today we are all united in our grief for the victims of yesterday's heinous attack. Our caucus was gathered in Quebec City just last week. Quebec Winter Carnival was beginning just as our meetings were wrapping up.

This is supposed to be a fun time of year, when some of the coldest nights of the year become so warm and inviting.

Quebec City is warm and welcoming, and one of the safest cities in Canada, a point of pride for those who live there. It was the city of the victims of yesterday evening's attack. It is a terrible shock to the region.

On behalf of the official opposition, I extend my deepest and most heartfelt condolences to the families of those who were killed in cold blood yesterday evening at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec.

[English]

Once again, the House is memorializing innocent people killed by cowardly attackers. We are offering our thoughts and prayers to families in Quebec City who today are mourning their fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons, innocent people who merely went to pray and will not be coming home. This terrorist attack strikes at the very heart of one of the freedoms we cherish as Canadians: the right to practise one's faith, to worship without fear. It is the freedom to worship as people choose, with their fellow believers as a community, in safety and security.

We have profoundly defended that right for people around the world, but it is most meaningful to us in Canada. An attack against a place of worship, against people praying in a mosque, is an attack on these very freedoms. It negates the principles on which Canada was founded.

[Translation]

In the House we have our differences on many issues that are important to Canadians, but I know that every member of every caucus believes in the great Canadian tradition of pluralism, this peaceful coexistence of people of faith and different beliefs under the banner of Canadian citizenship.

That peace was broken yesterday evening in Sainte-Foy. This is not the first time this has happened in Canada, a country that enjoys relative peace in many ways.

[English]

Yet we must never be blind that such terrible motivations as hatred or ignorance persist. We cannot stand for it and we must be ready to meet it. This attack offers another sad reminder that our country is not immune to terrorism and demonstrates that we must always be vigilant against this threat.

Today, we are incredibly grateful for those who stand vigilant on our behalf, including the police and first responders, as well as the Canadian Forces and our intelligence agencies. We appreciate their swift response last night.

• (1330)

[Translation]

Later today, I will be joining the Prime Minister in Quebec City. I want to thank him for this opportunity to show all Canadians that we are united in our support for the victims and their loved ones. We will keep the victims of this crime and their families in our thoughts and prayers.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, *as-salaam alaikum*.

Yesterday evening's terrorist attack on the Centre culturel islamique de Québec has shaken our country. Families are mourning the loss of their loved ones and praying for those who are injured and fighting for their lives.

To all our Muslim brothers and sisters, we mourn with you and we pray for you. We promise that we will stand united and fight against hatred, bigotry, Islamophobia, and against those who peddle the politics of fear and division.

Today, people feel unsafe in their place of worship. Many feel unsafe in their communities.

[English]

That is just not something we can accept. This is not the Canada we believe in. It is not the type of society we want to live in. Canada is a country of diversity, peace, and inclusion. We cannot and we will not tolerate hate and violence.

Today our hearts are broken, but with love and hope, we come together with the shared belief that we will overcome.

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, death came to a place of worship, armed with guns and hate to spread terror and despair.

Government Orders

Yesterday, six Quebecers were murdered because of their beliefs. Five others are still in the hospital in critical condition for the same reason. Our hearts go out to them.

An unhealthy climate has taken hold in our society and across the western world. The Quebec City attack is the latest example of a climate of distrust and intolerance.

There is not enough love. That is clear from all of the information we are bombarded with on the news, in the newspapers, on the radio, and on social media about Syria, the ongoing attacks around the world, the calls for hatred, the abandoning of refugees for small political gains, radicalization, and the rejection of differences. There is not enough love.

We were all horrified by the Quebec City attack and we do not understand it. We do not understand this violence and barbarism. We do not understand how anyone could pull the trigger and kill people who are praying, people who talk and think differently. We strongly oppose, denounce, and condemn this violence that makes us feel sad, hopeless, angry, and ashamed. However, it is not something that we will ever understand or even begin to comprehend.

How could anyone do such a thing? It makes no sense. Such a thing should not be. This must stop. We are in desperate need of love and solidarity.

Yes, we stand with our fellow citizens in the Muslim community. We stand with families and friends who lost a loved one yesterday for no good reason. Our hearts go out to the children and spouses of the victims of this senseless, cowardly massacre.

We stand with all those who mourn the senseless loss of the Quebec City shooting victims. We stand with all those who are ashamed of what happened at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec, ashamed that it happened in our country, ashamed that January 29, 2017, will forever be a black day in our history.

We stand with all Quebecers affected by this incident, with everyone around the world who is stunned by what happened yesterday. We mourn with them. We will also stand together to find solutions. This must stop.

Today we mourn the deaths of Muslim Quebecers. Now is the time for tears, for solidarity, for love. Tomorrow, we will reflect and find solutions. Canadians can count on us.

• (1335)

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, *as-salaam alaikum*; peace be upon Canadians.

[*Translation*]

It is a great honour to speak to my colleagues today. I second everything that my colleagues, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, said. It is clear that all members of Parliament are united. I share their feelings and wish to express my condolences.

[*English*]

At the same time, when we know we have no words, and my colleague, the leader of the Bloc, said it best, we do not understand. This is Canada. This is Quebec City. This is a mosque where

innocents gathered to worship. We know that much, but we cannot understand it because it is so out of order. It does not belong in Canada. It feels as if it could not possibly have happened, and yet it did.

We will pray. We will work. We will reject intolerance and hatred. We will say, as our Prime Minister has said, to every Muslim member of the Canadian family, that today we are all Muslims. We stand with you. We will never let there be daylight between a Christian, a Jew, a Sikh, an atheist, and a Muslim in our country.

We are Canadians, and we stand together in love.

• (1340)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: There have been discussions among representatives of all the parties in the House, and I understand that there is consent to observe a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the attack at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec. I invite hon. members to rise.

[*A moment of silence observed*]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

STATISTICS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-36, an act to amend the Statistics Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of ministerial statements, government orders will be extended by 23 minutes.

The hon. member for Windsor West has two and a half minutes remaining in his speech on debate.

I would ask members to keep very quiet.

The hon. member for Windsor West.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I come from Windsor West, an area which has a significant Muslim population as well as a significant connection with our American cousins on the U.S. side, friends, families and neighbours. With the presidential ban and this heinous act, the last 48 hours have been very difficult. It is important for us at this time to at least have this House carry voices in a way that we can actually talk. I do not believe that has been my experience here this morning. It is sad that I have had to fight to have my say in this chamber. I hope other members at some point reflect on what has taken place this morning.

I will conclude with that, because I have fought long and hard many times to be in this chamber, and to have people swear at me and laugh I do not think is appropriate in this place.

The Speaker: Order. I appreciate the attempt by the hon. member for Windsor West to call upon members to be attentive, to listen to other members and show their respect. On a day like today in particular, we ought to be mindful of our duties and of the need to be respectful of each other, as we must be respectful of this place.

Government Orders

Questions and comments, the hon. member Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, one of the provisions in Bill C-36 is it is replacing one existing review or advisory committee with another. It is not clear to me at first glance what the purpose is of moving from an existing oversight committee to a new committee.

I wonder if the member has reflected on that particular provision of the bill, and if he has any thoughts on why the government might be making this particular change.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, my colleague's question is an interesting one, one which was brought up by his critic. It relates to the fact that we are going from a 13 member council to a 10 member council, which makes it difficult if we want some regional representation. It is something in the bill that needs to be examined.

There are also questions regarding the council's relationship with the chief statistician, and how they relate to the minister. Once again, we have to make sure there is as much independence as possible.

The member brings forward a very valid point that will be part of the debate at committee. I look forward to amendments, because there is an argument to be made for the regional aspect that could be accommodated by 13 members as opposed to 10 members.

• (1345)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if I may at the beginning, I would just acknowledge and share many of the thoughts that were expressed by the Prime Minister, the leader of the official opposition, and others in regard to their thoughtful expressions of love and caring for what has taken place. I would just express my best wishes and condolences on what is a very tragic moment that has taken place in Canada.

Having said that, I listened thoroughly to what the member was commenting on prior to the interruption that took place. I listened attentively, and I would assure the member that as a government, we talk a great deal about the importance of the public service. We recognize the hardships that have been caused with respect to the Phoenix pay system. The member had a great deal of interest in the Phoenix system. I would just let the civil servants know that this is a government that is very much listening and doing what we can to try to fix a problem that was handed down to us with the transition into the Phoenix process.

My question for the member is with respect to the legislation before us. I would ask the member to reflect on the positives of the legislation which would enable a more independent thinking Stats Canada. At the end of the day when we look at the importance of statistical information for good solid, sound policy decisions at the national, provincial, or municipal government levels, school divisions, non-profits, and even the private sector, this bill is indeed a step forward. Therefore, it is highly recommended that this particular piece of legislation be passed. Would the member not agree?

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, the member is not in the section where the foul language was coming from, so I appreciate his noting that he actually listened to me. I appreciate the fact that the member

has recognized the importance of the census. We are supporting the bill to go to committee and we have no will to hold up any changes that could actually be very important for timing of how to improve things for the next census, given the extreme amount of work that needs to be done before then.

As far as Phoenix goes, we still assert that the Liberal government has not resolved enough of the problems to fix Phoenix. It is as simple as that. At the end of the day, there are people who are not being paid. These people have families. Some people have been overpaid, have been underpaid, have had clawbacks and a series of different problems. I agree with the member that the Liberals inherited it from the previous administration. The Conservatives argued that they did not, but the member is correct.

As far as this bill goes, it is critical, as the member has noted. It does go down to municipalities. It does go down to planning. It does affect social services for children. It affects the provinces in how they actually deliver the different types of program funding. All of those things are part of a robust census that we need to de-partisan. When it comes to the independence of the minister versus that of the chief statistician, we will be looking for amendments to make sure we have that validity stamped out, because a previous chief statistician basically quit because of that relationship and the problems related to Service Canada.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to echo the comments that have been made by our Prime Minister, the hon. leader of the official opposition, and all of the party leaders. What a sad day it is. I woke up this morning and heard of the shootings in Quebec City. Our national caucus was just there over the weekend. Words cannot express enough our heartfelt condolences to the friends and families of the victims.

At first glance, Bill C-36 carries a few concerns. The government would like to centralize the role that Statistics Canada has and take away the role of three provinces and the territorial governments as well. I fail to see the necessity of that.

We are constantly hearing about cyber-attacks in which Canadians' private information has been given away by a third party for nefarious reasons. We are concerned about this. With Bill C-36, under the authority of the chief statistician, Canadians' information could be moved to a third party without Canadians consenting to have their information shared with anyone. Canadians' privacy should be paramount. Canadians should have a say as to whether their information is to be shared or not. They should also know where that information is going to be stored. Bill C-36 would allow the chief statistician to move this information to a third party, which in today's world of cyber-attacks would end up who knows where. I shudder to think about it.

I wonder if our hon. colleague from Windsor West has the same concerns regarding privacy and housing the information of everyday Canadians with a third party that to this day has not been vetted.

• (1350)

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for expressing his concerns with the tragedy and the acts that took place over the last 24 hours. We all have concerns about this.

Government Orders

With regard to this legislation, there is a good example that we could continue with—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Brian Masse: The conversation by those Liberal members seems to be ending now, Mr. Speaker. I will continue with my comments as those members are leaving. It is pretty hard to debate properly in the House when Liberal members have ongoing discussions. Quite frankly, I am not afraid to raise this. I am not afraid to say that it becomes almost impossible to speak. I will continue to raise it when swear words are said to me and I hear members laughing. I am not afraid. Those are things that—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is the hon. member raising a point of order?

Mr. Brian Masse: Yes, Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, there has been so much discourse during my speech that I would ask you to review the tapes to find out the exact level of discourse. I do know it came from across the aisle and members were in the House. The tape will decide who used foul language. There were two occasions when I was trying to talk and there was an extraordinary amount of laughing and cat-calling going on. I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to review that. I would also ask you to review the most recent case, which was the extended conversation that continued to go on. Some discourse is going to happen in the House of Commons, but clearly, I have never witnessed it to this extent.

I would also ask that the tapes be reviewed to see the Speaker's interaction with respect to how much time these conversations went on for and the fact that I would continue speaking and there was no acknowledgement; hence I had to basically take it upon myself to pause to get some kind of attention. That would be my point of order.

I feel that my parliamentary privilege has been affected by the conduct and behaviour in the House today. My capability to articulate my thoughts with respect to this particular bill has been diminished. As a dean of the NDP caucus and someone who has been here through several different party machinations, I am quite perplexed and saddened that I have to intervene in such a way.

I would like to answer my hon. colleague's question briefly because he did bring up some good points and I hope that I can do so without being—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I will deal with the point of order first before we go back to answering the question. I believe that when the hon. member was speaking, both myself, as Speaker, and the Speaker who was in the chair prior to me tried to rein people in. We made those efforts, but we will take it under advisement and come back to the House should we have anything to report.

Now I will allow the hon. member for Windsor West to continue with his response.

• (1355)

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, to answer the hon. member's question, there is a good example to look at. Back in 2003, the issue of the outsourcing of the census to Lockheed Martin was raised by Bill Blaikie. That continued until 2004, when a final contract was actually awarded to Lockheed Martin, which provided the census.

The data and so forth, as the member is concerned about breaches in security, fell to a third party.

I asked the minister a question previously about concerns regarding third-party ownership of data. I look forward to the hon. member raising that important issue in committee.

Mr. Geng Tan (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-36, an act to amend the Statistics Act.

As we know, the bill aims to strengthen Statistics Canada's independence. To achieve this, the bill introduces three key legislative amendments. The first would assign authorities for decisions on statistical matters and operations directly to the chief statistician. This amendment would ensure decisions of a technical statistical nature would be based strictly on professional considerations.

The second key amendment would change the appointment of the chief statistician from one of "at the pleasure" to one of "during good behaviour" for a term of five years, with the possibility of reappointment. This would protect the chief statistician from being potentially dismissed for unfair and unjust reasons.

The third key amendment, which I would like to spend a bit more time on today, is the creation of a new Canadian statistics advisory council to replace the existing National Statistics Council. This new council would be created to increase transparency and ensure that Canada's statistical system would continue to meet the needs of Canadians.

The National Statistics Council has been a useful consultative body. Established in 1985, it is a non-legislated consultative body, with a mandate to advise the chief statistician in setting priorities and rationalizing Statistics Canada programs. It currently consists of 35 to 40 experts who serve in the public interest without pay. This council has made important contributions to the work of Statistics Canada, including helping to revise and update the Statistics Act. However, its mandate, structure, and composition have not evolved to match the changing nature and demands of the statistical system under Statistics Canada.

I am splitting my time, Mr. Speaker, with the member for Winnipeg North.

The new council's mandate would be to advise both the minister and the chief statistician on any matters either of them may refer to it. Its focus would be on the overall quality of the national statistical system, including the relevance, accuracy, accessibility, and timeliness of data it produces.

Unlike the current council's work, which is not in legislation or mandated to be done transparently, Bill C-36 introduces the requirements that the new council's work be done in a transparent manner. It also requires that the council make public an annual report on the state of the national statistics system.

• (1400)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Don Valley North will have six minutes and 30 seconds when he resumes after question period.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS***[Translation]***SHOOTING IN QUEBEC CITY**

Mr. Michel Boudrias (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, obscurantism no longer recognizes any borders, and last night, it struck us here at home.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I unreservedly condemn the terrorist acts that have plunged Quebec City and the rest of Quebec into grief. We are all devastated by the realization that human beings are capable of such cowardice and brutality.

On behalf of the Bloc, I offer our deepest condolences and unwavering support to the families of the victims and the entire Muslim community in Quebec.

We also want to recognize the exceptional work of law enforcement officials, the SPVQ, the SPVM, the Sûreté du Québec, and the RCMP, as well as the hospital staff who cared for the injured and continue to treat them today.

We stand in solidarity with all Quebecers of Muslim faith. We stand in solidarity with all Quebecers.

Let us stand up together here today and send a very clear message that intolerance has no place here, and it never will.

* * *

MARCEL PRUD'HOMME

Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the Honourable Marcel Prud'homme, an MP and senator who passed away a few days ago at the age of 82.

Marcel was here within these walls for 45 years, 29 as a member of Parliament and 16 as a senator. Marcel was known throughout his career as a straight talker on matters of foreign affairs and as a defender of difficult causes, including the Palestinian cause.

Marcel, you gave true meaning to freedom of expression, one of our fundamental values. Marcel, thank you very much for being an important player dealing with nations that were not necessarily natural allies at the time. Thank you for moving our country forward over the years, Marcel. We will never forget the friendship we shared over the years. Keep building bridges on behalf of Canada wherever you are up there, Marcel.

* * *

*[English]***INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE**

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all I wanted for Christmas was to bring back some fantastic craft beer from my home province of Alberta to Ottawa without breaking the law. However, government interference on interprovincial trade has weakened the Canadian economy and impeded consumer choice. A Senate study states barriers to internal trade costs the Canadian economy nearly \$150 billion.

In a new and uncertain world, freer trade among the provinces and territories will grow our economy. However, an agreement with

dozens of exemptions, like beer, wine, and cheese, is not free trade. The Conservatives want to see a full free trade deal benefiting all Canadian industries, not just a select few.

Before endorsing a fake free trade agreement with the provinces, the Liberals must ask the Supreme Court for clarification on section 121 of the Constitution, which states that free trade is a constitutional right for all Canadians.

It is time to free the beer. It is time to free the Canadian economy.

* * *

LINDA VATCHER

Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Long Range Mountains, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the holidays, communities and families in my riding were devastated to learn that Linda Vatcher was the Canadian who had been killed in the terrorist attack in Jordan, which claimed 10 lives and injured several, including her son. Linda had been on holidays visiting her son.

It became clear as the news of this cowardly attack and terrible tragedy spread just how many people Linda had touched throughout her life, especially in the communities of Burgeo and Corner Brook. Linda was a selfless, loving woman with a kind and big heart. Many have told stories of Linda's compassion and determination to help others.

For example, as an elementary school teacher, she often reached into her own pocket to ensure each student received a book at the book fair. As an avid volunteer, she worked tirelessly to help organizations, like the Canadian Cancer Society and the Salvation Army Food Bank.

Linda had recently initiated a program of Women helping Women to further help those in need. The day she left for her holiday, she dropped off a donation for the Christmas programs and said that she would be back to help as soon as she returned.

It is clear that Linda made the lives of everyone she met better.

* * *

LARRY COSTELLO

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to honour my friend and hero, Larry Costello. Larry, a veteran of the Canadian Navy, passed away at the age 92.

Larry was a decorated veteran and respected soldier of the Canadian Navy. He served for 25 years with distinction and fought bravely in the Battle of the Atlantic, the longest engagement of World War II.

His storied military career is only equalled by the fight he chose to take on in his post-active service life as a tireless and determined advocate for veterans. Whether it was helping a specific group, or organization, or veteran, he was always up for the cause and served as a warrior, advocate, and champion. He executed his duty with grace and dignity.

I want to extend my deepest condolences to Goldie and the Costello family, as well as friends, and the community.

Statements by Members

Life was exceptional with Larry. We have him as a role model. We thank him and his family for that.

* * *

• (1405)

ANDREW TELEDI

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with a sad heart that I rise to pay my final respects. The hon. Andrew Peter Teledi passed away a week ago, on January 23.

He served this House from 1993 to 2008 as MP for Kitchener—Waterloo, parliamentary secretary to the minister of citizenship and immigration, parliamentary secretary to the minister of indigenous affairs, and chair of the citizenship committee.

His life was one of service. He served as a city and regional councillor, founded the non-profit organization Youth in Conflict with the Law, and sat on several boards.

It is my solemn duty to rise to offer my thoughts and prayers to Nancy and Erin, and to dedicate our actions to his ideals: building Canada, strengthening our communities, and providing a voice for the voiceless.

Many will remember him from his time in this House as a great member of Parliament. I and many of us here will remember him as a friend and mentor. Andrew, on behalf of Canada, thanks.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Bill S-217, Wynn's law, sponsored by the member for St. Albert—Edmonton will soon be up for final debate in this House.

Tragically, in January 2015, RCMP Constable David Wynn was killed and Auxiliary Constable Derek Bond was severely wounded by a career criminal who had been let out on bail because the prosecution did not disclose his criminal history to the judge. Bill S-217 would ensure that judges have the relevant facts about the accused before granting bail.

As members of Parliament, we have a moral duty to our men and women in uniform and to the communities we serve to make sure our Criminal Code adequately ensures justice is served. I urge all members of this House to join together in passing this much-needed legislation.

* * *

MEMBER FOR KILDONAN—ST. PAUL

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Kildonan—St. Paul, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to thank all Canadians.

Since November 2015, I have had the honour of serving Canadians as minister of employment, workforce development, and labour. It was my pleasure to work with the dedicated public servants in ESDC and, together, we made history over the last year and half.

I am proud to sponsor pay equity for the federally regulated sector, sign Canada's ban on child labour, improve funding and job training for indigenous people, help secure a settlement for Canada Post, and make education and training more accessible for Canadians.

I am excited to focus my energy on working for the people of Kildonan—St. Paul. It is an honour to serve them here in Ottawa.

* * *

TAMIL HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all this month, Canadians have been celebrating Tamil Heritage Month from coast to coast to coast.

At the University of Toronto Scarborough campus, Tamil Heritage Month was marked by a \$2-million endowment to the Tamil Worlds Initiative by Dr. Ravi Gukathan of Digital Specialty Chemicals. This generous gift will allow the university to expand Tamil studies, including digital archiving, scholarships, and a post-doctoral fellowship.

Dr. Gukathan came to Canada at the age of 18 with his parents from Jaffna, Sri Lanka. In 1986, he obtained a Ph.D. in chemistry from UTSC and established Digital Specialty Chemicals, one of the top enterprises in Scarborough, currently employing 21 Ph.D.s.

What a way to mark Canada's 150th birthday and the first pan-Canadian Tamil Heritage Month celebrations, by enshrining the study of the Tamil language, culture, and people at one of Canada's top universities. I am proud to welcome to Ottawa Dr. Ravi Gukathan and Dr. Bruce Kidd, principal of UTSC.

* * *

• (1410)

SHOOTING IN QUEBEC CITY

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the rest of my colleagues in this place to express my deep sorrow at the horrific terrorist attack that took place yesterday evening in Quebec City, Sainte-Foy, and offer my sincere condolences and prayers to the families who have had loved ones lost so senselessly. To those still fighting for their lives, we offer our prayers for strength.

In my role as public safety critic for the official opposition, I want to take this opportunity to publicly thank my hon. friend the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness for briefing me this morning on the situation as it was unfolding.

As we condemn this act of violence and terrorism, we also reach out with compassion to the Muslim community of Quebec City and all of Canada. Places of worship and freedom of religion are sacred to Canadians, and we must stand against all those who oppose these enshrined values. Acts of evil know no bounds, and at times like this our collective understanding, grief, deepest sympathy, and a call for justice must also know no bounds.

We must stand together, and we will stand together. We will find those responsible for the murders. They should be held to the fullest account.

RACISM

Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past Friday was International Holocaust Remembrance Day, a sombre anniversary when we remember the murder of more than six million Jews at the hands of the Nazis during the Second World War. It is also a day when we recognize and remember the indomitable spirit of those who survived this evil, and the thousands of Holocaust survivors who built new lives for themselves and their families in my riding of York Centre and across Canada. Their enduring legacy of courage and triumph of spirit must continue to inspire us to combat anti-Semitism and all forms of systemic racism in our communities and around the world.

We must ensure that we never forget our obligation to stand up and speak out against hatred and prejudice, wherever it rears its ugly head, as it did so tragically last night in Quebec City. We must all stand together in condemnation of this heinous act of terror and in support of the Muslim Canadian community.

* * *

SPRING FESTIVAL

Mr. Geng Tan (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe many parliamentarians have been participating in Spring Festival celebrations in ridings across Canada with their families and friends. It is the most important celebration of the year for many Asian Canadians. That is thanks to the passage of my Spring Festival motion last June. The Government of Canada now proclaims the first day of every Lunar Year as the beginning of the 15-day Spring Festival.

To celebrate the Spring Festival on the Hill, the Canada-China Legislative Association is hosting a reception tomorrow, Tuesday, January 31, at 4:00 p.m. in room 160-S in Centre Block. It is my pleasure to invite all my colleagues to attend.

Happy Chinese New Year.

* * *

[Translation]

SHOOTING IN QUEBEC CITY

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night, six Canadians brought together by their faith were victims of the worst act of human cowardice.

Today, our thoughts are with the victims' friends and families, the orphaned children, the widows, the friends they will never see again. Criminals stole their lives. Our thoughts are also with police personnel, who acted so quickly, and Quebec's medical practitioners, who continue their efforts to save the lives of survivors as we speak.

Terrorism knows no religion, no race, no nationality, no age. Terrorism is the embodiment of cowardice, ugliness, and weakness.

[English]

As we read in the Quran, the taking of an innocent life is the taking of all mankind. This is why I want to express my deepest sorrow to the Muslim community.

[Member spoke in Arabic]

Statements by Members

[Translation]

What I wanted to say is that we will respond to hate with solidarity, unity, and support. Today we are all Quebec City Muslims.

* * *

• (1415)

[English]

SHOOTING IN QUEBEC CITY

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, *as-salaam alaikum*. For Muslims, the greeting means “peace be unto you”. That peace was shattered yesterday in Sainte-Foy. A shooting at Le Centre culturel islamique de Québec took the lives of several of our fellow citizens. This was not simply an attack on Muslim worshippers; it was an attack on the values that all Canadians hold dear: that our diversity is our strength; that by not only tolerating but by celebrating different faiths, we are stronger as a people.

[Translation]

We are in shock after these tragic events, and we condemn in the strongest terms this terrorist attack against Canadians who were in a place of worship and sanctuary.

[English]

Our deepest condolences go to the families and friends of those who died, and we wish a speedy recovery to those who were injured.

I say to Muslim Canadians that we stand in solidarity with them against intolerance.

Wa-alaikum-salaam, which means, “and unto you be peace”. That is the commitment we make today to Canadians, that in this country all persons can worship in peace and safety.

* * *

MULTICULTURALISM

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a rich and diverse country, with a vibrant multicultural mosaic that reflects the faces of the world, and nothing brings cultured communities together better than love, compassion, and respect for each other.

Chinese community leaders organized the 44th annual Lunar New Year parade yesterday, with tens of thousands of people from all walks of life taking part in celebration of the Year of the Rooster. The streets in Vancouver's Chinatown were an incredible array of colourful lions, spirited dancers, dragons, marching bands, troops, and aboriginal drummers. The centuries-old cultural tradition was not just celebrated in Vancouver, but indeed it was celebrated across the country in communities big and small.

As we celebrate our nation's 150th birthday as well, let us also celebrate the contributions and strengths of the multicultural communities.

[Member spoke in Cantonese]

[English]

Oral Questions

Happy Lunar New Year to everyone and to all Canadians.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SHOOTING IN QUEBEC CITY

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my democracy is suffering. I have been deeply affected and hurt by the attack on the Centre culturel islamique de Québec yesterday evening.

Unfortunately, the very heart of Canada's unique and highly valued multiculturalism has come under attack. Our acceptance of diversity is what makes Canada such a great place to live, but now intolerance is creeping in.

As we once again witness a wave of anger and hatred toward Muslims, I hope that we will emerge from this tragedy stronger and more united than ever.

To Canadians of the Muslim faith, particularly those in Quebec, please know that our hearts are united with yours, regardless of religious belief.

I want to extend my deepest condolences to the victims' families and loved ones.

* * *

SHOOTING IN QUEBEC CITY

Mr. Rémi Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, terror struck at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec in Sainte-Foy last night.

The Muslim community's place of worship, a sanctuary and meeting place, was the scene of a shooting that took several people's lives and injured many. Lives were lost and families wrenched apart.

We strongly condemn this horrible crime. Our thoughts are with the victims, their families, their loved ones, the Muslim community, and everyone affected by this terrible tragedy.

As we come to terms with this senseless act, let us remember that we are all Canadians. Let us remember that we are united and strengthened by diversity no matter where we come from, the colour of our skin, or our religion. Canadian Muslims are woven into the fabric of our nation. Terrible acts like what happened yesterday have no place in our communities, our cities, or our country.

Today, more than ever, it is our duty to demonstrate openness and tolerance to all of our fellow citizens.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1420)

[*Translation*]

SHOOTING IN QUEBEC CITY

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are shocked by the terrorist act that was committed in a Quebec City mosque last night.

We offer our sincere condolences to the families of the victims and wish a speedy recovery to those who were injured. All Canadians are free to practise their religion as they wish, and they should feel safe doing so. Those who perpetrated these horrendous acts must be brought to justice.

Can the Prime Minister provide an update on the investigation as well as the federal government's response?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question and for her leadership, just as I thank all members of the House for their leadership in these difficult times.

We stand united with the Muslim community, the people of Quebec, and all Canadians who might be feeling scared or anxious right now. We are working closely with all levels of government.

I have spoken with Premier Couillard, Mayor Labeaume, and many people who are working very hard to clarify the situation and figure out how this happened. The investigation is ongoing, but it is important for Canadians to know that we must stick together in the days, weeks, and months to come. We know that diversity is our strength. Our Muslim brothers and sisters are important to all Canadians.

* * *

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last year the House unanimously voted to recognize that violence perpetrated by ISIS against the Yazidi people constitutes genocide and committed to providing asylum to women and girls from this persecuted minority within 120 days. Time is almost up and the U.S. travel ban on refugees from the region has made this rescue operation all the more critical.

Could the Prime Minister update the House on how many Yazidi women and children have made it safely to Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the new Minister of Immigration is working very hard on this file. We know that the end of February deadline is rapidly approaching and the solidarity shown by all members of the House standing with the vulnerable Yazidi people and wanting to do more here in Canada is something we take very seriously, which is why we are working very hard on this issue and look forward to having positive things to announce in the coming weeks.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a lot has changed for Canada in the last few months. The new U.S. administration is lowering taxes and cutting regulations with the promise to bring back jobs to America. Canadians are worried this means their jobs might be heading south. When is the Prime Minister going to get serious and present a plan to protect our workers and their families?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the focus of this government is on growing the middle class and supporting those who are working hard to join the middle class. That means good jobs for Canadians, which is why we recognize that building a strong economy and protecting the environment need to go hand in hand, which is why we have approved pipelines at the same time as we are making innovative measures toward lowering our emissions and creating the clean, green jobs of the future. We are investing in training for workers. We are investing in post-secondary education and research facilities. We know that we need to be smart about our investments to create the good jobs of the future and that is the primary focus of this government.

* * *

ETHICS

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conflict of Interest Act is clear about the Prime Minister accepting travel on private aircraft. It says, “No minister of the Crown...shall accept travel on...private aircraft for any purpose unless required in his or her capacity as a public office holder, or in exceptional circumstances or with the prior approval of the Commissioner.”

We know the Prime Minister violated the act in this context. My question is simple: Why does the Prime Minister think that the rules do not apply to people like him?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member well knows, my office is working very closely with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to resolve all these questions.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is the first time that the Ethics Commissioner has launched a formal investigation into the behaviour of a prime minister. This is not good for the country, especially when Canadians need their prime minister focused on jobs. They need him focused on his job and jobs for Canadians, not distracted by ethics investigations.

How can Canadians have confidence the Prime Minister is focused on their interests when he is spending all of his time defending his own?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to get out across the country to 10 different town halls where I heard directly from Canadians who, yes, are very worried about their jobs, are very worried about the future we are building together. That is why I was able to highlight the significant investments we are making in Canadians' future, defending Canadian jobs, building the jobs of tomorrow, working with Canadians to ensure that we have the skills to take on the challenges and the opportunities that are coming at us in the coming years. That is the focus of this government. That is what we will remain focused on.

• (1425)

[Translation]

SHOOTING IN QUEBEC CITY

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday evening in Quebec City, several members of the Muslim community were murdered while at prayer in the Great Mosque. We offer our condolences, prayers, and love to the victims' families and loved ones.

What does the Prime Minister intend to do to keep religious institutions across Canada safe?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously, the authorities and communities are keeping a close watch on religious institutions of all denominations.

Meanwhile, we know that the best way to defend Canadians is to have a united and compassionate society where all members listen to, care about, help, and are there for one another.

We are going to remain vigilant and stress the fact that we are strong, not in spite of our differences but because of them. We will always work together to defend one another.

[English]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the loss and suffering in Quebec City is being felt across the country and, indeed, throughout the world. The mosque in question had been the target of hateful acts in the past. The victims were murdered last night in the middle of prayer.

Will the Prime Minister commit to immediate support for the affected families and will he also commit to greater dialogue with concerned religious and faith groups across the country?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, over the past hours, and indeed over the past months and years, all Canadians, all parliamentarians, not just of our party, have been very much engaged with faith leaders in their communities, as MPs, as community leaders. We are very aware of the pressures of intolerance that exist within our country and around the world. We know that opening dialogue, fostering understanding, reducing ignorance, and combatting fear and division with unity and messages of positivity and hope are the kinds of things that we need to do a lot more of. I look forward to working with the member opposite and all—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Outremont.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the American President has implemented a ban on all individuals from a number of Muslim countries. There have been no justifications offered, but we all know that there can be no justification for this.

Does the Prime Minister agree that this targeting of people based on their religion or place of birth is an affront to our shared values as Canadians and supporters of human rights across the world?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will always stand to defend the Canadian values of openness and diversity that we cherish so much, that we understand are essential, not just to our success in the past, but to our success in the future. We are a strong, united people, who are generous and open because we have seen how much openness to the world and diversity not only make us more prosperous, but more safe as a country and as communities.

I will continue to stand for Canadian values any chance I get, in this House and elsewhere.

[Translation]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we were proud to see the Government of Canada take measures to offer temporary residency permits to those stranded by the United States' recently announced Muslim ban. However, the government must now commit to taking the next step.

What does the Prime Minister intend to do to provide ongoing assistance to the thousands of refugees who are now banned from the United States?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again say how proud I am of the Canadians, communities, municipalities, and provinces who have told me that they are prepared to do more and that we need to be even more open and provide more aid.

I asked the Minister of Immigration to look at the different ways we can help these people. I look forward to discussing with all members of the House how we can once again show the rest of the world that being open, generous, and compassionate is good for us, our economy, and our security.

* * *

• (1430)

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, instead of following the laws on party financing, the Prime Minister has decided to change the law because the optics will be better. However, that is not the case. The law does the job, but it must be obeyed.

Will the Prime Minister promise to work for all Canadians, and not just do partisan work for the Liberal Party of Canada?

[English]

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government was elected on a platform of openness and transparency. I look forward to working with all members in this House, particularly with the opposition parties, to work to provide information and access to all Canadians; information and access that will help us to continually improve our democratic institutions.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): But it costs \$1,500, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

Canada will be facing many challenges this year. The government must stop making taxpayers pay more taxes. Forestry workers want an agreement to bring stability to their sector. When it comes to free trade with the U.S., we must protect Canadian jobs.

Will the Prime Minister stop changing the ethics rules that are not to his liking and focus on the Canadian economy and Canadian workers?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

I would like to talk about the softwood lumber agreement. As the House knows, the softwood lumber agreement expired while the former government was in power. Our government will vigorously defend the interests of Canadian workers and producers in this sector. We will continue to work closely with softwood lumber workers and producers.

I want to point out that we are looking for a good agreement for Canada, not just any agreement.

* * *

[English]

ETHICS

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has come to the Prime Minister's attention that the Prime Minister has been breaking the Prime Minister's own ethical rules, so now the Prime Minister is creating new rules for the Prime Minister to follow so that the Prime Minister will no longer appear to be breaking the Prime Minister's rules. Can the Prime Minister please confirm it?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is taking concrete action to provide more openness and transparency to Canadians. We restored the long-form census. The Prime Minister made mandate letters to ministers public. We unmuzzled government scientists to talk freely about issues like climate change. As well, the Prime Minister just concluded an open town hall tour: 10 town halls, seven provinces, 12,000 Canadians.

We will continue to take action to make government and all aspects of our democracy more open and transparent.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is now changing the rules for the Prime Minister to follow after the Prime Minister was unable to follow the initial rules the Prime Minister made. Therefore, if the Prime Minister cannot follow the first set of rules that the Prime Minister made, what makes the Prime Minister think he can follow a new set of rules for the Prime Minister? Or, does the Prime Minister now realize that the problem is not the rules, but that the problem actually is the Prime Minister?

Oral Questions

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to restate that the Prime Minister just did something unprecedented in Canadian history. He travelled across—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Let us start the new year with decorum and proper respect for each other and for this place.

The hon. Minister of Democratic Institutions.

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, he travelled across the country to 10 town halls, seven provinces, and 12,000 Canadians where he was open and accountable. He let people ask whatever questions they chose and he answered Canadians. That is something that we are incredibly proud of on this side of the House: engaging with Canadians, listening to Canadians, and being open and transparent—

•(1435)

The Speaker: The hon. opposition House leader.

Hon. Candice Bergen (House Leader of the Official Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, section 12 of the Conflict of Interest Act says that no minister, including the Prime Minister, should accept travel on private aircraft except in exceptional circumstances. I do not think a holiday to the Bahamas is an exceptional circumstance. This Prime Minister seems to have no regard for the rules or even the law. Therefore we ask again and we ask him to answer Canadians today: Why does the Prime Minister think the rules around travel and private aircraft do not apply to people like him?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as it is my first time standing in the House this year, I would like to welcome back all members of Parliament. I look forward to working with each and every single one of them on behalf of Canadians.

As was previously stated, the Prime Minister was on a personal family vacation with a long-standing friend. The Prime Minister has known the Aga Khan ever since childhood. The Prime Minister will answer questions the commissioner may have.

Hon. Candice Bergen (House Leader of the Official Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he either did not know the rules, which does not make any sense, or he blatantly broke them, and he needs to tell Canadians which one of those he did.

The Ethics Commissioner, the Lobbying Commissioner, the Privacy Commissioner, even the languages commissioner have placed the Prime Minister and his Liberals under investigation. That is unprecedented.

As we saw from Jacques Corrivau's sentencing last week, the Liberals have a history of breaking the rules. Sadly, this Prime Minister is no different. Does the Prime Minister not understand that there are consequences to breaking the law, and why in the world is he putting his own personal gain against the highest office in Canada?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government always follows the rules, and as the Prime Minister has stated, we will answer any questions the commissioner may have. We will always work with the

Ethics Commissioner. We will always work with every office in this place to ensure that we provide the information necessary to ensure that we work hard on behalf of Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple question for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Has the government shared its concerns with the American authorities regarding the Trump administration's decision to ban entry to the U.S. for the citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie for her question. I hope we can work productively together. I have a great deal of respect for the member.

I would also like to begin by offering my condolences to the victims of yesterday's shooting in Quebec City, as well as to their loved ones. Canadians will stand with them against these hateful acts.

As Minister of Foreign Affairs, it is my duty to work in favour of our economic interests, while at the same time, always asserting our Canadian values.

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are alarmed and outraged by President Trump's immigration and travel ban. Inscribed on the Statue of Liberty are the words, "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses", but now it falls to other nations to step up and provide shelter to those fleeing violence and persecution.

Canadians are staunch defenders of human rights who reject a ban based on race, religion, or place of birth. Will Canada do its part and immediately lift the 1,000 application cap on privately sponsored refugees?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the 1,000 cap on refugees only applies to groups of five members. There are other avenues that sponsorship agreement holders and others, the hon. member must know, can use to sponsor privately sponsored refugees.

Our immigration level plan for 2017 includes a historic level of 16,000 spots for refugees. That is something we can be very proud of.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

FINANCE

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a few hours before Christmas, on December 23, the Department of Finance published a document that stated that if nothing changes, Canada is headed toward a \$1.5 trillion debt by 2050 and, if nothing changes, we will return to a balanced budget by 2055. The Liberal government is missing its target by 36 years. That is Liberal management. The worst part is that our children and grandchildren will be footing the bill.

My question is simple. For the 15th time, I am asking the Minister of Finance, when will we return to a balanced budget?

• (1440)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the report says that our economy is ideal for the long term. In the meantime, we know that we need to invest in the future to improve our level of growth. The report does not talk about changes to our investments. We have to be careful with our investments in order to improve the economy now and for the future of all Canadians across the country.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, it is clear that the minister has no plan to balance the budget. He does, however, have a plan to make life difficult for our entrepreneurs, the people who create jobs.

The government wants to impose a Liberal carbon tax, a Liberal health care tax, and a medical tax on dental care. The United States, on the other hand, wants to cut taxes on businesses and workers.

Why is the government completely neglecting the Canadian economy?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we want to be clear with Canadians about taxes. We want a system that works for families who are part of the middle class and those who want to join it. Our system must be fair to Canadians. That is what we did by giving nine million Canadians a tax cut when we came to power. We will stick to our agenda to ensure that the system is fair, responsible and effective.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Liberals seem to have something against workers earning just \$45,000 a year. Such workers do not earn enough to get anything from the so-called middle-class tax plan, but they do qualify for new carbon taxes on gas, home heating, and electricity.

Today a Dental Association report showed that a worker earning \$45,000 a year would pay \$1,200 under the new Liberal plan to tax health benefits.

What has the government got against people earning just \$45,000 a year?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the very first thing our government did was lower taxes on nine million Canadians. We know it is important that we have a system that is fair, efficient, and responsible.

We announced in budget 2016 a review of our tax system to make sure that it is just that. We will continue on this and assure Canadians

that we will come up with a system that is fair, responsible, and efficient so that we can have a system that works for all Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Fair, Mr. Speaker? He thinks it is fair that he has a middle-class plan that does not give anything to people earning just \$45,000 a year, a plan that forces such workers to pay higher taxes on home heating, gas, and electricity, and maybe even lose their jobs because the employer cannot afford that tax, and now a new tax on health benefits that could force families to have to buy its own private supplementary plan, which would cost thousands of dollars.

In what universe is such an approach fair to the middle class?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we think it is important to consider the real facts. The real facts are that nine million Canadians had their taxes lowered last year. The real facts are that the Canada child benefit helps nine out of 10 families with children and puts more money in their pockets, significantly more money, on average \$2,300 after tax.

We will move forward with the review of the tax system to make sure that we continue to make a difference for Canadians, middle-class Canadians and those people who are working hard to get there.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it took only one week for the new President of the United States to announce that he is in favour of using torture. Torture is immoral and ineffective. I commend the minister for speaking out against torture every chance he was given. However, here at home, a ministerial directive that allows the use of information obtained by torture is still on the books.

[English]

With such a frightening normalization of torture by a Five Eyes ally, will the minister finally repeal this directive, yes or no?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have noted, torture is contrary to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is contrary to the Criminal Code. It is contrary to virtually all of the international treaties and conventions to which Canada is a party. Most important, torture is found to be abhorrent by Canadians, and we reject it.

The ministerial directives issued previously, as I have indicated many times in this House, are under review to ensure that they are consistent with the policies and practices of the Government of Canada.

Oral Questions

•(1445)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, our thoughts are also with New Brunswickers who are still dealing with the fallout of the ice storm that left 133,000 New Brunswick homes in the dark. Many are still without electricity, heat, and other necessities. Two people died from carbon monoxide poisoning, and seven others are seriously injured.

On Friday, the Premier of New Brunswick requested the assistance of the Canadian Armed Forces, who just arrived in Miscou and Lamèque today.

Can the Minister of National Defence explain why it took three days before the troops were sent after the formal request was made by the province?

[*English*]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, whenever a disaster strikes Canadians, the Canadian Armed Forces is always ready to help.

There is a system in place to allow for the provinces to do their own assessment. We are always ready and prepared to provide support.

As soon as the request was made, the response was there, and we have right now 200 members of the Canadian Armed Forces proudly helping Canadians.

Mr. Pat Finnigan (Miramichi—Grand Lake, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as was said by my colleague across the aisle, last Wednesday, January 25, the east coast, mainly New Brunswick, was hit with its worst ice storm in history. Thousands of homes and businesses, including many from coastal and first nations communities, are still without power today.

[*Translation*]

Canadians who have gone through similar experiences know how devastating this can be and what an anxious time it is for those going through such a disaster. The situation is critical and the conditions will only deteriorate as the temperatures drop over the next few days.

[*English*]

Can the minister please update this House on this emergency situation?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers are with the people of New Brunswick who have suffered the impacts of this storm and particularly with the friends and families of those who lost their lives.

On Saturday we received and accepted a request for assistance from the provincial government, and Canadian Armed Forces members are now proudly engaged in the emergency response effort. Our government will continue to support the people of New Brunswick, both in the immediate term and throughout the process of recovery.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for years Canada's intelligence services have warned that China is trying to steal Canadian advanced technology.

In 2015, our Conservative government ordered Chinese divestment of ITF, a Quebec high-tech company, on national security grounds. Three months ago, as the Liberals rushed to satisfy Chinese demands at every level, coincidental with the Prime Minister's cash-for-access events and the Chinese billionaires' shopping spree, the Liberals cancelled the Conservative cabinet's divestment order. Why?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member understands that all foreign investments in Canada are screened for national security in accordance with the Investment Canada Act.

This rigorous process is undertaken in consultation with the government's national security agencies, so any decision we make is done in conjunction with the guidelines provided by the national security advisers.

I can assure the member and this House that any decision we take going forward will be in the best national interest of our country.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is not just any Canadian company. ITF has worked with Canada's Communications Security Establishment, the National Research Council, and the Department of National Defence.

ITF's various technology applications have military applications. More than a quarter of the Hong Kong company is held by a Chinese state-owned enterprise. We know minority ownership by Beijing means control by Beijing.

Again, why are the Liberals risking Canadian national security to play up to the Chinese communist government?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, we will never compromise our national security. We will never compromise our national interest. Any decision we make will be to the benefit of all Canadians.

I can also tell the member opposite that we have increased transparency by publishing national security review guidelines and information on national security reviews in the IC annual report. This will help investors and Canadian businesses in planning investments while maintaining our authority to take action to protect national security.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, when the Prime Minister was asked at a town hall why the Liberals opposed Wynn's law, he said that he did not know anything about the bill, a bill that has been before Parliament for more than a year and that his cabinet, presumably, has vetted.

It begs the question, just how many other decisions of his cabinet is the Prime Minister in the dark about?

Oral Questions

●(1450)

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, certainly with respect to Wynn's law, the private member's bill the member is referring to, we want to acknowledge and recognize the suffering that has been caused with respect to the loss in Alberta.

We are committed to reforming the criminal justice system to improve the efficiencies and the effectiveness of that system. We recognize that there is a need for information at bail hearings, and we are committed to the objectives of this bill. That is why we are working very collaboratively with our partners in the provinces and territories, the steering committee, to ensure that the efficiencies—

The Speaker: The member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister incredibly said that he was at a disadvantage when it came to learning the facts about Wynn's law.

Do members know who was at a disadvantage? It was Constable Wynn. He was at a disadvantage when he was shot and killed by someone who should not have been on the streets and would not have been on the streets had Wynn's law been the law.

Now that the Prime Minister is in the loop, will he do the right thing and pass Wynn's law?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, I am pleased to speak about the mandate that the Prime Minister has given me to comprehensively reform the criminal justice system to improve the efficiencies and effectiveness of the criminal justice system, including bail reform.

I acknowledge the hon. colleague across the way for his involvement and commitment to ensure we improve the effectiveness. This is exactly what we are doing, working with the provinces and territories, working with stakeholders, and working with the steering committee, which is focused specifically on assisting us with bringing forward substantive solutions. We will move forward in due course.

* * *

[Translation]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has clearly shown just how out of touch he is with the needs of indigenous youth. The priority of youth is not canoes, but rather adequate and equitable services.

My question is very simple: when will the government finally comply with the decision of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and the unanimous motion of the House and immediately invest the required \$155 million?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to fully reviewing child and family services for first nations. We have invested \$635 million over five years to close the gap in funding. We are determined to work with first nations, the provinces, and the

agencies to achieve real reform at all levels to ensure the well-being of children.

[English]

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the money is still not flowing.

My constituents are also concerned that the enhanced service delivery program will end in March. Hundreds of youth benefit from this program, which is giving them important job skills.

Let us face it. This is not what first nations youth want. According to Indian Affairs, an assessment of the program should have been completed last year. It is now 2017.

Will the minister commit to ongoing funding so that northern youth are employed?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows in listening to youth, it is hugely important that they want the skills to be able to participate in the economy, but they also want the language and culture. They want to be back in touch with the land to be able to be proud indigenous people. We will work on both fronts to make sure that happens.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question is very simple. Has the Government of Canada received, in writing, from the American government that the U.S. travel ban of citizens from the affected seven countries will not affect Canadians with dual citizenship and permanent residency travelling to the U.S.?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada continues to be a welcoming country to newcomers, including those refugees fleeing persecution and war.

U.S. authorities have assured us very clearly that anyone with a Canadian passport and Canadian permanent resident cardholders will be allowed entry into the United States. We continue to monitor the situation closely and work with our American counterparts.

Canada continues to remain open and views immigration as a key ingredient in our economic success.

●(1455)

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the private sponsor refugee program uses donations from Canadians to support refugees, which means that we do not need to rely solely on taxpayers to help those who are in need. The Prime Minister's weekend Tweet did absolutely nothing to explain his decision to prevent privately sponsored refugees from being admitted to Canada this year.

With over 45,000 PSR applications in the queue, why is the Prime Minister limiting the generosity of private sponsorship groups and shifting the responsibility solely to taxpayers?

*Oral Questions***INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. member asked that question, because it gives me an opportunity to clarify some of the confusion around this.

The year of 2016 was unprecedented for our country. We welcomed more than 40,000 Syrian refugees, from November 4, 2015, and we are proud of that record.

Wait times for privately sponsored refugees continued to balloon under the previous government, and we intend to take action against that. Our immigration levels in 2017 create 16,000 allocations for privately sponsored refugees, which is triple that the previous government created under its administration.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the government is so welcoming to refugees, why, since the motion around Yazidi genocide victims was passed in October, has the government admitted exactly zero Yazidis to Canada?

My question is very simple. If the government truly supports this motion, why did the Prime Minister dodge this question? How many Yazidis is the government bringing to Canada and will it meet the timeline associated with the motion?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has been recognized widely as being a great government for welcoming and resettling refugees from across the world. We are committed and proud of the fact that all members in the House supported the resettlement of victims and survivors of Daesh. We have a plan that is under way. Our operation is under way. We have committed to meet that goal. We will be providing an update to the House in the near future.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Don Rusnak (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour and I were pleased to reopen one of nine Veterans Affairs Canada offices closed by the previous Conservative government. The nearly 1,700 veterans in my region can now be served by Veterans Affairs staff, will now provide restored service and access, and benefits to veterans where they need them and when they need them. This is not just a gain for Thunder Bay but for all of northwestern Ontario.

Could the Minister of Veterans Affairs give the House an update on office reopenings?

Hon. Kent Hehr (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am extremely proud to be reopening doors that were previously closed to veterans and their families. Veterans have selflessly served our country and our government is recognizing their service by enhancing financial benefits and restoring and expanding access to critical services not just in Thunder Bay, but in Corner Brook, Brandon, Sydney, Kelowna, Saskatoon, and Charlottetown, where we also opened offices. We will open three more offices in Windsor, Prince George, and Surrey, B.C., all by May of 2017. We are getting it done.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister stated that he knew better than the chiefs and the top priority for indigenous youth was a place to store their canoes and paddles. That is unbelievable. We have a suicide crisis. Two 12-year-olds from Saskatchewan took their lives.

Our committee travelled across the country with panels listening to youth. They talked about safety, security, education, and hope. Canoe storage did not come up.

Will the Prime Minister retract these condescending and out-of-touch comments?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, any loss of life is a great tragedy and it grieves us when we hear about indigenous young people taking their lives. We know that the roots of the suicide crisis among indigenous youth are deep and complex, but we are working with our partners, indigenous leaders, and provinces to make sure we have supports for people.

Our government has invested \$69 million to make sure there will be 24 mental wellness teams, as well as crisis support teams.

We will continue to support these youth and put an end to this crisis.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are increasingly worried about their economic situation, and this is tied to the emerging crisis of precarious work that we are facing in our country. While the economy is staggering, the government is failing to protect and create good, full-time, permanent jobs. It has also failed to react to this crisis and, instead, prefers to tell Canadians to just get used to it. Canadians deserve a government that will fight for good jobs.

When will the government show leadership, stand up for Canadian workers, and fight for the good jobs that they deserve?

● (1500)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government knows that our prosperity relies on young Canadians getting good jobs and contributing to the economy in the fullest way. That is why we are investing historic amounts into ensuring that young people have the diversity of skills to bring forward new ideas, new talent, and new creativity to the emerging workforces of Canada.

I look forward to working with the member opposite on a plan.

Oral Questions

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year small businesses and non-profits in my riding of Brampton North hired 134 students through the Canada summer jobs program. Could the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour tell the House how many jobs across Canada have been created for young Canadians this year?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know it is important for young Canadians to have access to opportunities to gain the skills that they are going to carry forward into their careers. That is why I am so excited that we are again supporting small businesses, not for profits, and public sector employees to hire young Canadians this summer through the Canada student job program.

I encourage all employers to apply for funding at canada.ca. The deadline is Friday.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in January, there were two incidents where the Prime Minister should have answered a question in one language but instead he answered in the other.

With his usual arrogance, the Prime Minister demonstrated his lack of respect for Canadians and official languages. On behalf of Canada's linguistic minorities, I am calling on the Prime Minister to publicly apologize for his blatant lack of respect for those communities.

Will the Prime Minister apologize and finally show respect for Canada's official languages?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that our Prime Minister is an ardent defender of official languages. That is why he gave me a strong mandate to support him on this issue.

Official languages are a priority for our government and we have done more than just talk. We have taken action. We reinstated the Mobilité francophone immigration program. We appointed bilingual judges to the Supreme Court, and we reinstated the court challenges program. Those are not just words. We have taken action.

We are also going to launch a new official languages action plan in 2017.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government wants to introduce a bill laying out the rules for its \$1,500 fundraising cocktails featuring privileged access to the Prime Minister, but that will not solve the problem.

The government has no plans to end the undue influence of bagmen or privileged access for rich lobby groups that can afford to invest \$1,500 in a Liberal cocktail.

The Liberal position is that advertising these fundraisers will suffice.

When will the Liberals realize that advertising \$1,500 privileged access to the Prime Minister does not make it more ethical?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians need more openness and transparency when it comes to political party fundraising activities attended by ministers, party leaders, and party leadership candidates. We will introduce our plan to make that happen.

I am pleased to be working with parliamentarians to introduce more openness and accountability into political party fundraising activities.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a month ago the Prime Minister attended a cocktail party with Chinese investors who wanted to move their projects forward by paying \$1,500.

This could continue today under Liberal legislation. Of course there will be a report, which will be made public with great pomp and circumstance, but otherwise, nothing will change.

Rather than encouraging cynicism among the electorate, will the Minister of Democratic Institutions follow Quebec's example, put a \$500 cap on political donations, and restore per-vote public subsidies to political parties?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I am very honoured to be given the opportunity to serve Canadians by improving our democratic institutions.

Our government was elected on a promise of openness and transparency. Our government believes that it must be open and transparent with Canadians. Our government will have more to say very shortly on how we believe political party fundraising can be made more open and transparent. I look forward to working with all my colleagues on this issue.

* * *

●(1505)

INTERESTS OF QUEBEC

Mr. Simon Marcil (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, many are worried about the U.S. government's protectionist talk, but Quebecers have the most to fear.

Our regions are already suffering from the federal government's inability to stand up to the United States. When it comes to diafiltered milk, softwood lumber, or spent fowl, the Canadian border is a sieve for Americans doing business here, but a wall when Quebec might come out on top. Every party in power here has allowed the Americans to run roughshod over NAFTA.

What does this government plan to do differently to protect Quebec?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada and the United States have a strong economic relationship and we are working with the new U.S. administration to protect and develop this integrated relationship.

I am proud of my work with the Government of Quebec on CETA. I have already spoken with representatives from the Province of Quebec about NAFTA and our relations with the U.S. As Minister of Foreign Affairs, I am well aware of the interests of Quebec, and it is an honour and a privilege—

* * *

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Dave Levac, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and the Honourable Linda Reid, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the member for the electoral district of Honoré-Mercier has been appointed a member of the Board of Internal Economy in place of the member for the electoral district of Orléans, for the purposes and under the provisions of section 50 of the Parliament of Canada Act.

* * *

• (1510)

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the following treaties:

[Translation]

The first treaty, entitled, “Resolution (88)15 setting up a European support fund for the co-production and distribution of creative cinematographic and audiovisual works (Eurimages)”, was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 26 October 1988, as amended.

[English]

The second treaty is entitled “Audiovisual Coproduction Treaty between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan”, done at Amman on October 31, 2016.

[Translation]

An explanatory memorandum is included with each treaty.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the House that Thursday, February 2, will be an allotted day.

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[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 109, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to the second report of the Standing Committee on National Defence entitled, “Canada and the Defence of North America: NORAD and Aerial Readiness”, tabled in the House of Commons on September 19, 2016.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again pursuant to Standing Order 109, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, entitled, “Report 5—Canadian Army Reserve—National Defence”, of the spring 2016 reports of the Auditor General of Canada, tabled in the House of Commons on October 3, 2016.

* * *

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, under provisions of Standing Order 32(2) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement Implementation Report for 2013–2014.

Also under the provisions of Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the 2014 annual report of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. I request that this report be referred to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

Finally, under the provisions of Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a copy of the Nisga'a Final Agreement Implementation Report, 2012–2013.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 130 petitions.

*Routine Proceedings***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on International Trade in relation to Bill C-30, an act to implement the comprehensive economic and trade agreement between Canada and the European Union and its member states and to provide for certain other measures. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

* * *

SHOOTING IN QUEBEC CITY

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as you know from the many passionate statements we have heard today, all Canadians are shocked and saddened by last night's attacks in Sainte-Foy, Quebec. In light of the vigil organized this evening on Parliament Hill, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion that would allow all members in this place to stand in solidarity with those victims and those grieving their loss.

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, the House shall adjourn to the next sitting day at 5:55 pm later this day and shall not take up adjournment proceedings pursuant to Standing Order 38.

• (1515)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed

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

Some hon. members: Agreed

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the break I heard from many people in my constituency concerned about the economic impact of job losses and the other challenges we are facing in Alberta; so I am pleased to table a petition today calling on the government to do something concrete, and that is to support the energy east pipeline. People across the country support this project, and they see the value of it for helping Albertans get back to work and also creating jobs across the country.

SENIORS

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House today to present a petition. The petitioners recognize that there is a very big demographic shift happening in Canada today with respect to seniors and that Canada needs to prepare for these dramatically changing demographics and the unique needs of seniors. Therefore, they call upon Parliament to appoint a minister for seniors and develop a national strategy for seniors.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize the member for London—Fanshawe for the great work that she has done in this regard.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Kate Young (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present two petitions. I am pleased to first present a petition on behalf of more than 400 people across London. The congregation of Lambeth United Church has undertaken private sponsorship of the Ghazel family. Currently, the family resides in Aleppo, waiting for the immigration interview process to begin.

The petition asks that the Ghazel family's immigration file be expedited due to the high risk of injury or looming threat of death.

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Ms. Kate Young (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition has more than two dozen signatures of individuals in London, Ontario, who are asking the Government of Canada to undertake public consultations to amend the Canada Elections Act to ensure voters can cast an equal and effective vote; be represented fairly in Parliament regardless of political belief or place of residence; be governed by a fairly elected parliament where the share of seats held by each political party closely reflects the popular vote; live under legitimate laws approved by a majority of elected parliamentarians representing a majority of voters; and expect introduction of a suitable form of proportional representation as a result of the requested public consultations.

[*Translation*]

COMMUNITY TELEVISION

Mr. Michel Boudrias (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, I am pleased to table a petition signed by 284 petitioners from the Les Moulins RCM.

This petition, which is also being circulated in 13 other ridings represented by other members of the House, seeks to draw the government's attention to the consequences of the new CRTC policy on independent community television in Quebec and Canada.

The petitioners are asking that the government strengthen independent community television to ensure its survival, ensure that local media is available in remote communities and other regions, and ensure that it has sufficient resources.

I therefore urge the government to take note of the new reality brought to light in this petition.

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petitions from residents of Gabriola Island who are opposed to the establishment of five new bulk commercial anchorages, each to house 300-metre-long vessels that are going to be exporting Wyoming coal to China, where it will be burned in power plants. Petitioners point out that this is bad for climate change, bad for the sensitive ecology, and bad for the sport fishery in the area. No local jobs are created. Oil spills risk their local economy. They urge the federal government to take their advice and to follow the government's commitments to restore habitat protection to the Fisheries Act and to restore the protections of the navigable waters act.

If the government had done its work, this petition would not be necessary and the community would not be so risked.

* * *

•(1520)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 596, 598, 605, 606, 608, 609, 611, 613, 615, 622, 626, 628, 629, 631, 634, 642, 644, 653, 654, 660, 663, 671, 672, 673, 676, 680, 684, 688, 694, 697, 702, 725, 726, 734, 737, 740-742, 744, 755, 757, 761, 762, 764, 770, 772, 777, 782, 785, 788, 789, 791, 792, and 793.

[Text]

Question No. 596—**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:**

With regard to the Canada Summer Jobs program: (a) how many jobs were created through this program from 2014 to 2016, broken down by year; and (b) for each of these years, how many jobs (i) were full time, (ii) were part time, (iii) lasted more than 12 weeks, (iv) lasted between 8 and 12 weeks, (v) lasted between 4 and 8 weeks, (vi) lasted less than 4 weeks?

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the jobs created by the Canada Summer Jobs, or CSJ, program are as follows: for 2014, 34,538; for 2015, 34,470; and for 2016, 65,874.

For 2014, with regard to (b)(i) and (b)(ii), through CSJ there were 34,538 full-time and part-time jobs. It should be noted that jobs must be full time—i.e., from a minimum of 30 to a maximum of 40 hours per week. Under exceptional circumstances, students with disabilities or with other barriers to full-time employment are eligible to work part time.

With regard to (b)(iii), (b)(iv), (b)(v), and (b)(vi), the estimated duration is based on average project data: 11% of the jobs lasted more than 12 weeks; 51% of the jobs lasted between 8 and 12 weeks, and 38% of the jobs lasted less than 8 weeks.

For 2015, with regard to (b)(i) and (b)(ii), through CSJ there were 34,470 full-time and part-time jobs. It should be noted that jobs must be full time—i.e., from a minimum of 30 to a maximum of 40 hours per week. Under exceptional circumstances, students with disabilities or with other barriers to full-time employment are eligible to work part time.

With regard to (b)(iii), (b)(iv), (b)(v), and (b)(vi), the estimated duration is based on average project data: 11% of the jobs lasted more than 12 weeks; 66% of the jobs lasted between 8 and 12 weeks, and 23% of the jobs lasted less than 8 weeks.

For 2016, with regard to (b)(i) and (b)(ii), through CSJ there were 68,874 full-time and part-time jobs. It should be noted that jobs must be full time—i.e., from a minimum of 30 to a maximum of 40 hours per week. Under exceptional circumstances, students with disabilities or with other barriers to full-time employment are eligible to work part time.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to (b)(iii), (b)(iv), (b)(v), and (b)(vi), the estimated duration is based on average project data: 2.5% of the jobs lasted more than 12 weeks; 77.5% of the jobs lasted between 8 and 12 weeks, and 20% of the jobs lasted less than 8 weeks.

Question No. 598—**Mr. Alupa Clarke:**

With regard to Supplementary Estimates (B), 2016-17 and the \$46.7 million listed for Public Works and Government Services Canada under “Funding for incremental costs related to post-implementation pay operations”, how was the total of this funding used, broken down by line item and expense?

Hon. Judy Foote (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as of November 10, 2016, the supplementary estimates (B) have had not been approved by Parliament.

Should they be approved by Parliament as tabled, PSPC plans to allocate this funding (of \$47.6 million) in the following way: \$5.7 million for additional support provided by IBM, which includes 24-7 troubleshooting support and refinements to processes and functionality; \$22.2 million for satellite offices in various locations, including Gatineau, Montreal, Shawinigan, and Winnipeg, as well as the call centres in Toronto and Ottawa; \$14.6 million for additional resources to manage our complaints centre, provide training and support to departments, and provide other support to ensure that system maintenance is performed with minimal disruption and that systems interacting with Phoenix are running as they should; and \$4.2 million as contingency to address unforeseen issues as they arise.

This is also subject to receiving the necessary spending authorities from Treasury Board.

Question No. 605—**Mr. Ted Falk:**

With regard to the regulations and guidelines outlined in sections 241.31 (3) and 241.31 (3.1) of the Criminal Code: (a) since June 17, 2016, has the Minister of Health established a process for monitoring and reporting on medical assistance in dying; (b) if the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, what information has been gathered, on (i) the types of medical conditions that motivate requests, (ii) whether the safeguards in the law are working as intended, (iii) demographic information about people who request the service, (iv) whether there are regional differences in how the service is carried out across Canada, (v) the number of requests made for medical assistance in dying both approved and not approved; (c) what are the details of any statistics available related to information gathered; and (d) if the answer to (a) is in the negative, what steps has the Minister of Health undertaken to begin collecting the information in (b)?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the new legislation, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and make related amendments to other Acts (medical assistance in dying), formerly Bill C-14, authorizes the federal Minister of Health to make regulations for the purpose of establishing a system for monitoring medical assistance in dying.

With regard to (a), a process for monitoring and reporting on medical assistance in dying is currently being developed. While most sections amending the Criminal Code to permit the lawful provision of medical assistance in dying came into force with the passage of the legislation, the sections on monitoring, sections 4 and 5, will come into force 12 months later—i.e., June 17, 2017. This means that the federal Minister of Health’s authority to make regulations with respect to monitoring will only become active at that point, but it does not require that the regulations be completed by that time.

Routine Proceedings

For these reasons, (b) and (c) are not applicable.

With regard to (d), federal officials are currently working on the parameters of a federal monitoring and reporting system, including what information will be collected; to whom it must be sent; information technology requirements; and how information will be protected, analyzed, and released. The complexity of these regulations and the consequences for health care professionals require that the government must take the time necessary to get the regulations right, and include opportunities for consultations. Until these federal regulations are in place, health care professionals will not be required to provide information to the federal government; however, each province and territory has its own approach to the implementation and oversight of medical assistance in dying and may require its health care providers to provide data for these purposes.

All governments in Canada recognize the importance of timely public reporting on medical assistance in dying. To this end, federal, provincial, and territorial officials are working collaboratively to produce interim reports with available national data during the regulatory development period.

The government expects an initial release of data in early 2017. Subsequent interim reports will be released on a periodic basis until annual reporting commences under the federal regulatory regime.

Question No. 606—Mrs. Marilène Gill:

With regard to the Minister of Finance's involvement in the Muskrat Falls project: (a) what were the findings of the risk analyses conducted by the Department of Finance to justify two federal loan guarantees of \$6.3 billion and \$2.9 billion, respectively, to enable Newfoundland and Labrador and Nalcor to carry out the Muskrat Falls project; (b) does the Department recommend that the government offer further loan guarantees to cover the project's rising costs; (c) is the value of the assets of the Muskrat Falls project greater than the \$9.2 billion in loan guarantees; (d) does the fee of 0.5 per cent that the government applied to the \$2.9-billion loan guarantee announced in November 2016 indicate that this new extension of funds will not be backed by Muskrat Falls assets; (e) has the Department assessed the ability of the Newfoundland and Labrador government to repay the federal government in relation to the Muskrat Falls project should the federal loan guarantee be implemented and, if so, what were the findings of the assessment; and (f) has the government considered the possibility that Newfoundland and Labrador may default on payments to the government following the implementation of the federal loan guarantee, which enabled it to carry out the Muskrat Falls projects, and, if so, what conclusion did the government reach?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), (b), (e), and (f), in processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and certain information has been withheld on the grounds that the information constitutes advice or recommendations and cabinet confidences.

With regard to (c), Nalcor Energy, found at www.nalcorenergy.com/publications.asp, and Emera Inc., found at <http://investors.emera.com/corporateprofile.aspx?iid=4072693>, both value property, plant, and equipment assets at historical cost in their financial statements. Once construction is completed, costs and therefore asset values are expected to be in excess of total federal loan guarantees.

With regard to part (d), the specific conditions of additional loan guarantee support will be negotiated with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nalcor Energy in the near future with provisions for commercial terms. The Government of Canada

will remain protected by a strong legal construct, as with the first federal loan guarantee.

Question No. 608—Mrs. Marilène Gill:

With regard to the involvement of the Minister of Natural Resources in the Muskrat Falls project: (a) on the basis of what analysis did the Minister decide that the Muskrat Falls facility would enable Nalcor to cover project costs; (b) at what price will the electricity produced at Muskrat Falls have to be sold for to enable the project to achieve a breakeven point; (c) before offering a new loan guarantee of \$2.9 billion, did the Minister conduct market research to determine that the price of electricity in the Atlantic provinces and northeastern United States would enable the Muskrat Falls project to achieve a breakeven point; and (d) if the answer to (c) is affirmative, what were the findings of this study?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the cost recovery framework for Muskrat Falls consists of a series of revenue agreements available on the Muskrat Falls website at <https://muskratfalls.nalcorenergy.com/newsroom/reports/>, in English only, in provincial legislation, and in orders in council. This cost recovery framework legally requires that all project costs be recovered from electricity consumers in Newfoundland and Labrador, regardless of the final costs.

With regard to (b), the prices paid to the project entities will be set at a value that ensures full cost recovery plus a return on equity. These prices will be determined once the projects are complete and the final construction cost is known.

With regard to (c), the Muskrat Falls project's viability is not dependent on electricity exports; all project costs will be covered by electricity consumers in Newfoundland and Labrador. As such, no market research was required to determine whether export prices would enable achievement of a break-even point.

For these reasons, (d) is not applicable.

Question No. 609—Mrs. Marilène Gill:

With regard to the involvement of the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard in the Muskrat Falls project: (a) before authorizing the Muskrat Falls project, did the Minister ensure that the necessary environmental assessments were completed pursuant to the Fisheries Act, particularly as regards mercury contamination of fish stocks; (b) was the Minister informed of the findings of independent studies indicating that the Muskrat Falls project would result in high levels of contamination and, if so, why did the Minister not cancel the authorization?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), Fisheries and Oceans Canada, DFO, was actively involved in the environmental assessment of the Lower Churchill hydroelectric project, which was carried out by a federal-provincial joint review panel and concluded in August 2011. Among other things, the environmental assessment examined in considerable detail the bioaccumulation of methylmercury as a result of the project. It was recognized during this environmental assessment that the Muskrat Falls component of the project and other hydroelectric projects on the Churchill River would likely result in some bioaccumulation of methylmercury, including in downstream areas.

During the environmental assessment, DFO reviewed various technical documents, submitted information requests, and prepared both a written submission and an oral presentation for the hearings. DFO provided expert science-based advice that downstream bioaccumulation of methylmercury could be greater and extend further than predicted by the proponent, Nalcor Energy. This was recognized in the report and conclusions of the joint review panel. In response to the joint review panel's conclusions and recommendations, the Government of Canada required Nalcor Energy to extend downstream methylmercury monitoring into Goose Bay and Lake Melville. This monitoring would assess the extent and duration of any increases in methylmercury in fish and seals and enable Nalcor Energy to implement consumption advisories if needed.

The requirement to implement a comprehensive methylmercury monitoring program was formally prescribed as a condition of the authorization DFO issued to Nalcor in 2013, under section 35(2)(b) of the Fisheries Act, for impacts on fish and fish habitat from the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric dam and reservoir creation.

With regard to (b), over the past three years, the Nunatsiavut government has carried out and supported studies on methylmercury in Lake Melville, including work by Harvard University researchers published in 2015. Fisheries and Oceans Canada, DFO, was made aware of these studies as a result of meetings with the Nunatsiavut government in October of 2015.

In February 2016, DFO carried out a scientific review of the implications of the Harvard study on methylmercury in Lake Melville through a Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat, or CSAS, process. DFO and Environment and Climate Change Canada scientists determined that predictions in the Harvard study were consistent with the advice the DFO provided during the environmental assessment. The scientific review recommended some adjustments to downstream methylmercury monitoring protocols, which DFO implemented.

These adjustments are covered under the Fisheries Act authorization issued to Nalcor Energy in 2013, which allows for the implementation of adaptive management in the monitoring of post-project predictions and adjustments to the program to respond to new information. As a result of this condition, the authorization did not require cancellation or amendment.

Departmental officials have maintained an ongoing dialogue with the Nunatsiavut government with respect to the project. The minister of DFO has also met with the Minister for Lands and Natural

Resources for the Nunatsiavut government to acknowledge and discuss the Nunatsiavut government's concerns related to methylmercury in Lake Melville. Furthermore, in October 2016 an agreement was made between the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and indigenous leaders to create an independent expert advisory committee, or IEAC, that would determine and recommend options for mitigating human health concerns related to methylmercury. While DFO does not possess expertise in relation to human health risks associated with methylmercury, DFO will be participating in the IEAC as an expert adviser in relation to the bioaccumulation of methylmercury in fish and seals downstream of the project.

Question No. 611—Mr. David Sweet:

With regard to the decision to not issue a commemorative medal as part of the Canada 150th celebrations: (a) what was the justification for this decision; (b) what are the details of any documented evidence to support this justification; and (c) what process was used to make this decision, in particular, (i) who was consulted, (ii) how they were consulted?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, Canada's 150th anniversary of Confederation is a unique opportunity to bring Canadians together and strengthen our connection to our communities by inspiring a vision of a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive country.

Canada 150 celebrations will be rooted in community building, engagement, and family celebrations from coast to coast to coast. These celebrations are for each and every Canadian. They are about connecting with one another.

Our government will mark the 150th anniversary of Confederation by inviting all Canadians to participate, celebrate, and explore via the numerous initiatives in their communities.

The Government of Canada is providing funding for community-driven activities and pan-Canadian signature projects as well as major events. Our government is empowering and encouraging all Canadians to engage with their community and to make 2017 a year to remember. We want all Canadians to join in the celebrations.

The vision for the 150th anniversary of Confederation is intended to inspire Canadians and bring them together by highlighting the themes of diversity and inclusion, reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, young people, and the environment.

Our government is proud to support and promote initiatives that will inspire a generation of Canadians to help build Canada's future and creating a lasting economic, cultural, and social legacy for our country.

Question No. 613—Mr. Gordon Brown:

With regard to wait times at the Thousand Islands Bridge Border Crossing and the Ogdensburg-Prescott International Bridge Border Crossing, broken down by crossing, between May 1, 2016, and October 31, 2016: (a) what was the average wait time for vehicle traffic, broken down by month, day and hour; and (b) what was the volume of vehicle traffic, broken down by month, day and hour?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the CBSA cannot provide the requested information within the prescribed time frame. The request would result in an exceptionally large volume of information, and translating thousands of lines of data would require significant human and financial resources.

Current and forecasted border wait times, however, are available at the following web address: <http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/bwt-taf/menu-eng.html>.

Question No. 615—**Mr. Bob Saroya:**

With regard to the work integrated learning program mentioned by the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, in the House of Commons on November 18, 2016: (a) what are the details of the program; (b) how much government funding has been allotted for the program; (c) what is the duration and yearly budget for the program; and (d) what are the specific goals of the program?

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), as announced in Budget 2016, the student work-integrated learning program, or SWILP, is a \$73-million program that will support new work-integrated learning, WIL, opportunities, such as co-ops and internships for young Canadians, with a focus on high-demand fields such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics, or STEM, and business, as well as through sustainable partnerships to align skills training with jobs in demand. Details will be provided once the SWILP is officially launched.

With regard to (b), as announced in Budget 2016, the student work-integrated learning program, SWILP, is a \$73-million program that will support new work-integrated learning, or WIL, opportunities, such as co-ops and internships, for young Canadians, with a focus on high-demand fields such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics, or STEM, and business, as well as through sustainable partnerships to align skills training with jobs in demand.

With regard to (c), the student work-integrated learning program, SWILP, is a four-year program. Yearly budget for the SWILP will be provided once the SWILP is officially launched.

With regard to (d), the student work-integrated learning program, SWILP, is a four-year initiative that will support sustainable and innovative partnerships between employers and willing post-secondary education, or PSE, institutions to create quality work-integrated learning, WIL, opportunities for PSE students in high-demand fields related to science, technology, engineering, mathematics, or STEM, and business.

The WIL opportunities created through these partnerships will better align the technical, foundational, and work-ready skills of students. PSE students will be encouraged to approach learning and WIL opportunities with an entrepreneurial mindset, to better position them to secure employment in their chosen fields of study and make immediate and meaningful contributions to Canada's future growth and innovation.

The student work-integrated learning program, SWILP, will bring stakeholders from post-secondary education institutions and employers in key growth and innovation sectors of the Canadian economy.

Question No. 622—**Mr. François Choquette:**

With regard to the Critical Habitat of the Beluga Whale (*Delphinapterus leucas*) St. Lawrence Estuary Population Order, published on May 14, 2016: (a) when will the Order come into force; (b) how many stakeholders have commented on the project; and (c) what are the names of the stakeholders who commented on the project, if this information is available?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the ministerial order is expected to come into force in early winter 2017.

With respect to (b) and this ministerial order, four comments were submitted during the 30-day Canada Gazette part I comment period.

With regard to (c), the stakeholders who commented on this proposed ministerial order are Madame Amélie Larouche, chef conseillère, Première Nation Malécites de Viger; Philippe Gervais, vice-président, Capital Hill Group; Lloyd Sykes, a citizen; and from the Government of Quebec, Minister Laurent Lessard, Ministre des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs, and Minister David Heurtel, Ministre du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques.

Question No. 626—**Mr. Mel Arnold:**

With regard to the mandate letter to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and specifically, the section which called for the review of the previous government's changes to the Fisheries and Navigable Waters Protection Acts: (a) specifically what lost protections is the mandate letter referring to; (b) what harms or proof of harm, to fish or fish habitat, attributed to the previous government's changes to these two Acts exist; and (c) specifically what protections lost, or alleged to have been lost as a result of the previous government's changes to these two Acts, is not provided for under other federal, provincial, or territorial legislation or regulations?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the previous government's changes to the Fisheries Act were made with little consultation or transparency and were poorly received by environmental and indigenous groups. Various partners, stakeholders, and indigenous groups have emphasized the need for improved engagement and collaboration in developing and implementing any new legislation and policy to protect fish and fish habitat.

Since the Fisheries Act was changed in 2012-2013, indigenous groups, the academic community, stakeholders, and the public more generally have expressed concern with the changes to the act and their implementation. The department has continued to hear these types of concerns during the initial stages of public engagement related to the review of the 2012-2013 changes to the Fisheries Act this year.

Routine Proceedings

For example, concern has been expressed about the legislative change from a prohibition against “harmful alteration, destruction or disruption of fish habitat” to a prohibition against “serious harm to fish”, defined as the “the death of fish or any permanent alteration to, or destruction of, fish habitat”. Some people have expressed concern that under this new wording, temporary alterations to fish habitat are no longer prohibited, even though temporary alterations can have significant effects on fish and fish habitat productivity.

There has also been concern raised that since 2012-2013, the habitat protection prohibition only applies to fish and fish habitat that are part of or support commercial, recreational, and aboriginal fisheries and that are currently harvested.

The department has received comments that the reduction in offices and staff that coincided with the 2012-2013 amendments also reduced protections, as they resulted in a decreased capacity to deliver on fish and fish habitat protection through project review, monitoring, and enforcement.

With regard to (b), the department has not been either resourced or mandated to conduct this type of comprehensive monitoring and has not undertaken specific monitoring or analysis to compare the impacts of the changes to the act. The department is, however, developing new processes to monitor projects as well as to report back to Canadians on how fish and fish habitat are being protected in these specific areas.

With regard to (c), while management of inland fisheries has largely been delegated to the provinces and the Yukon Territory, the administration of the provisions related to the protection of fish and fish habitat remains with the federal government across Canada. Provincial and territorial authorities do deliver a range of natural resource conservation initiatives under various provincial and territorial laws that complement those of the federal government. For example, land use decisions made by these authorities may have a significant bearing on the quality and function of fish habitat in a given watershed.

Question No. 628—Mrs. Kelly Block:

With regard to the Community Participation Fund program: (a) how many grants were issued from January 1, 2016, to November 23, 2016; (b) how many of the groups who received grants were (i) Indigenous groups, (ii) local groups and local organizations, (iii) municipalities with a population of less than 10 000, (iv) not-for-profit organizations; (c) how many requests for funding were received; and (d) what percentage of grants went to (i) reviewing documents and providing written comments to contribute to the development and improvement of Canada’s marine transportation system in Canada, (ii) preparing for, travelling to, and participating in meetings related to the development and improvement of Canada’s marine transportation system in Canada, (iii) hiring expertise or conducting studies that contributes to the development and improvement of Canada’s marine transportation system in Canada?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada recognizes the importance of a renewed relationship with indigenous peoples in Canada. That is why the community participation funding program, CPF, helps eligible indigenous groups and local communities take part in developing and improving Canada’s marine transportation system. The CPF gives recipients the opportunity to contribute their knowledge towards tailoring marine transportation systems to local conditions and the environment.

Eligible recipients include indigenous groups, local groups and local organizations, municipalities with a population of less than 10,000, and not-for-profit organizations. Applicants must also prove that they depend on the local marine environment in an area that is being considered for social, economic, or commercial activities.

With regard to (a), 36 grant recipients were approved during this time period, and 29 grant payments have been issued to date.

With regard to (b), of the groups that received grants, 22 were indigenous groups, none were local groups or local organizations, one was a municipality with a population of less than 10,000, and 13 were not-for-profit organizations.

With regard to (c), 39 funding requests were received.

With regard to (d)(i), 100% of grants went to reviewing documents and providing written comments to contribute to the development and improvement of Canada’s marine transportation system. With regard to (d)(ii), 100% of grants went to preparing for, travelling to, and participating in meetings related to the development and improvement of Canada’s marine transportation system. With regard to (d)(iii), 16.6% of grants went to hiring expertise or conducting studies that contributed to the development and improvement of Canada’s marine transportation system.

Question No. 629—Mrs. Kelly Block:

With regard to Transport Canada’s online consultation on the Navigation Protection Act: (a) how many submissions were received; and (b) what are the names of the individuals and organizations who participated in the consultation?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to Transport Canada’s online consultation on the Navigation Protection Act, with regard to (a), from June 20 to August 31, 2016, Canadians were encouraged to participate in an online questionnaire to help inform the government’s review of environmental and regulatory processes, including the Navigation Protection Act, as outlined in the Minister of Transport’s mandate letter. This questionnaire included one question specific to the Navigation Protection Act, to which 155 people provided a response. This consultation was in addition to the continual engagement work conducted by Transport Canada.

With regard to (b), names of individuals and organizations that participated were not collected through this questionnaire. This online questionnaire was conducted anonymously to encourage more openness in responses, as is common practice. Anonymously filling out the questionnaire also eliminates the risk of unauthorized or inappropriate use or disclosure of personal information because no personal information is collected.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 631—Mr. Tom Lukiwski:**

With regard to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and the most recent request for funding by the Canadian Administrator of VRS (CAV), Inc. from the National Contribution Fund: (a) what is the amount of the total 2017 CAV budget; (b) what is the amount of CAV's 2016 deficit; (c) what is the amount of the 2017 administrative expenses in the CAV budget; (d) what is the amount of the 2017 CAV budget to provide 76 hours per week in both English/ASL and French/LSQ services; (e) what is the CAV's forecast in the 2017 budget of the number of VRS users on average throughout the year and the average number of minutes per month; (f) what is the amount being paid by CAV to the contractor for the VRS Platform, IV&S, in (i) 2016, (ii) 2017; (g) what is the amount being paid by CAV to Convo Communications for seat-hours in (i) 2016, (ii) 2017; (h) what is the amount being paid by CAV to Service d'interprétation visuelle et tactile (SIVET) in (i) 2016, (ii) 2017, for VRS service to meet the needs of French/LSQ speakers; and (i) what is the amount being paid by CAV in (i) 2016, (ii) 2017, to Convo Communications as an incentive to establish Canadian-based operations?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the amount of the total 2017 budget for the Canadian Administrator of VRS, or CAV, is \$25,419,405.

With regard to (b), the amount of CAV's 2016 deficit is \$666,693. With regard to (c), while there is no line item in the budget specifically called "administrative expenses", the CAV projected \$375,419 for administration for 2017.

With regard to (d), by "the amount of the 2017 CAV budget to provide 76 hours per week in both English/ASL and French/LSQ services", it is assumed that the question refers to the CAV's operations expenses and operations-contingency, which are as follows: for operations, 19,703,898; for operations-contingency, \$3,487,416.

With regard to (e), the CAV's forecast of VRS users for 2017 is an average of 3000 users, and the average number of minutes per month is 100 minutes per user.

With regard to (f), (g), and (h), in processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and the information requested has been withheld on the grounds that the information constitutes third party information related to material loss and contract negotiations.

With regard to (i), while the CAV's application to the CRTC notes that there are incentives within the contract they concluded with Convo Communications to incite them to establish Canadian-based operations, no further details were provided and the CRTC has no additional insight.

Question No. 634—Mrs. Karen Vecchio:

With regard to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and Canada 2020: how much funding did SSHRC provide to Canada 2020 in order to sponsor the Canada 2020 conference held from November 2 to 4, 2016, in Ottawa?

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Minister of Science, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, SSHRC, has an agreement with Canada 2020 that includes a \$15,000 contribution to the conference.

Question No. 642—Hon. Candice Bergen:

With regard to the guidelines set out in the Prime Minister's "Open and Accountable Government" document: (a) what processes are in place when a public office holder is accused of violating the Prime Minister's guidelines; (b) what processes are in place when the Prime Minister is accused of violating the said guidelines?

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, "Open and Accountable Government" sets out the Prime Minister's expectations for his ministry. The Prime Minister may determine whether a particular minister is meeting those expectations and whether any corrective action should be taken. Similarly, it is the responsibility of each minister to ensure that the exempt staff in his or her office are acting in accordance with guidelines applicable to those staff. Privy Council Office, PCO, officials may support the Prime Minister in providing advice on how such guidance can be interpreted or applied and how it relates to other documents or legal instruments, such as the Conflict of Interest Act and the Lobbying Act. PCO officials further support the Prime Minister with respect to Governor-in-Council appointment processes for senior government officials.

Question No. 644—Mr. Scott Reid:

With regard to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), since October 20, 2015: (a) which divisions within the RCMP equip some or all of their cruisers with automated external defibrillators (AEDs); (b) in each RCMP division, how many police cruisers are equipped with an AED; (c) has the number of RCMP cruisers equipped with AEDs increased, and if so, in which RCMP divisions has the increase occurred, and what is the number of the increase experienced in each division; (d) what policies or procedures exist which dictate (i) the use of AEDs by RCMP officers, (ii) the dispatching of RCMP vehicles to incidents where a sudden cardiac arrest is suspected, (iii) how to equip patrol cruisers with AEDs; (e) are there any existing or developing plans, at the divisional or national level, to increase the number of RCMP cruisers equipped with AEDs; and (f) what are the dates, times, originators and recipients of all communications to and from the Office of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness which mention automated external defibrillators and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Speaker, in response to (a), the divisions within the RCMP that equip some or all of their cruisers with automated external defibrillators, AEDs, are C, Québec; D, Manitoba; E, British Columbia; K, Alberta; and National.

In response to (b), the number of police cruisers by division equipped with AEDs are as follows: C Division, Québec, six police cruisers; D Division, Manitoba, two police cruisers; E Division, British Columbia, is unable to provide an accurate response at this level of detail, as it would require an excessive amount of resources and time; K Division, Alberta, six police cruisers; and National Division, two police cruisers

In response to (c), there was no recent increase in the number of RCMP cruisers equipped with AEDs in Divisions C, D, K, and National. E Division is unable to provide an accurate response at this time.

In response to (d), training for the use of AEDs is included in the standard first aid curriculum that all RCMP members take every three years.

Routine Proceedings

The RCMP has approved the implementation of AEDs for the following RCMP operational areas: the emergency medical response team, the divisional fitness and lifestyle program, the Prime Minister's protection detail, and where provincial policing standards require that an AED be available or carried in conjunction with a conducted energy weapon.

In response to (e), if an RCMP workplace is not outlined in (d) and requires AED implementation, the detachment commander or manager can obtain approval through the commanding officer.

In response to (f), between October 20, 2015, and December 5, 2016, the RCMP executive services and ministerial liaison unit received one piece of correspondence on defibrillators on February 26, 2016, from the office of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness. A response was provided on March 18, 2016.

National and divisional RCMP policies with respect to the use of AEDs by the RCMP can be found in chapter 9 of the RCMP National Occupational Safety Manual.

Question No. 653—Mr. Bob Saroya:

With regard to funds, grants, loans, and loan guarantees the government has issued through the Department of Canadian Heritage, in excess of \$1000 and since November 4, 2015: what are the details of these funds, grants, loans, and loan guarantees, and for each one, what is the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) constituency of the recipient, (iii) program for which the grant, loan, or loan guarantee was given, (iv) date the application was received, (v) amount of the individual grant, loan, or loan guarantee, (vi) date the payment was made?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as of January 1, 2016, in the effort to increase transparency, Canadian Heritage became the first department to go above and beyond Treasury Board policy requirements on proactive disclosure and committed to disclosing awards from one dollar and above.

Please note that the requested information is available on the departmental website at <http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1453476384672/1453476482298>. The department does not provide loans or loan guarantees.

Question No. 654—Mr. Bob Saroya:

With regard to bonuses paid out for employees of Shares Services Canada, since November 4, 2015: (a) how many employees have received bonuses; (b) what is the total amount paid out in bonuses; (c) how many employees have received performance bonuses; (d) what is the total amount paid out in performance bonuses; and (e) what is the total amount paid out in performance bonuses to employees at the EX-01 level or higher?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the performance management program for executives is a government-wide program guided by a directive set by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat and a responsibility of the deputy head, which is adhered to by SSC.

Executives in the core public administration are eligible to earn performance pay when they meet the commitments outlined in their performance agreements. Executives do not earn performance pay if they do not meet expectations. Performance pay includes at-risk pay, which is a portion of the pay that must be re-earned each year, and, potentially, a bonus for exceptional performance.

The terminology used in the answers below covers fiscal year 2015-16 as follows: "at-risk pay" covers sections (a) and (b); "bonus" covers sections (c) and (d).

Accordingly, (a) employees that have received at-risk pay, 117.

According to (b) total amount paid out in at-risk pay, \$1,532,968.

According to (c) employees that have received performance bonuses (bonus), 19.

According to (d) total amount paid out in performance bonuses (bonus), \$82,683.

According to (e) total amount paid out in performance bonuses (at-risk pay, plus bonus) to employees at the EX-01 level or higher, \$1,615,651.

Question No. 660—Hon. Kevin Sorenson:

With regard to the government and middle-class Canadians: (a) what is the government's definition of the middle-class; and (b) what salary range does the government consider to be middle-class for (i) individuals, (ii) couples, (iii) families?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada defines the middle class using a broader set of characteristics than merely income. Middle-class Canadians can generally be identified by the values they hold and the lifestyle they aspire to. Middle-class values are values that are common to most Canadians and from all backgrounds: they believe in working hard to get ahead and hope for a better future for their children. Middle-class families also aspire to a lifestyle that typically includes adequate housing and health care, educational opportunities for their children, a secure retirement, job security, and adequate income for modest spending on leisure pursuits, among other characteristics. The income required to attain such a lifestyle can vary greatly based on Canadians' specific situations, e.g., whether they face child care expenses or whether they live in large cities where housing tends to be more expensive.

As a result, it is not possible to pin down a specific income range that would capture everyone who is in the middle class and exclude everyone who is not. In addition, Canada has no official statistical measure of what constitutes the middle class.

Question No. 663—Mr. Dave MacKenzie:

With regard to the RCMP ceremonial guard at the Canada 2020 reception at the Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C., on March 9, 2016: how much did Canada 2020 pay the RCMP for the ceremonial guard?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada 2020 did not pay the RCMP, but they covered all travel-related expenses.

Question No. 671—Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:

With regard to the proposed Canada Infrastructure Bank: what contingency plans does the government have in the event that private-sector funding for the Bank is either unavailable or withdrawn?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker governments in Canada cannot address all of the country's infrastructure needs alone. Large institutional investors, such as Canada's public pension funds, have a large pool of capital that the infrastructure bank can help attract and leverage to meet the country's infrastructure requirements.

The Advisory Council on Economic Growth's report on infrastructure released in October 2016 highlights that given the historically low and, in many cases, negative interest rate environment, there is an abundance of institutional capital around the world waiting to be deployed. The report broadly illustrates this point in noting that there is approximately \$11.7 trillion "parked" in negative-yield bonds.

The report also states that pension funds and sovereign wealth funds have approximately \$170 billion invested in infrastructure. The infrastructure investment potential for these institutional investors is estimated at \$1.7 trillion to \$2.5 trillion, representing 10 to 14 times the level of current investment.

Canada is a stable country with fiscal room for significant investment and a well-grounded system in place. Furthermore, Canada has a long and solid tradition of partnering with the private sector, with a solid reputation in developing and leading in public-private partnership projects. Thus, Canada is well positioned to attract its share of the large amounts of capital that the private sector is seeking to invest in infrastructure.

The Canada infrastructure bank will be responsible for investing at least \$35 billion on a cash basis from the federal government into large infrastructure projects that contribute to economic growth, through direct investments, loans, loan guarantees and equity investments. Part of this amount—\$15 billion—will be sourced from the announced funding for public transit, green infrastructure, social infrastructure, trade and transportation, and rural and northern communities. An additional \$20 billion in capital will be available to the Canada infrastructure bank for investments, which will result in the bank holding assets in the form of equity or debt. This \$20 billion will therefore not result in a fiscal impact on the government.

Question No. 672—Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:

With regard to the 59 different expense claims made by the exempt staff of the Minister of International Development for trips to Sherbrooke, Quebec, between November 20, 2015 and August 30, 2016, as listed on proactive disclosure: (a) what are the details of any official government business which occurred on each trip, broken down by specific event or meeting; and (b) what government business related to the Minister's International Development portfolio occurred on each trip, broken down by specific event or meeting?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 55 of the 59 claims submitted as listed in the proactive disclosure are transportation related. Despite the significant distance between Ottawa and the riding of Compton—Stanstead, there are very limited flight or train options to travel. The most cost-efficient solution is to use the driver provided by the department for transportation.

Further details are provided in the "Policies for Ministers' Offices—January 2011", available online at <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/hgw-cgf/structure/pgmo-pldcm/pgmo-pldcm-eng.asp>

Question No. 673—Mr. Matt Jeneroux:

With regard to studies conducted by the government about the impact a carbon tax will have on food and grocery prices, since November 4, 2015: (a) have any studies been conducted regarding the increase in food and grocery prices as a result of a carbon tax; and (b) what are the specific details for all studies in (a) including (i) date of completion, (ii) title, (iii) file number, (iv) summary of conclusions?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the first ministers meeting on December 9, 2016, most provinces and territories agreed to implement the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change. The framework includes a pan-Canadian approach to pricing carbon pollution, such that carbon pricing will be implemented across the country by 2018. Provinces and territories have the flexibility to choose between two systems: a direct price on carbon pollution or a cap and trade system. British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec, representing over 80 per cent of the population, have already implemented or have introduced legislation to implement carbon pricing.

The federal government will introduce a backstop pricing system that will apply in jurisdictions that do not meet the national carbon pricing benchmark. The revenues from pricing carbon pollution will remain in the province or territory where they originate. Each jurisdiction can use carbon pricing revenues according to their needs, including to address impacts on vulnerable populations and sectors, and to support climate change and clean growth goals.

The impact of pricing carbon pollution on food and grocery prices in Canada will depend on the approaches taken individually by provinces and territories in implementing a carbon price that meets the pan-Canadian benchmark for carbon pricing, as well as the decisions made regarding how revenues from carbon pricing will be used.

An overview of the analysis of the environmental and economic impacts of the pan-Canadian framework can be accessed on the Canada.ca website at the following address: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange/climate-action/economic-analysis.html>.

Question No. 676—Mr. Harold Albrecht:

With regard to the submission from the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) to the Standing Committee on Finance which recommends exempting group medical structures and health care delivery from Budget 2016's proposed changes: (a) has the Department of Finance done a cost analysis on this recommendation, and if so, what were the results; (b) does the government plan on implementing the CMA recommendation; and (c) what is the rationale for the decision in (b)?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the department has not done a cost analysis for the recommendation made by the CMA.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to (b), implementing CMA's recommendation would be inconsistent with the intent of the amendments, which clarify that each small business is entitled to one small business deduction.

With regard to (c), the government is committed to ensuring tax fairness for all Canadians and businesses so that everyone pays their fair share. This includes ensuring that private corporations are not being used to inappropriately reduce tax obligations for high-income earners. The Budget Implementation Act, 2016, No. 2 amended the Income Tax Act to address certain tax planning arrangements that could allow access to the small business tax rate in unintended circumstances. It ensures, for example, that if the \$500,000 income limit is intended to be shared among partners in a small business partnership, the partners cannot multiply the limit. The amendments will only affect structures that attempt to multiply access to the small business deduction through the use of a partnership or corporation. It will not affect certain alternative structures that are available for group operations, such as cost-sharing arrangements.

Question No. 680—Mr. Martin Shields:

With regard to civil aviation enforcement actions by Transport Canada: (a) how many operators currently do not have the confidence of Transport Canada, and specifically the confidence of Prairie and Northern Region (PNR) Civil Aviation and are considered to not be operating safely; and (b) what specific actions have been taken by Transport Canada or PNR to address the assessment on the final page of the Minister's transition binder that "minimal compliance with regulations has proven to be insufficient to deem these operators safe"?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, continually improving aviation safety in Canada is a priority. As such, the Government of Canada does not hesitate to take the necessary actions to keep Canada's skies safe. With respect to civil aviation enforcement actions by Transport Canada and question (a), when Transport Canada believes an operator is operating unsafely, it immediately takes action to require the operator to correct the issue or, if deemed appropriate, it suspends the operator's operating certificate until the situation can be corrected. All Canadian air operators are treated in this manner across the country.

With respect to (b), Transport Canada suspends or cancels an operator's operating certificate when it believes they are operating unsafely. A suspended operator cannot operate until they demonstrate that they have met the conditions of reinstatement.

In the public interest, Transport Canada cancelled the air operator certificate of one company, prohibiting them from operating aircrafts commercially due to the company's inability to sustain the required level of compliance needed to maintain safe operation. The air operating certificate was cancelled after Transport Canada conducted a comprehensive review of the company's full compliance and safety record.

Transport Canada also suspended a second operator, as deficiencies were identified in the company's operational and maintenance control. After being suspended, Transport Canada approved corrective action plans developed by the company. As a result, Transport Canada reinstated the company's air operator certificate. Following their reinstatement, the company was placed in enhanced monitoring to enable department officials to closely monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the corrective actions. Transport

Canada continues to monitor the company to ensure that its corrective action remains in place and is effective.

Transport Canada takes its aviation safety oversight role very seriously and expects every air operator to fully comply with aviation safety requirements. When air operators fail to comply with regulations, Transport Canada will take action in the interest of public safety.

Question No. 684—Mr. Robert Aubin:

With regard to the International, Large Business and Investigations Branch of the Canada Revenue Agency, since it was created in April 2016: (a) how many employees have been assigned to it; (b) what has been its operating budget; (c) how many taxpayer audits have been active; (d) of the audits in (c), how many have been referred to the Criminal Investigations Program or the Public Prosecution Service of Canada; (e) of the audits in (d), how many have been or are before the courts; and (f) of the cases before the courts in (e), how many have resulted in convictions?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the international, large business and investigations branch, ILBIB, was formerly part of the larger compliance programs branch, CPB. ILBIB was created in April 2016 to provide more focus on international tax audit, aggressive tax planning, criminal investigations and the development of strategies to combat international tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance. As of June 29, 2016, the most recent date for which current information is available, ILBIB had 2,654 full time equivalents FTEs.

With regard to (b), ILBIB has an annual operating budget of \$271,283,229, which includes funding from budget 2016 related to the cracking down on tax evasion and tax avoidance commitment.

With regard to (c), since April 2016, there have been 15,602 active audits in ILBIB, of which 5,184 audits were completed as of November 25, 2016, the most recent date for which current information is available. Please note that many of the completed and active files were created in the former CPB, prior to the creation of ILBIB.

With regard to (d), while the CRA is able to provide the number of new criminal investigations opened since April 1, 2016, it cannot do so in the manner requested (i.e., with respect to the data provided in part (c)). Since April 1, 2016, 56 new criminal investigations have been opened. Criminal investigations can be complex and require months or years to complete. This will be dependent on the complexity of the case, the number of individuals involved, the availability of information or evidence, cooperation or lack thereof of witnesses or the accused, and the various legal tools that may need to be employed to gather sufficient evidence to establish a case beyond reasonable doubt.

Routine Proceedings

None of the 56 have been referred to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, PPSC, in the nine months of the scope of the question. Generally speaking, whether or not a file is accepted for criminal investigation and possible subsequent prosecution is based on many factors, including the evidence to establish that a crime has been committed and the likelihood of securing a conviction if charges are laid. The criminal investigations program investigates suspected cases of tax evasion, fraud, and other serious violations of tax laws and recommends to the PPSC cases for possible prosecution where an investigation has been carried out and where evidence accumulated indicates guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

With regard to (e) and (f), for the reasons outlined in part (d), since April 1, 2016, no files are before the courts and, consequently, there have been no convictions.

Question No. 688—Ms. Karine Trudel:

With regard to the audits conducted by the Canada Revenue Agency concerning international tax evasion, since January 1, 2006: (a) how many cases have resulted in a negotiated settlement, broken down by (i) year, (ii) amount of the penalties imposed, (iii) interest charged?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, please note that as of April 2014, through the creation of the offshore compliance division, the CRA began to track offshore related audits that resulted in a negotiated settlement. For this reason, the CRA is only able to provide data from that date. Information prior to April 2014 is not available in the manner requested (i.e., by year, since January 1, 2006).

The CRA strives for effective and efficient resolution of audit issues, on the basis of facts, and only settles files on a principled basis in accordance with legislation that it administers (the Income Tax Act, Excise Tax Act, and other fiscal legislation). Reaching an agreement with the taxpayer has numerous potential benefits, such as the reduction of litigation risk and costs, taxpayer agreement to the taxability of the income earned, consistency in resolution of complex issues, and the commitment by the taxpayer to pay the liability within a specific time frame.

With regard to part (a)(i), since 2014, 34 of the over 293 tax audits of offshore non-compliance resulted in a settlement.

With regard to part (a)(ii), these 34 audit cases settled resulted in over \$6 million in federal taxes assessed and \$3.8 million in penalties. In total, the 293 audits yielded \$155 million in federal tax and penalties assessed.

With regard to part (a)(iii), the CRA does not track the interest charged from the negotiated settlements noted above.

Question No. 694—Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency's Offshore Tax Informant Program (CRA) (OTIP), since its creation in 2014: (a) what have the CRA's operating costs for this Program been; (b) how many leads have been provided under OTIP; (c) of these leads, how many resulted in audits; (d) what sums were recovered by the CRA as a result of OTIP; (e) what was the amount of each award given to OTIP informants; and (f) what percentage of the amounts recovered did the awards to OTIP informants represent?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the above-noted question, what follows is the response from the Canada Revenue Agency, CRA. The offshore tax informant program, OTIP, was launched on January

15, 2014, as part of the CRA's efforts to fight international tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance. OTIP allows the CRA to make financial awards to individuals who provide information related to major international tax non-compliance that leads to the collection of taxes owing.

Individuals who wish to participate in the OTIP and who have specific and credible information about a situation of major international tax non-compliance are recommended to first contact the OTIP hotline. During the call, the CRA discusses how the program works on a no-names basis. If it appears that the case generally meets the criteria, individuals are provided with a case number and instructions on how to submit the information to the program. Information that the CRA receives is collected under the authority of federal tax legislation and will be used to determine if there is non-compliance with Canada's tax laws. Where the CRA determines that the submission does not meet the program criteria or qualify for a reward, the CRA can still use this information for other purposes in carrying out its mandate to ensure that all taxpayers pay the correct amount of tax under the law. The information provided can be referred to other program areas for compliance action.

More information is available on the CRA website: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/gncy/cmplnc/otip-pdife/sbmt-eng.html>.

In response to part (a), from January 2014 up to November 2016, the date to which current figures are available, the CRA's operating costs for the offshore tax informant program, OTIP, are \$1,866,090.

In response to part (b), as of November 30, 2016, the date to which current figures are available, the OTIP has received 398 written submissions; 127 are active submissions, of which the OTIP has entered into over 20 contracts with informants and are reviewing the balance. Of the 271 cases that did not qualify under the OTIP, 94 have been closed and 177 were referred to other areas within the CRA for possible compliance action.

In response to part (c), of the leads received in part (b) through the OTIP, the CRA has completed or is currently conducting audits involving over 218 taxpayers.

In response to part (d), while the CRA is unable to confirm the amount recovered, to date, the CRA has reassessed more than \$1 million in federal tax and foreign reporting penalties as a result of information submitted to the OTIP. As these are multi-year audits, this represents a small number of the over 218 taxpayers that were or are currently under audit.

Routine Proceedings

In response to part (e), an individual, or “informant”, must be eligible for the offshore tax informant program, OTIP. Information about the eligibility for the offshore tax informant program is available on the CRA website: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/gncy/cmplnc/otip-pdife/lgbly-eng.html>.

An OTIP analyst will consider the information provided by the informant, evaluate the merits of the case, and make a recommendation about inclusion in the program. If a case is recommended for inclusion in the program, it is referred to an oversight committee of senior management representatives for approval to enter into a contract. Once approved, the informant and the CRA will enter into a contract. A payment can be denied and a contract can be terminated in certain situations. The CRA works to conclude the process as efficiently as possible. However, it may take several years from the date of entering into a contract with the CRA until the additional federal tax is assessed, the taxpayer's appeal rights have expired, and the amount owing is collected.

The CRA has entered into over 20 contracts with informants and others are in process; however, for the reasons noted above, no rewards have been paid to date.

In response to part (f), for the reasons noted in part (e), the CRA has not paid any awards to date. However, under the OTIP, if the CRA assesses and collects more than \$100,000 in additional federal tax, the amount of the reward will be between 5% and 15% of the federal tax collected, not including interest or penalties.

Question No. 697—Mrs. Kelly Block:

With regard to the carbon pricing plan announced by the Prime Minister: (a) has the government produced any economic impact studies on the impact of a \$50 per tonne carbon price on the following sectors (i) commercial aviation, (ii) freight rail, (iii) passenger rail, (iv) marine shipping; and (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, what are the details of each study, including (i) dates and duration of each study, (ii) who conducted each study, (iii) findings of each study?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the first ministers' meeting on December 9, 2016, most provinces and territories agreed to implement the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change. The framework includes a pan-Canadian approach to pricing carbon pollution, such that carbon pricing will be implemented across the country by 2018. Provinces and territories have the flexibility to choose between two systems: a direct price on carbon pollution or a cap and-trade system. British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec, representing over 80% of the population, have already implemented or have introduced legislation to implement carbon pricing.

The federal government will introduce a backstop pricing system that will apply in jurisdictions that do not meet the national carbon pricing benchmark.

The revenues from pricing carbon pollution will remain in the province or territory where they originate. Each jurisdiction can use carbon pricing revenues according to their needs, including to address impacts on vulnerable populations and sectors and to support climate change and clean growth goals.

The impact of pricing carbon pollution on commercial aviation, freight rail, passenger rail, and marine shipping in Canada will depend on the approaches taken individually by provinces and

territories in implementing a carbon price that meets the pan-Canadian benchmark for carbon pricing, as well as the decisions made regarding how revenues from carbon pricing will be used.

An overview of the analysis of the environmental and economic impacts of the pan-Canadian framework can be accessed on the Canada.ca website at the following address: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange/climate-action/economic-analysis.html>.

Question No. 702—Mr. Gordon Brown:

With regard to Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA): what are the file numbers of all ministerial briefings or departmental correspondence between the government and CBSA since November 4, 2015, broken down by (i) minister or department, (ii) relevant file number, (iii) correspondence or file type, (iv) date, (v) purpose, (vi) origin, (vii) intended destination, (viii) other officials copied or involved?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a preliminary search was done in ccmMercury, the file tracking system of the Canada Border Services Agency, CBSA, to find the file numbers of all ministerial briefings or departmental correspondence between the government and the CBSA since November 4, 2015. As a result of the volume and the processing required to provide the detail requested, the CBSA cannot produce a response by the specified deadline.

Question No. 725—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to the political activities regime set out in the Public Service Employment Act: (a) how many allegations of improper political activities were reported between October 2015 and December 2016, broken down by department; (b) of the reports listed in (a), how many investigations were performed, broken down by department; (c) of the investigations listed in (b) how many resulted in disciplinary action, broken down by department; and (d) of the investigations listed in (b), how many were initiated by the Deputy Minister, the Associate Deputy Minister, and other management level officials?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), from October 1, 2015, to December 6, 2016, the Public Service Commission received five allegations of improper political activities concerning employees from Shared Services Canada, the Canada Revenue Agency, the Department of National Defence, the Department of Justice, and Natural Resources Canada.

In response to (b), of these allegations, two investigations were launched. In processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and certain information has been withheld on the grounds that the information constitutes personal information.

Routine Proceedings

In response to (c), to date, no disciplinary action has been ordered by the commission regarding these investigations. One of these investigations was discontinued, while the other one is still ongoing. In processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and certain information has been withheld on the grounds that the information constitutes personal information. Disciplinary action can also be taken by the employee's home department under the deputy head's authority. The Public Service Commission does not collect data related to disciplinary action taken by departments

In response to (d), both investigations were initiated by managers.

Question No. 726—**Mr. Kelly McCauley:**

With regard to public service staffing and the Veterans Hiring Act: (a) how many veterans have been hired since October 19, 2015; (b) how many veterans applied; and (c) how many veterans were rejected, and what were the reasons for each rejection, in list format?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), a total of 266 veterans were hired since October 19, 2015, of which 255 were statutory or regulatory priorities. This data originates from the Public Service Commission's priority information management system. It includes appointments from organizations subject to the Public Service Employment Act, as well as appointments using similar criteria at the Canada Revenue Agency. In addition, 11 were through preference and mobility provisions. Information on preference and mobility appointments is available up to March 31, 2016.

With regard to (b), a total of 1,350 veterans submitted 3,813 applications from October 19, 2015 to November 30, 2016. This includes applications to organizations subject to the PSEA, based on the closing date of the advertisement. Cancelled advertisements are excluded. Some veterans submitted multiple applications. Due to information being captured through monthly extracts, applicant data is only available up until November 30, 2016.

With regard to (c), of the 3,813 veteran applications, 457 were screened out of internal and external appointment processes from October 19, 2015 to November 30, 2016 for the following reasons: 420 applications did not meet the screening requirements identified for the job opportunity, 30 applications did not meet the unsupervised Internet test requirements identified for the job opportunity, six applications did not indicate that the applicant was residing or employed in the specified radius identified for the job opportunity at the time they submitted their application, and one application did not meet the experience requirements identified for the job opportunity. This data originates from the Public Service Commission's public service resourcing system, PSRS. Decisions on the remaining applications were made by the hiring organizations at later stages in the appointment process and may have been based on assessment tools such as written examinations, interviews or references.

Question No. 734—**Mr. Robert Kitchen:**

With regard to the government's proposal for the Canadian Infrastructure Bank: (a) what will be the corporate structure of the bank; (b) how much funding will the government provide to the bank; (c) how much in loan guarantees will the government, including any federal agency, provide to the bank; (d) how much private investment is needed to ensure the sustain the bank; (e) what is the value of all firm

financial commitments the government received to the bank from private investments so far; (f) are there any requirements that private investments in the Canadian Infrastructure Bank come from Canadian firms; (g) will the Canadian Infrastructure Bank allow investments from individuals or groups with ties to the Chinese government; (h) will the Canadian Infrastructure Bank allow investments from individuals or groups with ties to other foreign governments; and (i) will the Canadian Infrastructure Bank allow investments from individuals or groups with ties to a listed terrorist group?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the 2016 fall economic statement announced the investing in Canada plan, proposing to invest over \$180 billion over 12 years, starting in 2017-18, in public transit, green infrastructure, social infrastructure, transportation that supports trade, and Canada's rural and northern communities. As part of this plan, the government is proposing the creation of a Canada infrastructure bank that will work with provinces, territories, and municipalities to further the reach of the government funding directed to infrastructure. The Canada infrastructure bank, federal and provincial/territorial governments, and investors will work together to identify potential projects and identify investment opportunities that provide the biggest economic, social, and environmental returns.

The Canada infrastructure bank will make investments in revenue-generating infrastructure projects and plans that contribute to the long-term sustainability of infrastructure across the country. It will be mandated to work with project sponsors to structure, negotiate, and deliver federal support for infrastructure projects with revenue-generating potential; use innovative financial tools to invest in national and regional infrastructure projects and attract private sector capital to public infrastructure projects; serve as a single point of contact for unsolicited proposals from the private sector; and improve evidence-based decision making and advise governments on the design and negotiation of revenue-generating infrastructure projects.

Regarding the corporate structure of the Canada infrastructure bank, it will be accountable to, and partner with, government, but will operate at greater arm's length than a department. It will work with provincial, territorial, municipal, indigenous, and investment partners to transform the way infrastructure is planned, funded, and delivered in Canada.

Routine Proceedings

In terms of funding and investments, the Canada infrastructure bank will be responsible for investing at least \$35 billion on a cash basis from the federal government into large infrastructure projects that contribute to economic growth through direct investments, loans, loan guarantees, and equity investments. Part of this amount, \$15 billion, will be sourced from the announced funding for public transit, green infrastructure, social infrastructure, trade and transportation, and rural and northern communities. An additional \$20 billion in capital will be available to the Canada infrastructure bank for investments, which will result in the bank holding assets in the form of equity or debt. This \$20 billion will therefore not result in a fiscal impact for the government.

Regarding potential private sector investments in Canada's public infrastructure, the Investment Canada Act provides for the review of significant direct acquisitions of control of Canadian businesses by foreign investors for their likely economic net benefit to Canada. The act also provides for the review of foreign investments that could be injurious to national security.

The government will announce further details on the investing in Canada plan through budget 2017.

Question No. 737—**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:**

With regard to any federal payments made, or to be made, as a result of the decision by the Ontario government to cancel a project with Windstream Energy LLC: (a) what is the current amount of federal funds which are slated to be delivered to Windstream Energy LLC as a result of the related NAFTA ruling; (b) what steps is the government planning or considering in order to recover the money from the individuals involved; (c) has the government asked any of the following individuals or entities for repayment on behalf of Canadian taxpayers, (i) the former Premier of Ontario, Dalton McGuinty, (ii) the current Premier of Ontario, (iii) the Liberal Party of Ontario, (iv) any of the individuals facing charges in relation to the cancellation of the project, or in relation to the deletion or destruction of related emails; (d) does the government have any plans to take legal action against any individuals in order to recover the federal funds required as a result of the NAFTA ruling; (e) if the answer to (d) is affirmative, what are the details of any action the government is planning to take?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on September 30, 2016, the NAFTA Chapter 11 tribunal constituted to hear *Windstream v. Canada* issued its final award, which awarded the claimant, Windstream Energy LLC, \$25,182,900 in damages and \$2,912,432 in costs.

This award is but a small fraction of the damages requested as the majority of the company's claims were dismissed by the tribunal. Post-award interest, as agreed to by the parties, is also payable. The public version of the award is available here at www.pccases.com/web/sendAttach/2036. The Government of Canada is currently in consultation with the Government of Ontario with regards to payment details.

This dispute represents a very small portion of the billions in investments that Canada attracts and the billions that Canadian companies invest abroad.

Question No. 740—**Hon. Ahmed Hussen:**

With regard to Lt. Gen. Michael Hood's testimony at the Senate Standing Committee for National Security and Defence in which he indicated that our NORAD and NATO commitments were previously being met, but a policy change which required meeting these commitments concurrently resulted in a requirement to increase the number of fighters available: (a) who made this policy change; (b) was Lt. Gen. Hood consulted prior to the decision to make this change; (c) if the answer to (b) is in the negative, what is the rationale; (d) on what basis or recommendation

was this policy change made; (e) on what date was this policy change made; (f) why was this change made before the completion of the government's Defence Policy Review; (g) what is the rationale for this policy change; (h) since November 3, 2015, has the Armed Forces' policy requirements changed for the (i) Chinook helicopter fleet, (ii) CP-140 Aurora surveillance plane fleet, (iii) Griffin helicopter fleet, (iv) Sea King helicopter fleet, (v) C-17 Globemaster fleet, (vi) C-130 Hercules fleet; (i) if the answer to any part of (h) is affirmative (i) what was the change, (ii) who made it, (iii) on what basis or recommendation was it made, (iv) on what date was it made, (v) why was it made before the completion of the government's Defence Policy Review, (vi) what is the rationale for it; (j) what are the estimated additional operational costs of this policy change; (k) what is the total number of fighter jets required for the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) to implement this policy change; (l) what will be the result of this policy change with respect to the RCAF's NATO contributions; and (m) what is the expected result of this policy change with respect to the RCAF's NORAD contributions?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has made the decision to no longer risk manage our ability to simultaneously meet our NORAD and NATO commitments. Canada's current CF-18 fighter aircraft fleet is now more than 30 years old and down from 138 to 76 aircraft. Canada has been risk managing its ability to meet these commitments for a number of years. The government is no longer willing to accept this risk, and is consequently exploring the acquisition of an interim fleet of Super Hornet aircraft to supplement the CF-18 fighter aircraft fleet until the permanent replacement arrives. This decision was announced on 22 November 2016.

By taking action now, the government will ensure that our defence needs will continue to be met in both the short- and long-term, and that Canada remains a credible and dependable ally. In making this decision, advice to the Minister of National Defence was funneled through his two main advisors, the chief of the defence staff and the deputy minister.

The specific information requested about on what basis or recommendation this policy change was made constitutes advice to ministers and is cabinet confidence.

Since 3 November 2015, there have been no changes to policy requirements for any of the other fleets of the Royal Canadian Air Force listed in the question.

Canada has obligations to the North American Aerospace Defense Command, NORAD, and to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, to be ready to deploy a fighter capability. Specifically, Canada has committed six fighter aircraft on standby to the NATO Response Force. The number of Canadian fighter aircraft committed to NORAD is classified. However, the number of mission-ready fighter jets Canada can concurrently provide to these organizations is fewer than the sum of these obligations could demand, which means, as a result, that the Royal Canadian Air Force, RCAF, faces a capability gap.

Routine Proceedings

Details on the permanent fleet size and the anticipated costs will be defined by the defence policy review and budget 2017.

Question No. 741—**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:**

With regard to the statement made in the House of Commons by the Minister of National Defence on November 23, 2016, that on September 11, 2001, Canada had to “put every single fighter up in the air”: (a) how many of Canada’s CF-18s flew sorties on September 11, 2001; (b) how many of Canada’s CF-18s were put on readiness on September 11, 2001; and (c) were any of Canada’s CF-18s diverted from their NATO obligations on September 11, 2001?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, on September 11, 2001, in response to terrorist attacks against the United States, the North American Aerospace Defense Command, NORAD, took control of Canadian and American airspace and mobilized assets to address the threat. The airspace in both Canada and the United States was shut down, and all airborne civilian and military aircraft were ordered to land at the nearest suitable airfield.

In Canada, all NORAD rapid reaction assets were immediately deployed, primarily to escort international air traffic to coastal airfields. Throughout the day, the Royal Canadian Air Force, RCAF, recalled personnel and prepared combat capable, mission-ready air assets in response to the uncertain security situation. The RCAF continued to generate forces at the two main operating bases, Canadian Forces Base Bagotville and Canadian Forces Base Cold Lake, until each base reached its maximum operating capacity. NORAD has responsibility for detailed information related to operations on September 11, 2001, and has classified information related to the number of sorties flown that day.

Readiness is a measure of how prepared the Canadian Armed Forces are to deploy, and readiness levels are always classified. In processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and certain information has been withheld on the grounds that the information relates to national security, defence and international affairs. In keeping with the principles of these acts, while we are in a position to state that all NORAD rapid reaction assets in Canada were deployed, specific details such as the number of aircraft fuelled and armed or the number of sorties flown on September 11, 2001 cannot be released.

A review of our historical data found no record of CF-18s being diverted from their North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, obligations, specifically on September 11, 2001.

Question No. 742—**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:**

With regard to the deletion from the Department of National Defence’s website of the Defence Research and Development Canada June 2014 report in relation to fighter jets: (a) when was the report deleted from the website; (b) who ordered the deletion; (c) when was the Minister or his office made aware of the deletion; (d) did the Minister or his office approve the deletion, and if so, on what date; (e) what is the rationale behind the decision to delete the report; and (f) what are the details of any briefing notes, memorandums, or other docketed related to the deletion of said report including (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title, (v) summary, (vi) file number?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, the report was removed from the website on November 4, 2016.

The director of staff, strategic joint staff, ordered the deletion of the report.

The minister and the minister’s office became aware of the deletion after the Department of National Defence had taken action to remove the report from the website.

Neither the minister, nor the minister’s office, approved the deletion of the report. The Department of National Defence did not seek the minister’s approval.

Given the current threat environment, the director of staff, strategic joint staff, judged the information contained in the report should no longer remain public.

No briefing notes, memorandums or docketed were produced on the subject.

Question No. 744—**Hon. Candice Bergen:**

With respect to the mydemocracy.ca website: (a) what are the details of the membership of the advisory panel who decided on the questions, including for each individual their (i) name, (ii) title, (iii) affiliation; (b) what is the breakdown of expected costs associated with the postcards promoting the website, including (i) postage, (ii) printing, (iii) preparation, (iv) other costs broken down by individual cost; (c) what was the total cost of the development of the website, broken down by individual line item; (d) did the Minister of Democratic Institutions approve the questions on the website, and if so, on what date did the Minister approve the questions; and (e) on what date were the questions (i) finalized by the advisory panel, (ii) submitted to the Minister for approval?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, with regard to part a) of the question, Vox Pop Labs developed the questions, in consultation with the Government of Canada and an advisory panel of prominent scholars in areas such as research design, survey methodology, and electoral politics. The panel members included the following academics: André Blais, professeur titulaire, Université de Montréal; Elisabeth Gidengil, Hiram Mills professor, McGill University; Richard Johnston, professor, University of British Columbia; Peter Loewen, associate professor, University of Toronto; Scott Matthews, associate professor, Memorial University; Jonathan Rose, associate professor, Queen’s University; Laura Stephenson, associate professor, Western University; and Melanee Thomas, assistant professor, University of Calgary.

The members of the academic advisory panel issued a statement that can be found at: http://individual.utoronto.ca/loewen/Electoral_Reform_files/statement%20advisory%20board%20FINAL.pdf.

With regard to part b), the Government of Canada wanted to engage as many Canadians as possible in a conversation about electoral reform. Postcards were sent to every Canadian household inviting them to participate in MyDemocracy.ca. The breakdown of expected costs for the postcards includes \$1,673,921.08 for postage and a total of \$295,128 for the printing and preparation of the cards, which were done by the same firm. There were no other individual costs.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to part c), the contract with Vox Pop Labs for the development of the application along with analysis and reporting of results is expected to cost \$369,058.00, including HST.

With regard to part d), the final approval of the questions included in MyDemocracy.ca was given in November 2016.

With regard to part e), Vox Pop Labs developed the questions, in consultation with the Government of Canada and an advisory panel of prominent scholars in areas such as research design, survey methodology, and electoral politics.

The process for developing, reviewing, and providing feedback on questions was an iterative, consultative, and collaborative process. Final approval for the questions included in MyDemocracy.ca was given in November 2016.

Question No. 755—Ms. Irene Mathysen:

With regard to Veterans Affairs Canada what is: (a) the criteria for benefits for veterans with injuries or disease due to exposure to toxic chemicals, including, but not limited to, (i) asbestos, (ii) lead, (iii) lubricants, (iv) cleaners, (v) chemical spraying, (vi) spraying at CFB Gagetown, (vii) depleted uranium, (viii) radiation, (ix) other chemicals; (b) the number of claims that have been made for exposure to toxic chemicals, including, but not limited to, (i) asbestos, (ii) lead, (iii) lubricants, (iv) cleaners, (v) chemical spraying, (vi) spraying at CFB Gagetown, (vii) depleted uranium, (viii) radiation, (ix) other chemicals; and (c) the number of successful claims for toxic chemicals exposure, including, but not limited to, (i) asbestos, (ii) lead, (iii) lubricants, (iv) cleaners, (v) chemical spraying, (vi) spraying at CFB Gagetown, (vii) depleted uranium, (viii) radiation, (ix) other chemicals?

Hon. Kent Hehr (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part a), a diagnosed medical condition and evidence that the condition or disability is related to military service is required to receive a disability benefit from Veterans Affairs Canada. Canadian Armed Forces members and veterans with a disability associated with exposure as a result of military service or any other service-related disability are encouraged to apply for disability benefits from Veterans Affairs Canada. Additional guidance for the adjudication of disability benefit applications related to hazardous material, radiation exposure, and exposure to Agent Orange and other unregistered United States military herbicides may be found at the following website addresses: www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-us/policy/document/1315 and www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-us/policy/document/1190.

With regard to b) and c), toxic chemicals are not a condition but rather a potential cause to other conditions. Veterans Affairs Canada does not track the causes of the conditions, only the conditions themselves. As a result, Veterans Affairs Canada is unable to provide the data requested.

Question No. 757—Mr. Jim Eglinski:

With regard to projects funded by the government on the O'Chiese First Nation: (a) what is the total value of invoices which have been received but not paid as of December 7, 2016; (b) what are the details of any such invoices, including the (i) amount, (ii) date received, (iii) vendor, (iv) description of goods or services provided, (v) reason for non-payment; (c) what are the details of all correspondence between the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs and the O'Chiese First Nation or the vendors regarding non-payments, including the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title, (v) file number?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, insofar as Indigenous and Northern

Affairs Canada is concerned, no invoices were unpaid as of December 7, 2016.

Question No. 761—Mr. Ron Liepert:

With regard to the Free 2017 Parks Canada Discovery Pass Program offered by Parks Canada: (a) how many passes have been requested as of December 7, 2016; (b) how many passes were requested by (i) individuals residing in Canada, (ii) families residing in Canada, (iii) individuals residing outside of Canada, (iv) families residing outside of Canada; (c) what has been the cost to produce the passes, broken down by (i) staff time, (ii) staff overtime, (iii) printing, (iv) design, (v) mailing, (vi) postage, (vii) other costs, indicating nature of such costs; (d) how many passes have been provided to other agencies, such as the Canadian Automotive Association or Alberta Motor Association, identifying which agencies received passes and how many passes each agency received; (e) how many passes were purchased in the 2015-2016 fiscal year and what was the total gross revenue from purchased passes; and (f) what was the cost to produce the passes in the 2015-2016 fiscal year broken down by (i) staff time, (ii) staff overtime, (iii) printing, (iv) design, (v) mailing, (vi) postage, (vii) other costs, indicating nature of such costs?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is very pleased to offer free admission for all visitors to national parks, national historic sites, and national marine conservation areas operated by Parks Canada in 2017 to celebrate Canada 150.

Canada's national parks and national marine conservation areas provide outstanding examples of our country's natural landscapes, generate economic activity by attracting visitors from Canada and abroad, and provide Canadians with access to our natural heritage.

As Canada's largest provider of natural and cultural tourism, Parks Canada's destinations form important cornerstones for Canada's local, regional, and national tourism industry. Parks Canada places are an important part of local economies, helping to generate billions of dollars annually and employ tens of thousands of people.

The millions of visitors to Canada's national parks, national historic sites, and national marine conservation areas make a substantial and widespread contribution to the Canadian economy, through job creation and revenues generated for local businesses.

With regard to a), as of December 7, 2016, there were 377,879 pass orders for 661,925 passes.

With regard to b), Parks Canada received 360,926 orders from individuals or families residing in Canada for 632,146 passes. Parks Canada received 16,953 orders from individuals or families outside of Canada for 29,779 passes. The agency cannot differentiate between families or individuals based on orders.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to c)i), the amount is \$40,000. Over three months, the Discovery Pass program represented 70% of the work of two staff and 30% of the work of one staff person. No staff overtime has been incurred. Each pass costs \$0.342 to produce. As of December 7, 2016, approximately 661,925 passes were ordered. Print costs would be approximately \$226,378. With regard to c) iv), the amount is \$2,713. No mailing costs were incurred. No postage costs were incurred. No other costs were incurred.

No passes were provided to other agencies.

The free 2017 Discovery Pass replaces both regular entry and traditional Discovery Pass sales. The total number of 2015-16 entry passes purchased, including Discovery Passes and daily entry, was 5,884,127, totalling \$65,991,356 in total gross revenue. The number of Discovery Passes purchased for 2015-16 is 176,557 passes, totalling \$21,435,577 in gross revenue.

With regard to f) i), the amount is \$55,000 over 12 months. The Discovery Pass program represented 50% of the work of one staff and 20% of the work of one staff person. No staff overtime has been incurred. The cost of printing the 2016 Discovery Pass was \$0.36 per pass for a total of \$63,561. With regard to f) iv), the amount is \$2,713. Packaging and mailing passes cost \$34,250. Some 8,250 Discovery Passes were ordered for distribution by mail. With an average postal charge of \$0.98 per order, the total cost was \$8,085. No other costs were incurred.

Question No. 762—**Mr. Len Webber:**

With regard to the list of chronic diseases maintained by the Public Health Agency of Canada: (a) why are Crohn's and colitis not included on the list; (b) when were Crohn's and colitis last reviewed for inclusion on the list; (c) what criteria do Crohn's and colitis not meet for inclusion on the list; (d) when will Crohn's and colitis next be reviewed for inclusion on the list; and (e) what is the full criteria used for determining whether a disease is included on the list?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to a), the list of chronic diseases and conditions on the Public Health Agency of Canada's website was updated in December 2016 to include Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, see www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cd-mc/index-eng.php. In addition, surveillance information on diagnosed inflammatory bowel disease, IBD, collected on an annual basis via Statistics Canada's Canadian Community Health Survey, is also publicly available online via PHAC's Chronic Disease Infobase DataCubes, see <http://infobase.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cubes/index-eng.html>.

With regard to b), the list of diseases and conditions was reviewed in December 2016, and PHAC's website has been updated to include Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, see www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cd-mc/index-eng.php.

With regard to c), generally, the list includes those diseases and conditions on which PHAC conducts ongoing national surveillance.

With regard to d), as mentioned, the list of diseases and conditions was reviewed in December 2016, and PHAC's website has been updated to include Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, see www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cd-mc/index-eng.php.

With regard to e), generally, the list includes those diseases and conditions on which PHAC conducts ongoing national surveillance. Surveillance activities are prioritized based on criteria such public

health considerations, such as epidemiologic and economic burden; technical aspects, such as feasibility to collect data at the national level; validity of collection methods for the condition; alignment with PHAC's mandate and government's priorities; and resource availability. Surveillance experts revisit the coverage of their activities regularly, in light of these parameters.

Question No. 764—**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:**

With regard to the cancellation of the Enbridge Northern Gateway: (a) what scientific data was provided with regard to the impacts of the proposed pipeline route subsequent to the approval of this project by the Joint Review Panel in 2014; (b) how did this additional scientific input contradict the science that supported the original decision by the Joint Review Panel; and (c) what were the (i) potential consequences identified by this new scientific input, (ii) the risk or likelihood that these consequences would occur, (iii) the likelihood that additional conditions or measures intended to mitigate could have reduced these risks to an acceptable level?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in its 2014 report, the joint review panel made a non-binding recommendation to the Governor in Council on the project application. The report documents the extensive technical, scientific, traditional, and specialized information and knowledge the panel received from a variety of sources in relation to the project. In its November 25, 2016 decision, Order in Council 2016-1047, the Governor in Council directed the National Energy Board to dismiss the Northern Gateway Pipelines Limited Partnership's application for a certificate. The National Energy Board acted on the Governor in Council's direction on December 6, 2016, by dismissing the project application.

Routine Proceedings

The Governor in Council's decision on the project application relied on the joint review panel's 2014 report including the scientific evidence, analysis, and data contained in that report. The report contained scientific and other evidence documenting the unique and irreplaceable nature of the ecosystem of the Great Bear Rainforest, including the Douglas Channel. The sensitivity of this ecosystem was central to the Governor in Council's conclusion that the waters of the Douglas Channel must be protected from any spills of crude oil from tankers and was also, therefore, central to its direction to the National Energy Board to dismiss the project application. As the joint review panel did an adequate job of documenting the scientific evidence, it was unnecessary to consider additional scientific sources beyond those documented in the panel's report.

Question No. 770—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to the initiative of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration and the Paul Yuzyk Award for Multiculturalism: (a) what is the number of nominations for the Award received in 2015 and in 2016, broken down by each of the following categories (i) youth, (ii) organization, (iii) lifetime achievement or outstanding achievement; (b) what is the number of valid candidates for each year and category referred to in (a); (c) who is the winner of the 2016 Award; and (d) what is the full and complete list of all news release and other communication or notification products used in relation to the Award?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part a), in 2015, (i) 4 nominations, (ii) 12 nominations, (iii) 25 nominations.

In 2016, there were no nominations received as no call for nominations was made.

With regard to part b), in 2015, (i) 3 nominations, (ii) 11 nominations, (iii) 23 nominations. Three nominations received in 2015 were incomplete and were therefore not valid.

In 2016, there were no nominations received as no call for nominations was made.

With regard to part c), the format of the Paul Yuzyk Award for Multiculturalism is being re-evaluated following the return of the multiculturalism program to the Department of Canadian Heritage.

With regard to part d), communication and notification products used in relation to the 2015 Paul Yuzyk Award included a news release on January 19, 2015,

"Nominations now being accepted for the 2015 Paul Yuzyk Award for Multiculturalism", see <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=922589>.

On social media, on Twitter, 44 award-related messages were posted in English and French. These were retweeted 95 times and favoured 85 times. Other Twitter users posted 40 external messages related to the Award, which were in turn retweeted 20 times and favoured six times.

On Facebook, starting in March 2015, approximately eight award posts were made before the nomination deadline. Facebook had not previously been used to promote the award because of departmental restrictions.

In email marketing, messages were sent to approximately 1,800 contacts. These encouraged nominations and provided information about the new categories.

Messages were sent on four occasions: targeted launch messages for each of the three categories, a reminder to all contacts in early March, a deadline extension notice in late March, and a targeted message to previous sponsors encouraging repeat nominations, also in late March.

Details of the award were listed on Citizenship and Immigration Canada's website, which had responsibility for the multiculturalism program at the time.

Question No. 772—Mr. Alain Rayes:

With regard to the Mydemocracy.ca website: (a) did the Minister of Democratic Institutions make changes to add or remove any of the questions on the survey and, if so, what specific changes were made; (b) did the exempt staff of the Minister make changes to add or remove any of the questions on the survey and, if so, what specific changes were made; (c) who made the final decision regarding which questions were included; and (d) what role did (i) academic experts, (ii) Privy Council Office officials, (iii) political staff, have in the development, approval, and implementation of the questions?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the response from the Privy Council Office is as follows: Vox Pop Labs developed the questions, in consultation with the Government of Canada and Vox Pop Lab's advisory panel of prominent scholars in areas such as research design, survey methodology, and electoral politics. Inclusion of or changes to some questions was also based on empirical testing.

The process for developing, reviewing, and providing feedback on questions was an iterative, consultative, and collaborative one, but the Government of Canada was responsible for final approval of the questions.

Question No. 777—Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces' Treasury Board submissions, for each fiscal year from 2014 to present: (a) how many submissions were approved for (i) capital equipment projects, (ii) infrastructure, (iii) information management and information technology; (b) for each item in (a), what is the title and value of each submission; and (c) did any of the submissions in (b) refer to article 506.11(a) in the Agreement on Internal Trade, and if so, which ones?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the principles of the Access to Information Act, and as such, the information requested in the question has been withheld on the grounds that it constitutes a confidence of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada.

Question No. 782—Mr. Michael Cooper:

With regard to the Prime Minister's Open and Accountable Government guidelines: who has the mandate to conduct an investigation into alleged breaches of the guidelines?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, “Open and Accountable Government” sets out the Prime Minister’s expectations for his ministry. The Prime Minister may determine whether a particular minister is meeting those expectations, and whether any corrective action should be taken. Similarly, it is the responsibility of each minister to ensure that the exempt staff in his or her office are acting in accordance with guidelines applicable to those staff. Privy Council Office officials may support the Prime Minister in providing advice on how such guidance can be interpreted or applied, and how it relates to other documents or legal instruments such as the Conflict of Interest Act and the Lobbying Act. PCO officials further support the Prime Minister with respect to Governor in Council appointment processes for senior government officials.

Question No. 785—Mr. Gérard Deltell:

How many additional full-time jobs have been created in Canada between November 2015 and November 2016?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, between November 2015 and December 2016, 204,000 additional jobs were created in Canada, 88,100 of which were full-time jobs.

Question No. 788—Mr. Erin Weir:

With regard to the approval of Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain Expansion Project: what measures, if any, do the government and the National Energy Board plan to take to ensure that it be built with Canadian-made steel?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the National Energy Board recommendation report for the Trans Mountain expansion project does not require Kinder Morgan to purchase pipe materials, including steel, from Canadian suppliers. Country of origin is not a factor in material requirements for this project. Rather, materials must comply with the specifications and quality standards detailed in Condition 9 of the NEB’s report and the Canadian Standards Association’s oil and gas pipeline systems standards, CSA Z662, clause 5. These conditions and standards are designed to keep Canadians and their environment safe.

The proponent, Trans Mountain ULC., has stated its intent to source approximately 230,000 metric tonnes of line pipe material from a domestic supplier, which includes the use of Canadian-made steel. According to the proponent, Trans Mountain’s sourcing strategy is to maximize the amount of locally sourced pipe material, within the production capability and capacity of the domestic supplier.

Question No. 789—Mr. François Choquette:

With regard to the recovery strategy for the Copper Redhorse (*Moxostoma hubbsi*) and its population in Quebec, published in 2012 by Fisheries and Oceans Canada: (a) when will the proposed regulations to identify the species’ critical habitat in southwestern Quebec be published in the Canada Gazette; and (b) when will the Order come into force?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), officials with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans are actively working with their colleagues in other federal departments on this matter. It is anticipated that an order would be published in the Canada Gazette as early as winter 2017.

In response to (b), orders made under subsections 58(4) and (5) of the Species at Risk Act typically enter into force after they are signed

by the competent minister or ministers and formally assigned a unique number by the Privy Council Office, i.e. “registration”.

Question No. 791—Mr. David Sweet:

With regard to changes made to capital gains taxes and mortgage insurance rules in October 2016 by the Department of Finance: (a) what analysis has been done on the effects of such changes with respect to (i) housing prices by region, (ii) construction activity, (iii) value and rate of mortgage approvals for Canadians, especially first time homebuyers, (iv) GDP and employment; and (b) for each of the analyses conducted related to (a)(i) through (a)(iv), what conclusions were reached?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these measures follow an in-depth analysis of the housing market conducted by the Department of Finance Canada, in conjunction with various government agencies, including the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions, the Bank of Canada, and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, CMHC. They were also informed by the views of the wide range of stakeholders with whom the Department of Finance and government regularly meet, including ongoing collaboration and information sharing done through a working group with provincial and municipal officials.

Prior to the announcement regarding the changes to mortgage insurance eligibility, loan-level data from recent quarters was used to determine the extent to which mortgage lending would have been affected if the new rules had already been in place. The analysis found the new restrictions could have impacted roughly 8% of recent home sales in the first year of the policy, with impacts spread across the country. This estimate did not account for adjustments buyers could make to remain in the market by using savings for a larger down payment or purchasing a cheaper home.

The potential reduction in home sales was then translated into estimated impacts on residential investment, home prices and GDP growth, finding that the measures would be a modest drag on house prices and GDP growth in the short term.

These estimates did not incorporate the impact of the measures on enhancing the long-term stability of the Canadian housing market, financial system, and economy due to more sustainable mortgage debt. The intended impact of the new stress test is to help ensure new homeowners across all provinces can afford their mortgages even if economic conditions change, such as an increase in interest rates. This requirement will help promote the stability of the Canadian housing market and economy over the long term.

Question No. 792—M. Glen Motz:

With regard to Budget 2016: according to the most recent data available, what has been the economic and employment impact of the fiscal measures outlined on p. 256-258, both in total and broken down by specific measure?

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Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, overall, the fiscal measures in budget 2016 are “expected to translate into 100,000 jobs created or maintained by 2017-18.” This is based on the historical relationship between the types of spending and revenue measures announced in budget 2016, and their impact on growth in employment and real GDP in Canada.

Funding for the most substantial measures of budget 2016 began to flow into the economy in the third quarter of 2016—Canada child benefit and investments in infrastructure. Given that the estimates for economic impact included in budget 2016 were calculated based on a two-year time horizon, having only one quarter of GDP data does not provide sufficient information to assess their impact with any degree of precision.

However, employment data are available for the last two quarters of 2016. While it is not possible to attribute gains to specific budget measures, it is notable that employment gains in the last quarter of 2016—108,000 jobs—were the highest since the second quarter of 2010.

Question No. 793—**Mr. Glen Motz:**

With regard to the Minister of Finance's tax expenditure review panel: (a) what materials have been developed for the review panel; (b) what are the mandate, terms, and conditions of participation in the panel; (c) what is the list of tax expenditures which have been reviewed by the panel for potential elimination; (d) does the government have any targets with respect to revenue raised and, if so, what are they; and (e) what is the net cost of each expenditure referred to in (c)?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a), the review of federal tax expenditures is led by the Department of Finance Canada, with the support of a group of external advisers. The objective of the review and the role of the advisers are further explained in the response to part (b).

Advisers have been provided with internal analysis prepared by the Department of Finance Canada in the context of the review. Advisers have also been provided with general background information on federal tax expenditures.

In response to part (b), as stated by the government, the objective of the review is to ensure that federal tax expenditures are fair for Canadians, efficient and fiscally responsible—see Department of Finance Canada news release, June 17, 2016: <http://www.fin.gc.ca/n16/16-077-eng.asp>). This review is part of a broader government commitment to eliminate poorly targeted and inefficient programs, wasteful spending, and ineffective and obsolete government initiatives.

The review of federal tax expenditures is led by the Department of Finance Canada. To ensure that the review is informed by a range of perspectives, the following external experts have been engaged to provide advice to Department of Finance Canada officials: Robin Boadway, Queen's University; Kim Brooks, Dalhousie University; Kevin Dancy, former CEO of CPA Canada; Luc Godbout, Université de Sherbrooke; Jinyan Li, Osgoode Hall Law School; Kevin Milligan, University of British Columbia; and Jennifer Robson, Carleton University.

Terms and conditions under which the advisers are providing advice to the Department of Finance Canada were set out in the letters of agreement between the department and the advisers. As per

the statements of work attached to these letters, the advisers are expected to participate in periodic meetings, either in person or through conference calls, with other advisers and government officials; and provide advice to the Department of Finance.

The letters of agreement cover the period up to March 31, 2017. Advisers are remunerated on a per diem basis, up to maximum amounts that are set out in the letters of agreement. One adviser has declined to receive a per diem. Travel and living expenses incurred in the performance of these agreements are reimbursed by the department in accordance with the rates and conditions that are specified in the Treasury Board travel directive, up to maximum amounts that are set out in the letters of agreement. Total contract values are posted on the Department of Finance Canada website at www.fin.gc.ca/disclose-divulgaration/discl_cont-eng.asp.

In addition to the above, Mr. Kevin Milligan was on assignment with the Department of Finance Canada until December 31, 2016. The terms and conditions of this assignment are set out in an Interchange Canada letter of agreement, which has been agreed upon between Mr. Milligan, his employer—the University of British Columbia—and the Department of Finance Canada. Mr. Milligan's work during his assignment consists of special research projects directed by the Department of Finance Canada in the context of the review.

In response to part (c), as per the budget 2016 announcement, the department is undertaking a comprehensive review of tax expenditures. The scope of the review of federal tax expenditures is broad, and includes personal income tax expenditures, corporate income tax expenditures, as well as goods and services tax expenditures. The external experts who have been engaged to provide advice to Department of Finance Canada officials are providing advice in respect of all analysis performed by the department in the context of the review.

In response to part (d), the Government of Canada has not set a specific revenue target for the review of federal tax expenditures.

In response to part (e), estimates of the fiscal cost of each federal tax expenditure can be found in part 2 of the “Report on Federal Tax Expenditures” that is published annually by the Department of Finance Canada. The latest edition of this report is available on the department's website at www.fin.gc.ca/purl/taxexp-eng.asp.

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[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURN

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, furthermore, if supplementary responses to Questions Nos. 425 and 467, originally tabled on November 4, 2016, as well as Question No. 538, originally tabled on December 2, 2016, and the government's response to Questions Nos. 592-595, 597, 599, 600, 602-604, 607, 610, 612, 614, 616-621, 623-625, 627, 630, 632, 633, 635-641, 643, 645-652, 655-659, 661, 662, 664-670, 674, 675, 677-679, 681-683, 685-687, 689-693, 695, 696, 698-701, 703-724, 727-733, 735, 736, 738, 739, 743, 745-754, 756, 758-760, 763, 765-769, 771, 773-776, 778-781, 783, 784, 786, 789, 790 and 794-796 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the aforementioned questions be made orders for return and that they be tabled immediately?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 425—Ms. Rachael Harder:

With regard to pictures and pieces of artwork in government buildings, since November 4, 2015, broken down by department and agency: (a) how many pictures, paintings, or pieces of artwork have been installed or put on display in government buildings, not including employees individual offices, cubicles, or other personal space; (b) what are the costs associated with each of such pictures, paintings, or pieces of artwork including, but not limited to cost of acquisition or rental of image/artwork, framing, mounting and installation; (c) how many pictures of the Liberal leader and current Prime Minister have been installed or put on display in government buildings; and (d) what are the costs and location associated with each picture listed in (c), including, but not limited to cost of image, framing, mounting, and installation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 467—Mr. David Anderson:

With regard to training provided for Ministers or their exempt staff since November 4, 2015: what are the details of all expenses, including (i) vendor, (ii) date, (iii) location, (iv) total amount, (v) contract file number, if applicable, (vi) any travel expenses associated with the training?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 538—Mr. John Brassard:

With regard to fire safety education in First Nations communities: (a) what materials are distributed or provided by Indigenous and North Affairs to First Nations communities; (b) how much has Indigenous and Northern Affairs spent annually since 2005 to educate and train First Nations communities on fire safety and firefighting; (c) what amount does Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada budget annually specifically for education of fire safety in First Nations communities; and (d) how much does Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada spend annually, since 2005, on travel and expenses for Ministry Staff to inspect and report back to the Ministry on the fire protection preparedness in Canada's First Nations communities?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 592—Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:

With regard to the announced closure of the Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Case Processing Centre in Vegreville, Alberta: (a) what are the details of any studies or assessments the government has conducted regarding the impact of the closure on processing times, broken down by study or assessment, including the (i) date, (ii) title, (iii) conclusion or findings, (iv) methodology, (v) title of individual or organization which conducted the study or assessment, (vi) date the Minister of

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship was apprised of the findings, (vii) internal tracking or file number; (b) for every briefing document prepared in relation to the closure, (i) what is the date on the document, (ii) what is the title or subject matter of the document, (iii) what is the Department's internal tracking number, (iv) who was the document prepared for; (c) on what date and by what method were the following individuals made aware of the closure, (i) the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, (ii) the Premier of Alberta, (iii) the Mayor of Vegreville, (iv) the local Member of the Legislative Assembly, (v) the employees impacted by the closure; (d) what are the details of any consultations conducted with any of the individuals referred to in (c), including the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) method, (iv) title of the government official who conducted the consultations, (v) title, date, and file number of any documents resulting from the consultations; and (e) which Cabinet committee approved the closure?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 593—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to the Phoenix pay system backlog, in written form and in addition to graphs or diagrams: (a) what is the total number of all backlogged cases between January 1, 2016, to November 1, 2016; (b) what is the total number of all backlogged cases from June 1, 2016, to November 1, 2016; (c) what is the total number of all backlogged cases prior to February 1, 2016; (d) of the total number of all backlogged cases in (a), (b) and (c), what is (i) the total number of all backlogged cases in Priority 1, (ii) the total number of backlogged cases in Priority 2, (iii) the total number of backlogged cases in Priority 3; (e) what is the total number of backlogged cases that have been processed at the Miramichi Pay Centre; (f) what is the total number of backlogged cases that are being processed at the Miramichi Pay Centre; and (g) what is the total number of backlogged cases that are being processed at other pay centres, broken down by department?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 594—Mrs. Carol Hughes:

With regard to infrastructure spending on consumer and commercial broadband internet connectivity in Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskaing: (a) what amount has been allocated for each of the past ten years and forecasted for the next five years; (b) which companies have been awarded contracts; (c) for each company in (b), (i) what services are they mandated to provide, (ii) to what specific communities are they providing service, or are required to provide service; (d) what is the minimum bandwidth provided for each community; (e) what timelines have been set for the completion of service delivery; (f) what method is used to verify work is being completed as contracted; and (g) what progress has been made as of October 2016?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 595—Mrs. Carol Hughes:

With regard to the decision to classify Algoma Central Railway passenger service as rural and not remote: (a) what were the determining factors that the route was declared rural and no longer remote; (b) what roads service the community of Oba; (c) who maintains the roads in (b); (d) what information was provided to the new Minister of Transport to brief him on the decision to declare the route rural and not remote; (e) what are the details of all correspondence, evidence, or other information the Minister of Transport or Transport Canada possess that indicate that businesses in the area are thriving; and (f) what has the Minister of Transport done to encourage Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada to assist with the Missinabie Cree proposal to run the Algoma Passenger Train

(Return tabled)

Question No. 597—Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:

With regard to youth programs and services: (a) what are all of the federal programs for young people aged 15 to 24 or for organizations that help people in this age group, broken down by department, for the year 2016; and (b) for each of these programs and services, (i) what is their operating budget, (ii) what are their objectives, (iii) what are their criteria for determining the amount to grant to the requester?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 599—Mr. James Bezan:**

With regard to the Fifty per cent Aboriginal Hiring Strategy agreed to by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), now Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC): (a) between 1996 and 2016, what percentage of employees of AANDC/INAC have identified as Aboriginal, broken down by year (i) at the director level and below, (ii) at the director-general level and above; (b) between 1996 and 2016, how many individuals who have self-identified as Aboriginal (i) have been hired into full-time positions, (ii) have been hired into part-time positions, (iii) have been promoted within the department; (c) since 1996, what efforts have been made by AANDC/INAC to (i) increase the recruitment of Aboriginal employees, (ii) increase the retention of Aboriginal employees, (iii) provide promotions to Aboriginal employees; and (d) between 1996 and 2016, what percentage of part-time employees who have self-identified as Aboriginal have become permanent employees?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 600—Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to the Canadian Armed Forces' Operation IMPACT: (a) what was the original risk score assigned to the mission; (b) what is the current risk score assigned to the mission; (c) since the beginning of the mission, has the risk score changed and, if so, (i) when did it change, (ii) how many times has it changed, (iii) for each change, what was the original score and the new score; (d) are various risk scores applied to different Canadian Armed Forces personnel based on (i) location, (ii) rank, (iii) task; (e) if any responses to (d) are in the affirmative, what are all the risk scores that have been designated since the beginning of Operation IMPACT; (f) has the Department of Finance or the Department of National Defence changed the tax relief for personnel deployed on designated international operational missions for Operation IMPACT; (g) are all members of the Canadian Armed Forces deployed on Operation IMPACT entitled to the same tax relief measures; and (h) have any members received the tax relief measures provided to the members deployed since the beginning of the mission and, if so, what are the specific details of such relief measures?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 602—Mr. Matthew Dubé:

With regard to the collection and retention of metadata or associated data by CSIS: (a) on what dates were the present or former Ministers of Public Safety informed of (i) the existence of the Operational Data Analysis Centre, (ii) the retention of metadata or associated data pertaining to third-parties or individuals who were deemed not to pose a threat, (iii) the possibility this practice could be deemed unlawful; (b) how was the information communicated for each instance in (a); (c) on what dates were the present or former Ministers of Justice informed of (i) the existence of the Operational Data Analysis Centre, (ii) the retention of metadata or associated data pertaining to third-parties or individuals who were deemed not to pose a threat, (iii) the possibility this practice could be deemed unlawful, (iv) the fact that the Federal Court had not been properly informed of this practice; (d) how was the information communicated for each instance in (c); and (e) what is the total number of Canadians whose metadata has been stored by CSIS in each year since 2006?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 603—Mr. Ted Falk:

With regard to all government funding to the province of Manitoba: (a) which grant allocations, programs, projects, and all other means of disbursing government funds, have been cancelled since November 4, 2015; (b) what was the rationale provided for the cancellation of each item identified in (a); (c) what amount of funding had been dispensed to each item identified in (a) at the time of cancellation; (d) what was the estimated value of each item identified in (a) prior to cancellation; and (e) what consultations, if any, took place in relation to the items identified in (a) prior to their approval?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 604—Mr. Ted Falk:

With regard to the government's planned legalization and regulation of marijuana, since November 4, 2015: (a) what are the details of any consultations or meetings which have been held with stakeholders including (i) date, (ii) locations, (iii) attendees; (b) what are the details of any briefing notes or correspondence related

to the meetings referred to in (a), including (i) title, (ii) date, (iii) sender, (iv) recipient, (v) subject matter, (vi) file number; (c) what is the content of any information provided to the Minister of Justice and her parliamentary secretaries by (i) the Department of Justice, (ii) the Department of Health, (iii) the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, (iv) the Department of Finance, (v) the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development; (d) has the Minister of Justice or her officials consulted other jurisdictions that have legalized marijuana; and (e) if the answer to (d) is in the affirmative, what are the details, including (i) jurisdictions consulted, (ii) findings for each consultation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 607—Mrs. Marilène Gill:

With regard to the involvement of the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs in the Muskrat Falls project: (a) does the Minister intend for the government to become the owner of the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric facility, its high voltage power lines and its underwater cable if it has to make good on the loan guarantee; (b) has the Minister analyzed the constitutionality, especially as regards section 92(a) of the BNAA, of a situation where the government would own or operate a facility to produce electricity on provincial land and, if so, what were the findings of this analysis; (c) has the Department considered the possibility that, if the loan guarantee were called upon and the government of Canada takes possession of the facility, it could dispose of the Muskrat Falls assets, including transferring them to another province or one of its Crown corporations, without the approval of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador; (d) if the answer to (c) is affirmative, what were the Department's conclusions; (e) has the Department assessed the consequences for Quebec of its involvement in the Muskrat Falls project, in particular the arrival of a new competitor for the export markets sought after by Hydro-Québec in the Atlantic provinces and the northeastern United States; (f) if the answer to (e) is affirmative, what were the Department's conclusions; (g) have the Minister or the Department contacted the Government of Quebec regarding this file, and what have they done to address the issues identified by the Quebec National Assembly in its unanimous resolutions of April 6, 2011, and November 30, 2012; and (h) has the government discussed with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador the possibility of authorizing infrastructure to transport electricity across Quebec's territory?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 610—Mr. David Sweet:

With regard to the government's commitment to implement all 94 calls to action in the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, broken down by call to action: (a) what specific steps has the government undertaken towards implementation; (b) what are the next steps that the government will take towards implementation; (c) what is the projected implementation date; (d) what are the details of the costs to date; and (e) what are the projected costs to fully implement?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 612—Mr. Tom Lukiwski:

With regard to consultation surveys posted on various government websites, broken down by individual survey: (a) what is the title and description of each survey; (b) what steps were taken to ensure that results were representative of the Canadian population as identified by Statistics Canada; (c) what controls are used to ensure that those responding to the survey are from Canada and not from another country; (d) what efforts have been made to prevent an individual from taking the same survey multiple times; (e) were any outside groups or organizations consulted in the development of any survey; (f) if the answer to (e) is affirmative, what are the names of all groups or organizations that were directly consulted in the development of the survey questions, broken down by survey; and (g) what is the total cost of each survey?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 614—Mr. Guy Caron:

With regard to the Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program, between the program's launch and November 18, 2016, what projects have been submitted from the constituency of Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 616—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to the budget of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, broken down by program and sub-program area: (a) from 2011-2012 to 2016-2017, what was the budget amount allocated, divided by base spending and program spending; (b) from 2011-2012 to 2016-2017, what was the budget amount actually spent, divided by base spending and program spending; (c) from 2016-2017 to 2020-2021, what is the amount that is projected to be allocated, divided by base spending and program spending; and (d) what are the amounts in (a), (b) and (c) that will be taken from the lump-sum dollar figure that is set out under the two per cent cap?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 617—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Independent Assessment Process (IAP): (a) how much of the Common Experience Payment (CEP) fund was paid to survivors and how much was paid to others through education credits; (b) what is the total amount paid to survivors under the IAP to date; (c) what is the total amount paid to survivors' lawyers under the IAP to date; (d) what is the total amount that was paid to survivors' lawyers under the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) separately from claims under the IAP process; (e) what has been the total amount spent for the IAP administration, including payments to Justice Canada lawyers, arbitrators and other contractors; (f) what was the total amount spent by Justice Canada in defending residential school civil action claims and under the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process, before the IRSSA; (g) what has been the total amount spent to date by Health Canada for health supports under the IRSSA; (h) what has been the total amount spent to date by Library and Archives Canada in relation to residential school claims, including under (i) civil court cases, (ii) the ADR process, (iii) the IRSSA; (i) what is the government's best approximation of the amount spent by Canadian taxpayers for all aspects of the IRSSA; (j) what is the government's best approximation of the amount spent by Canadian taxpayers for all aspects of residential schools, including all costs associated with defending such claims and operating the ADR process before the IRSSA took effect; (k) what is the total amount that each church was required to pay according to the terms of the IRSSA; (l) what is the total amount that each church agreed to pay according to the terms of its liability-sharing agreement with Canada before the IRSSA, in particular, (i) Anglican agreements, (ii) Presbyterian agreements, (iii) agreements with the United Church, (iv) agreements with the Catholic church and orders; (m) what is the total amount that the churches each paid directly to Canada to help pay the costs in (l), broken down by denomination; (n) what are the details of the agreement between Justice Canada and the TRC detailing exactly which documents the Department of Justice agreed in 2015 to provide to the TRC or the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation; (o) how many separate documents are in the IAP system; (p) how many IAP compensation claims were denied on the basis that (i) Canada was not responsible for the residential school at the time of the incident, (ii) the residential school child was abused "off premises", (iii) the claimant was an "employee", (iv) the touching was not done for a sexual purpose, (v) the school had ceased being a residential school, or that Canada was not jointly responsible for the residential school, or that the school in question was not a "residential" school; (q) what number and percentage of IAP claims fell into the different categories of (i) acts proven that are set out in Schedule D of the IRSSA, (ii) harm that are part of the IAP process and listed in Schedule D of the IRSSA; (r) what was the average IAP payment within each category of (i) acts proven, (ii) level of harm; (s) what number and percentage of IAP claims were made by (i) male claimants, (ii) female claimants; (t) what number and percentage of IAP claims were attributable to (i) each Indian Residential School, (ii) each of the churches that administered residential schools, broken down by denomination; (u) what number and percentage of IAP claims occurred (i) from age 0 to 18, broken down by age, (ii) from 1800 to 1990, broken down by year; (v) what number and percentage of IAP claims were (i) student-on-student abuse, (ii) staff-on-student abuse; (w) how many unique individuals were alleged to have committed abuse; (x) what was the number of IAP claims alleged against each of the alleged perpetrators; (y) what number and percentage of IAP claims were for (i) physical abuse only, (ii) both physical and sexual abuse, (iii) sexual abuse only; (z) what categories of negative impacts were reported in IAP claims and what percentage of IAP claims reported each of those categories, including (i) addiction, (ii) imprisonment, (iii) incomplete education, (iv) damages to loss of earnings, (v) apprehension of children by child welfare authorities; (aa) what amount did the IAP pay to lawyers representing IAP claimants, including (i) through the IAP program, (ii) through the ADR program, (iii) within the Settlement Agreement itself; (bb) how many claims resulted in legal fee reviews and how many of the legal fee reviews resulted in fees being reduced; (cc) how many lawyers had their fees reduced on ten or more occasions; (dd) what are the names of the lawyers who had their fees reduced; (ee) how many claimants were financially

abused or negligently treated by their own IAP lawyers; (ff) is the IAP planning to publish the results of its investigations, findings and directives on claims resulting in legal reviews; (gg) is the IAP planning to publish a complete list of court and law society rulings on claims resulting in legal reviews; (hh) how many claimants died before their IAP decision was made or before their compensation was received; and (ii) how many different individuals, including (i) Government of Canada staff, (ii) IAP staff and contractors, (iii) survivors' lawyers, had access to (i) the IAP decisions database, (ii) the master persons of interest list, (iii) Canada's admissions of knowledge of student-on-student abuse, (iv) Canada's school narratives?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 618—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to policing and surveillance activities related to journalists and Indigenous activists since October 31 2015: (a) which security agencies or other government bodies have been involved in tracking Indigenous protest activities relating to (i) Idle No More, (ii) the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls or other Aboriginal public order events, (iii) the Trans Mountain Expansion Project, (iv) the Northern Gateway Pipeline, (v) the Energy East and Eastern Mainline Projects, (vi) the Site C dam, (vii) the Lower Churchill Hydroelectric Generation Project, (viii) Line 9B Reversal and Line 9 Capacity Expansion Project, (ix) other industrial or resource development projects; (b) how many Indigenous individuals have been identified by security agencies as potential threats to public safety or security, broken down by agency and province; (c) which indigenous organizations, and activist groups have been the subject of monitoring by Canadian security services, broken down by agency and province; (d) how many events involving Indigenous activists were noted in Government Operations Centre situation reports, broken down by province and month; (e) have any Canadian government agencies including Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) been involved in tracking Canadians travelling to Standing Rock Indian Reservation (North and South Dakota, United States of America); (f) has there been any request by the Canadian government or any of its agencies to the United States government or any of its agencies to share information on the tracking of Canadians citizens engaging in demonstrations at the Standing Rock Indian Reservation; (g) what are the titles and dates of any inter-departmental or inter-agency reports related to indigenous protest activities; (h) how many times have government agencies shared information on indigenous protest activities with private sector companies, and for each instance, which companies received such information, and on what dates; (i) how many meetings have taken place between representatives of the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Expansion Project and (i) RCMP personnel, (ii) CSIS personnel; and (j) what are the answers for (a) through (i) for journalists, instead of for Indigenous individuals or organizations, and only if applicable?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 619—Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:**

With regard to assistance provided by the government to various offices and agencies in Honduras and diplomatic relations between Canada and Honduras: (a) what is the nature of the financial, technical, advisory or other assistance that Canada is providing to the Honduran General Attorney's office; (b) regarding the assistance in (a), (i) is Canada providing specific support to the Special Prosecutor of Crimes Against Life (Fiscalía de Crímenes Contra la Vida) or other offices within the Honduran General Attorney's office and, if so, which ones, (ii) which Canadian government department developed the agreement to provide this assistance, (iii) which Canadian government department is the source of funding or other support for this assistance, (iv) have other organizations or agencies been hired to deliver this assistance and, if so, who are they, (v) what are the terms of reference for Canada's support to the Honduran General Attorney's office and related agencies, (vi) what objectives does such assistance seek to meet, (vii) what is the time frame for the assistance, (viii) what is the expected final product or outcomes of this project, (ix) how will these outcomes be made available to the public in Honduras and Canada during or following completion of this initiative; (c) what is the nature of the financial, technical, advisory or other assistance that Canada is providing to the Technical Criminal Investigative Agency (ATIC in Spanish) in Honduras; (d) regarding the assistance in (c), (i) which Canadian government department developed the agreement to provide this assistance, (ii) which Canadian government department is the source of funding or other support for this assistance, (iii) have other organizations or agencies been hired to deliver this assistance and, if so, who are they, (iv) what are the terms of reference for Canada's support to ATIC, (v) what objectives does such assistance seek to meet, (vi) what is the time frame for the assistance, (vii) what is the expected final product or outcomes of this project, (viii) are there any members of ATIC who have personally received financial or technical support stemming from Canadian support participating in the investigation into the murder of Berta Cáceres and the attempted murder of Gustavo Castro Soto; (e) what is the nature of the financial, technical, advisory or other assistance that Canada is providing to (i) judges with national jurisdiction, (ii) the Inter-Agency Security Task Force (FUSINA in Spanish), (iii) the Honduran National Police Investigative Division (DPI in Spanish), (iv) the Military Police for Public Order (PMOP in Spanish), (v) the Intelligence Troop and Special Security Response Groups (TIGRES), (vi) the Strategic Information Collection Collation Analysis and Archiving System (SERCAA in Spanish), (vii) other security agents in Honduras; (f) regarding the assistance in (e), (i) what are the terms of reference for this support, (ii) does the government have information on the resolution or mandate creating FUSINA that was passed by the National Defense and Security Council (Consejo Nacional de Defensa y Seguridad) in 2014 and, if so, what are the details of that information, (iii) have other organizations or agencies been hired to deliver this assistance and, if so, who are they, (iv) what objectives does such assistance seek to meet, (v) what is the time frame for the assistance, (vi) what is the expected final product or outcomes of this project, (vii) are there any members of these agencies who have personally received financial or technical support stemming from Canadian support participating in the investigation into the murder of Berta Cáceres and the attempted murder of Gustavo Castro Soto; (g) has Canada specifically urged Honduran officials to allow the Inter American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to oversee an independent, international investigation into the murder of Berta Cáceres and the attempted murder of Gustavo Castro Soto; (h) has Canada specifically urged Honduran officials to revoke the permits for the Agua Zarca project; and (i) has Canada specifically urged Honduran officials to demilitarize Lenca territory?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 620—Mr. Tom Lukiwski:

With regard to the government's decision to phase out coal-fired electricity by 2030, between January 1, 2016 and November 20, 2016: (a) what are the dates, times and locations of any consultations the Minister of Environment and Climate Change or any member of her exempt staff had with the Province of Saskatchewan related to this decision; (b) what are the dates, times, and locations of any meetings the Minister or any member of her exempt staff had with the Pembina Institute or any member of its staff or board of directors where coal-fired electricity was discussed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 621—Ms. Tracey Ramsey:

With regard to the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA): (a) what are the government's estimates of the financial impacts on (i) prescription drug costs, (ii) provincial and territorial health care systems, (iii) the fisheries and fish processing industries, (iv) the dairy industry, (v) all other industries in Canada that

will be affected by CETA, according to sectoral analyses or assessments of costs and benefits completed by the government; (b) has the government received or solicited any third party analysis on the potential impacts of CETA on any sector in Canada; (c) what is the exhaustive list of Canadian public services, at municipal, provincial, territorial and federal levels of government, to which investors would have market access, including (i) transportation infrastructure, including maritime transport, (ii) telecommunications, (iii) postal services, (iv) waste management, including wastewater, solid waste and recycling, (v) water supply networks, (vi) public transportation, (vii) electricity, (viii) education, (ix) emergency services, (x) environmental protection, (xi) health care and associated services, (xii) military, (xiii) public banking, (xiv) public broadcasting, (xv) public libraries, (xvi) public security, (xvii) public housing, (xviii) social welfare; (d) above the threshold of 200 000 Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) for goods and services, 400 000 SDRs for procurement by utilities entities, and 5 million SDRs for construction services, will minimum local content policies or practices in government procurement be permitted at the municipal, provincial, territorial or federal level; (e) has the government completed a study or assessment of the economic and employment effects that procurement provisions will or may have on the ability of municipalities and provinces to tender contracts locally and, if so, what were the results of this study or assessment; (f) has the government undertaken any consultation with Canadians on CETA and, if so, (i) on what dates, (ii) in which cities, (iii) with whom did the government consult; (g) does the government plan on holding consultations with Canadians, independently of the work of the House of Commons Standing Committee on International Trade, before CETA is ratified; (h) how many (i) labour, (ii) environmental, (iii) indigenous groups or individuals has the government consulted with on the potential costs, benefits and other impacts of CETA, and (i) what were the names of these groups or individuals, (ii) on what date and in which cities did the government consult with these individuals or groups, (iii) what were the results of these consultations; (i) has the government undertaken a study of the impact of having increased entrance of temporary workers and, if so, which sectors or industries has the government considered, and what are the results of these studies; (j) does the government intend to table in the House of Commons all sectoral assessments of financial and other costs and benefits, completed by Global Affairs Canada and other government departments, of the impact of CETA on Canadian industries; (k) does the government intend to table an explanatory memorandum related to CETA, as required by the Policy on Tabling of Treaties in Parliament, (i) if so, on what date, (ii) if not, why; (l) did the ministers of Foreign Affairs and of International Trade seek an exemption to the Policy on Tabling of Treaties in Parliament from the Prime Minister with regard to CETA and, if so, (i) on what date was the request made, (ii) in what manner, (iii) what was the rationale for the exception; (m) does the government intend to complete the final environmental assessment of CETA as required by the Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposal, (i) if so, on what date, (ii) if not, why?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 623—Mr. Brad Trost:**

With regard to court ordered firearm prohibitions and administrative orders related to firearms: (a) how effective is the government's enforcement of court ordered firearms prohibitions including court orders that restrict the ownership of firearms and other weapons, such as restraining orders, protection orders, peace bonds, persons on parole or conditional release and specifically, (i) how many times in the last ten years has a person subject to the above orders acquired a firearm or other prohibited weapon illegally, (ii) how is information about these firearms prohibition orders, conditions, and restrictions transmitted to the Canadian Firearms Information System and police forces across Canada, (iii) what is the average number of days it takes to get information about these firearms prohibition orders, conditions, and restrictions into the hands of the Canadian Firearms Information System and front-line police personnel responsible for actual enforcement of these orders, (iv) what is the average time it takes from when information about these firearms prohibition orders, conditions, and restrictions gets into the hands of the police until the firearms and weapons are removed from the person's possession, (v) for convicted offenders, who are subject to firearms prohibition orders, conditions, and restrictions, are periodic police searches conducted of their homes to ensure that they haven't acquired firearms or other weapons illegally, (vi) once firearms prohibition orders, conditions, and restrictions are rescinded or expire, how long does it take to cancel them and how long does it take before this information is passed along to the Canadian Firearms Information System and front-line police personnel responsible for actual enforcement of these orders, (vii) are persons subject to firearms prohibition orders, conditions, and restrictions required to turn in any documentation related to their current or previous firearm ownership, usage, or licencing, and, in particular, are they required to turn in their Firearms Possession and Acquisition Licences, Authorizations to Transport, Authorizations to Carry and Firearms Registration Certificates to authorities, (viii) if the answer to (vii) is in the affirmative, what follow-up action is taken to ensure they have complied; and (b) how effective is the government's enforcement of administrative orders such as firearms license refusals and revocation and specifically, (i) how is information about these license refusals and revocations transmitted to the Canadian Firearms Information System and police forces across Canada, (ii) what is the average number of days it takes to get information about these license refusals and revocations into the hands of the Canadian Firearms Information System and front-line police personnel responsible for actual enforcement of these orders, (iii) what is the average time it takes between the time information about these license revocations gets to the hands of the police before the firearms and weapons are removed from the person's possession, (iv) are periodic police searches conducted of the homes of individuals, who are subject to license revocations to ensure that they have surrendered all their firearms and haven't acquired firearms or other weapons illegally, (v) are persons subject to firearms license revocations required to turn in their documentation such as: Firearms Possession and Acquisition Licences, Authorizations to Transport, Authorizations to Carry and Firearms Registration Certificates to authorities and, if so, what follow-up action is taken to ensure they have complied?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 624—Mr. Brad Trost:

With regard to gun control laws in effect between 1979 and 2001, the period when the Firearms Acquisition Certificate program was in effect, and between 2001 and present, the period when the Possession and Acquisition Licence and Possession Only License programs were in effect: (a) what was the average annual cost for administering federal firearms laws, regulations, policies, and programs; and (b) for each of these two periods, what are the statistics that show which period was most effective at (i) reducing violent crime, (ii) reducing homicides, and (iii) reducing the number of armed crimes involving firearms?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 625—Mr. Fin Donnelly:

With regard to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and the presence of diseases in salmon rearing facilities: (a) have the infectious hematopoietic necrosis virus, the infectious salmon anaemia, heart and skeletal muscle inflammation, or any other disease been found in the waters on the Pacific Coast, including any hatcheries or facilities related to salmon rearing; (b) if the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, (i) how many times have these diseases been found in salmon rearing facilities, (ii) what are the names and locations of salmon rearing sites where diseases have been found; (c) how many full-time employees and how many part-time employees are dedicated to the detection and monitoring of diseases in salmon rearing facilities and has this number fluctuated over the years; (d) how

long does it take to inspect and test one salmon rearing facility for the presence of disease; and (e) have fish population impact studies been conducted to gauge the impact of these diseases spreading to wild salmon populations?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 627—Mr. Mel Arnold:

With regard to the government's disbursement of funds to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Oceana Inc. (Oceana): (a) what were the total disbursements of funds by the government to WWF during the periods of (i) November, 2015, to November, 2016, (ii) November, 2014, to November, 2015, (iii) November, 2013, to November, 2014; (b) what were the total disbursements of funds by the government to Oceana during the periods of (i) November, 2015, to November, 2016, (ii) November, 2014, to November, 2015, (iii) November, 2013, to November, 2014; (c) what services or activities were these funds intended for within each organization; (d) what were the associated dates and specific amounts of each disbursement; and (e) what were the file numbers of any associated funding agreements?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 630—Mr. Matthew Dubé:

With regard to policing and surveillance activities related to Indigenous activists since October 31, 2015: (a) which security agencies or other government bodies have been involved in tracking Indigenous protest activities relating to (i) Idle No More, (ii) the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls or other Aboriginal public order events, (iii) the Trans Mountain Expansion Project, (iv) the Northern Gateway Pipeline, (v) the Energy East and Eastern Mainline Projects, (vi) the Site C dam, (vii) the Lower Churchill Hydroelectric Generation Project, (viii) Line 9B Reversal and Line 9 Capacity Expansion Project, (ix) other industrial or resource development projects; (b) how many Indigenous individuals have been identified by security agencies as potential threats to public safety or security, broken down by agency and province; (c) which indigenous organizations, and activist groups have been the subject of monitoring by Canadian security services, broken down by agency and province; (d) how many events involving Indigenous activists were noted in Government Operations Centre situation reports, broken down by province and month; (e) have any Canadian government agencies, including the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) been involved in tracking Canadians travelling to Standing Rock Indian Reservation (North and South Dakota, United States of America); (f) has there been any request by the Canadian government or any of its agencies to the United States government or any of its agencies to share information on the tracking of Canadian citizens engaging in demonstrations at the Standing Rock Indian Reservation; (g) what are the titles and dates of any inter-departmental or inter-agency reports related to indigenous protest activities; (h) how many times have government agencies shared information on indigenous protest activities with private sector companies, and for each instance, which companies received such information, and on what dates; and (i) how many meetings have taken place between representatives of the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Expansion Project and (i) RCMP personnel, (ii) CSIS personnel?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 632—Mr. Len Webber:

With regard to credit cards issued to Ministerial staff: what expenses were charged to a government credit card, and not paid for by the government for the period of November 4, 2015, to September 23, 2016, including (i) the name of the vendor and the place of purchase, (ii) the date of the purchase, (iii) the value of the purchase, (iv) the due date of the statement, (v) the date on which the card holder provided reimbursement in full, (vi) the name of the card holder, (vii) the job title of the card holder, (viii) the department or agency of the card holder, (ix) the confirmation if that card holder is still an active holder of a government credit card?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 633—Mr. Len Webber:**

With regard to credit cards issued to Ministers, Ministers of State and Parliamentary Secretaries: what expenses were charged to a government credit card, and not paid for by the government for the period of November 4, 2015, to September 23, 2016, including (i) the name of the vendor and the place of purchase, (ii) the date of the purchase, (iii) the value of the purchase, (iv) the due date of the statement, (v) the date on which the card holder provided reimbursement in full, (vi) the name of the card holder, (vii) the official job title of the card holder, (viii) the confirmation if that card holder is still an active holder of a government credit card?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 635—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:

With regard to the government contracts awarded to the firm Morneau Shepell since January 2010, for each contract: (a) what was the (i) value, (ii) description of services provided, (iii) date and duration, (iv) internal file or tracking number; and (b) was it a sole source contract?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 636—Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to the government's decision to explore purchasing 18 F-18 Super Hornet planes from Boeing: (a) what is the projected acquisition cost of these planes; (b) what is the Department of National Defence's projected operational life span of an F-18 Super Hornet; (c) what is the projected yearly operation costs and maintenance of the fleet of F-18 Super Hornets; (d) what measures are in place to ensure that there is a fair and open competition for the permanent replacement fleet; (e) what specific measures are in place to ensure that Boeing does not receive an unfair advantage due to its status related to the interim fleet; (f) what are the dates, times, locations, and lists of attendees of all meetings between the government and Boeing since November 4, 2015; (g) what are the details of communications which have been received from the United States government to date related to the interim purchase of 18 Super Hornets from Boeing, including the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title, (v) relevant file number; and (h) on what date were each of the non-disclosure agreements referred to in the response to Q-531 signed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 637—Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy:

With regard to the Community Action Program for Children (CAPC): (a) what is the Program's total budget for each year of operation since it was established; (b) on an annual basis, how much funding is received per (i) province, (ii) territory, (iii) constituency; and (c) what are the Program's operating costs since it was established, broken down by year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 638—Ms. Irene Mathysen:

With regard to the Minister of Veterans Affairs series of announcements on the opening of new Veteran Affairs offices: (a) what was the cost for each event, including (i) venue rentals, (ii) audio-visual, (iii) advertising, (iv) accommodations, (v) travel, (vi) per diems for the Minister and staff; (b) how many people attended each event, broken down by location; and (c) what was the announced date for the actual reopening of each Veteran Affairs office, broken down by location?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 639—Ms. Irene Mathysen:

With regard to contract beds under the jurisdiction of Veterans Affairs Canada, and broken down by facility: (a) what are the number of contract beds available; (b) what is the percentage of contract beds currently in use; (c) what is the placement and admission process; (d) what are the number of applications for contract beds received; and (e) what are the number of successful applications?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 640—Ms. H  l  ne Laverdi  re:

With regard to interactions between the government and the Streit Group companies: (a) what support has the government provided to the Streit Group between 2009 and 2016; (b) what support has the government provided to the Streit

Group through overseas embassies, including, but not limited to, all trade and consular support between 2009 and 2016; (c) did the Streit Group receive any marketing support through the Global Markets Action Plan or any other trade promotion programs, and, if so, what are the details of the support received; (d) what are the details of any studies undertaken by Global Affairs Canada on the Streit Group before deciding to sole-source the purchase of two vehicles; (e) did Global Affairs Canada receive any indications or information about the Streit Group's alleged sales to criminal gangs before October 17, 2016; (f) was a company profile prepared by the Department on the Streit Group prior to former Minister Ed Fast's visit to their factory in the spring of 2015; (g) what mechanisms are currently in place to monitor Canadian companies operating overseas and compliance with Canadian and United Nations sanctions; (h) what investigations is the government currently undertaking into Streit Group's contravention of sanctions; (i) what are the sanctions Streit Group has contravened; and (j) is the government planning to change Canadian arms export guidelines to include Canadian companies operating overseas?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 641—Ms. H  l  ne Laverdi  re:

With regard to Canada's arms exports: (a) in 2016, by what means has the government monitored the use of its military exports to ensure compliance with Canada's export control regime; (b) what information has the government received since April 2016 on the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia that would contribute to an assessment of whether existing permits should be suspended or cancelled; (c) how much did the government spend between 2004 and 2016 on research and development relating to the manufacture of light-armoured vehicles; (d) what has been the trade balance in 2016 with regards to the Canadian defence and security industry with regards to export and import by government entities; (e) does the Canadian mission to Saudi Arabia monitor the use of Canadian weapons sold to Saudi Arabia, and, if so, how often does the mission report on this to Global Affairs Canada; and (f) has an economic impact assessment been carried out with regards to the 2014 agreement involving the export of military vehicles manufactured by General Dynamics Land Systems?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 643—Mr. Scott Reid:

With regard to all hard copy and soft copy communications that were exchanged between the Prime Minister's Office, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, the Office of the Minister of Democratic Institutions and the Office of the Government House Leader, between October 20, 2015, and the date this question is placed on the Order Paper: (a) what are the details of all communications which discuss choosing the successor to Chief Electoral Officer Marc Mayrand, including the (i) dates, (ii) times, (iii) originators, (iv) recipients; and (b) what are the details of all communications which mention the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer St  phane Perrault, including the (i) dates, (ii) times, (iii) originators, (iv) recipients?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 645—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to the mydemocracy.ca website: (a) what is the value of the contract the government has with Vox Pop Labs; (b) what specific services are being provided by Vox Pop Labs to the government; (c) what are the titles of the individuals who came up with the questions for the site, broken down by department; (d) what is the rationale for the website not having a question about a referendum; (e) what safeguards are in place to ensure that individuals do not submit multiple surveys that could skew the results; (f) what safeguards are in place to ensure that responses from non-Canadian entities do not skew the results; (g) what safeguards are in place to ensure that the survey is not skewed due to the use of "bots" or other similar devices; and (h) is there a limit on the number of responses that may come from a single IP address, and, if so, what is the limit and how is it enforced?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 646—Mr. John Nater:**

With regard to projects funded under the proposed Canada Infrastructure Bank: (a) what specific measures are in place to ensure that small and rural municipalities, specifically those municipalities with a population under 50 000, receive infrastructure funding from the bank; (b) what specific measures are in place to ensure that small and rural municipalities, specifically those municipalities with a population between 50 000 and 100 000, receive infrastructure funding from the bank; and (c) how much infrastructure bank funding has been specifically allocated for communities with a population under 100 000?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 647—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to contracts and standing offers the government has had with advertising agencies, since November 4, 2015: (a) what contracts and standing offers does the government have with advertising agencies, broken down by department and agency; (b) what are the specific details of each contract or standing offer in (a), including (i) vendor, (ii) value, (iii) duration; and (c) for each contract or standing offer in (a), what are the details of each associated advertising campaign including (i) title, (ii) description, (iii) dates, (iv) duration?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 648—Mr. Bob Saroya:

With regard to appointments to federal boards, agencies, and associations since November 4, 2015, for each appointment: what is the name, province, and position of the appointee?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 649—Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:

With regard to the government's commitment to bring 25 000 Syrian refugees to Canada, since November 4, 2015: (a) what was the total cost for the government to bring the refugees to Canada; and (b) what is the itemized and specific breakdown of all the costs in (a)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 650—Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:

With regard to the government's commitment to provide \$54 million in relief funding to Haiti: (a) what is the specific breakdown of how the funding will be provided, including a breakdown by (i) fiscal year, (ii) specific organization or group which will receive the funding; (b) for each group listed under (a)(ii), what is the funding to be used for; and (c) what specific measures does the government have in place to ensure that the funding is utilized properly and as intended?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 651—Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:

With regard to seizures by the Canada Border Services Agency since January 1, 2016: (a) how many times were illegal drugs or narcotics seized; (b) what is the total amount seized, broken down by substance; and (c) what are the details of each seizure, including (i) date, (ii) substance, (iii) amount, (iv) location, (v) country from which the substance was imported?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 652—Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:

With regard to the fentanyl epidemic, since November 2015: (a) what statistics does the government currently have regarding the country of origin of fentanyl in Canada; (b) broken down by country of origin and by month, how much fentanyl has been stopped from entering Canada by the Canada Border Services Agency; (c) what specific communication has the government had with Chinese officials regarding fentanyl; and (d) what are the details, including dates, titles, recipients, and file numbers of any briefing notes which the government has regarding fentanyl?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 655—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to ministerial regional offices: (a) what is the location of each office; (b) what is the overall annual budget for each office; (c) how many government employees or full-time equivalents are assigned to each location; and (d) how many ministerial exempt staff or full-time equivalents are assigned to each location?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 656—Mr. Kevin Waugh:

With regard to government sponsorship of the Open Dialogue Forum held in Ottawa on March 31, 2016, and April 1, 2016: (a) how much did the government spend to sponsor the event; (b) which government departments, agencies, or crown corporations sponsored the event; (c) which Ministers approved the sponsorships; and (d) what are the internal tracking or file numbers for the sponsorship contracts?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 657—Mr. Kevin Waugh:

With regard to contracts issued by any department, agency, or crown corporation, under object code 0499 (Other Professional Services Not Otherwise Specified), since November 4, 2015: (a) what are the details of each contract including the (i) vendor, (ii) date, (iii) amount, (iv) file number; and (b) for each contract referred to in (a), what are the specifics of the professional services provided?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 658—Mr. Kevin Waugh:

With regard to the government's commitment that by 2025, for all operations run by Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), 100 percent of our electricity will be purchased from clean power: (a) how many buildings does PSPC currently operate, broken down by province and territory; (b) how many buildings does the government currently operate which are not operated by PSPC; (c) how many of the buildings operated by the government are currently powered exclusively by clean power; (d) for the next ten years, and broken down by year, how many of the buildings operated by the government are expected to be powered exclusively by clean power; and (e) for the next ten years, and broken down by year, what are the details of all planned expenditures related to the commitment?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 659—Hon. Kevin Sorenson:

With regard to boil water advisories on First Nations Reserves: (a) how many advisories are currently in place; (b) which reserves are currently under a boil water advisory; (c) for each reserve listed in (b), how many individuals are currently under a boil water advisory; (d) when is each boil water advisory expected to be lifted; and (e) for each reserve listed in (b), what are the details of any funding which has been delivered for water infrastructure projects including (i) the date that the funds were received by the reserve, (ii) specific projects which funds were provided for, (iii) title and file number of related press release?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 661—Mr. Dave MacKenzie:

With regard to payments made under Treasury Board object code 010 (Canoe Allowance), since November 4, 2015: (a) what is the total amount spent, broken down by department, agency and crown corporation; (b) how many employees received the allowance, broken down by department, agency and crown corporation; (c) what are the job titles of the employees who received the allowance, broken down by department, agency and crown corporation; (d) what is the government's policy regarding when an employee is entitled to such an allowance; (e) what was the average amount dispersed under the object code; and (f) what was the highest amount dispersed under the object code?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 662—Mr. Dave MacKenzie:**

With regard to the government's pledge of \$20 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA): (a) what specific assurances has the government received that none of the funding will be used for any activities that promote terrorism; (b) were any of the assurances identified in (a) received in writing; (c) if the answer to (b) is affirmative, what are the details of each document, including the (i) sender, (ii) date, (iii) subject matter, (iv) file number; (d) does the government intend on making the documents referred to in (b) public, and if so, when; (e) by what means does the government monitor the work of the UNRWA to ensure that assurances identified in (a) are being fulfilled; and (f) what measures is the government prepared to take if assurances identified in (a) are not fulfilled?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 664—Mr. Guy Lauzon:

With regard to spending on photographers or photography services by Employment and Social Development Canada, since November 4, 2015, and broken down by individual expenditure and contract: (a) how much has been spent; (b) what were the dates and duration of each expenditure or photography contract; (c) what was the initial and final value of each contract; (d) what were the events or occasions which were meant to be photographed as a result of each contract and what were the costs associated with each photographic event; and (e) what were the locations where the photography work was performed for each contract?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 665—Mr. Guy Lauzon:

With regard to applications' processing and wait times at the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, from the date an application is received by the Department to the date it is processed: (a) what is the average wait time for an individual who applies for a work permit in Canada; (b) what is the average wait time for an individual who applies for a visitor visa in Canada; (c) what is the average wait time for an individual who applies for a student visa in Canada; and (d) what is the average processing time for an application made under the spousal sponsorship program?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 666—Mr. Kennedy Stewart:

With regard to the government's recent approval and future efforts to facilitate the construction of Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline: (a) what is the complete and detailed list of meetings in which the use of military or paramilitary force to facilitate Kinder Morgan's expropriation of private property, municipal lands, First Nations' traditional territories and Indian reserves was discussed; (b) were Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the RCMP, local police, or any government agencies included in each of the meetings identified in (a); (c) what were the results of each of the meetings identified in (a); and (d) what are the projected costs of any considered actions and how will these costs be shared among different levels of government?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 667—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to the information in Chapter 2, on page 89 of the March 22, 2016, Budget, and as of that date: (a) what is the total amount for the remaining uncommitted funds from older federal infrastructure programs; and (b) for the information in (a), what are the amounts broken down by province, municipality, and by other recipient, of the remaining uncommitted funds as of this date that have, or have not, or will be transferred, from older federal infrastructure programs through the Gas Tax Fund in 2016-2017, as promised in the March 22, 2016, Budget?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 668—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to the Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program, between the program's launch and November 30, 2016: (a) what projects have been submitted for funding from the constituencies of Kenora, Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Thunder Bay—Superior North, Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Timmins—James Bay, Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, Nickel Belt, Nipissing—Timiskaming, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Parry Sound—Muskoka, Mississauga—Malton, broken down

by constituency; and (b) for each of the projects in (a), which have been approved for funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 669—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to all government funding for the constituencies of Kenora, Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Thunder Bay—Superior North, Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Timmins—James Bay, Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, Nickel Belt, Nipissing—Timiskaming, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Parry Sound—Muskoka, Mississauga—Malton between November 4, 2015, and November 30, 2016: (a) which grant allocations, programs, projects, and all other means of disbursing government funds, have been cancelled since November 4, 2015; (b) what was the rationale provided for the cancellation of each item identified in (a); (c) what amount of funding had been dispensed to each item identified in (a) at the time of cancellation; (d) what was the estimated value of each item identified in (a) prior to cancellation; and (e) what consultations, if any, took place in relation to the items identified in (a) prior to their approval?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 670—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to travel taken by Ministers and their exempt staff to the constituencies of Kenora, Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Thunder Bay—Superior North, Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Timmins—James Bay, Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, Nickel Belt, Nipissing—Timiskaming, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Parry Sound—Muskoka, Mississauga—Malton between November 4, 2015, and November 30, 2016: (a) what are the details of all trips taken, including the (i) dates, (ii) amount spent, (iii) breakdown of expenses, (iv) details of any official meetings or government business conducted on the trips; and (b) what are the details of any briefing documents or dockets prepared in relation to the trips, including the (i) date, (ii) title or subject matter, (iii) department's internal tracking number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 674—Mr. Matt Jeneroux:

With regard to relocation costs for exempt staff moving to a location outside of the National Capital Region, since January 1, 2016: (a) what is the total cost paid by the government for relocation services and hotel stays related to moving these staff to a location outside of the National Capital Region; and (b) for each individual reimbursement, what is the (i) total payout, (ii) cost for moving services, (iii) cost for hotel stays?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 675—Mr. Matt Jeneroux:

With regard to briefing documents, memorandums or dockets prepared regarding a price on carbon or a carbon tax by any department, agency, Crown Corporation, or other government entity, since November 4, 2015: what is (i) the date, (ii) the title or subject matter, (iii) the department's internal tracking number, (iv) the recipient?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 677—Mr. Harold Albrecht:

With regard to meetings between the government and the Cannabis Friendly Business Association, since November 4, 2015: what are the details of all meetings the government, including Ministers and their exempt staff Members, have had with the Association, including (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) attendees, (iv) topics discussed, (v) titles and file numbers of any related briefing notes or documents?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 678—Mr. Harold Albrecht:

With regard to relocation costs for exempt staff moving to the National Capital Region since October 19, 2015, excluding costs revealed in the government's response to Q-258: (a) what is the total cost paid by the government for relocation services and hotel stays related to moving these staff to the National Capital Region; and (b) for each individual reimbursement, what is the (i) total payout, (ii) cost for moving services, (iii) cost for hotel stays?

Routine Proceedings

(Return tabled)

Question No. 679—Mr. Harold Albrecht:

With regard to government communications, for each announcement made by a minister or parliamentary secretary in the National Capital Region in a location other than the parliamentary precinct or the National Press Theatre, since November 4, 2015: (a) what was the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) purpose or subject matter, (iv) name and portfolio of the minister or parliamentary secretary involved; and (b) what were the amounts and details of all expenses related to making each such announcement?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 681—Mr. Martin Shields:

With regard to private security expenditures by the government, broken down by department, agency, crown corporation, or other government entity, since November 4, 2015: what are the details of each such expenditure including (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) vendor, (iv) details of contract, including duration, (v) location where security was to be provided, (vi) whether the contract was competitive or sole-sourced?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 682—Mr. Martin Shields:

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency since January 1, 2016: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values, if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 683—Mr. Martin Shields:

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by the Canadian Grain Commission since January 1, 2016: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values, if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 685—Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:

With regard to the Offshore Compliance Division of the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), since April 1, 2014: (a) how many employees have been assigned to the division, broken down by fiscal year; (b) what is its operating budget, broken down by fiscal year; (c) how many audits have been conducted; (d) how many audits in (c) have been referred to the CRA's Criminal Investigations Program; (e) how many investigations in (d) have been referred to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada; (f) how many prosecutions in (e) have led to convictions; and (g) what sentences were imposed for each conviction in (f)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 686—Mr. Matthew Dubé:

With regard to the financial crime sector of the RCMP, since April 1, 2006: (a) what has been the sector's budget, broken down by fiscal year; (b) how many investigators have been assigned to the sector, broken down by fiscal year; (c) how many of the sector's cases have been referred to the Canada Revenue Agency's Criminal Investigations Program; (d) how many criminal investigations have been opened, broken down by fiscal year; (e) how many criminal prosecutions have been launched, broken down by fiscal year; (f) of the prosecutions in (e), how many have resulted in convictions; and (g) what sentences were imposed for the convictions in (f)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 687—Mr. Matthew Dubé:

With regard to the enforcement of the Criminal Code, since January 1, 2006: (a) how many accounting firms, tax professionals, and chartered accountants have been prosecuted pursuant to section 22; (b) of the prosecutions in (a), how many resulted in convictions; and (c) what penalties were imposed for each of the convictions in (b)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 689—Ms. Karine Trudel:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency's Voluntary Disclosures Program, since January 1, 2006: (a) how many taxpayers have used this Program; and (b) of the taxpayers in (a), how many disclosed foreign amounts, broken down by country and by amount?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 690—Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency's Criminal Investigations Program, since January 1, 2006: (a) how many taxpayers' cases have been evaluated under this program; (b) how many of the cases in (a) have been referred to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada; (c) how many of the cases in (b) have led to prosecutions, broken down by year and by source of the funds or assets held; and (d) what were the findings and sentences for each prosecution in (c)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 691—Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy:

With regard to the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada (FINTRAC), since January 1, 2006: (a) how many financial transactions have been processed by FINTRAC, broken down by fiscal year; (b) how many files have been sent from FINTRAC to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA); (c) how many of the files in (b) have been audited by the CRA; (d) how many of the audits in (c) have been referred to the CRA's Criminal Investigations Program; (e) how many of the investigations in (d) have been referred to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada; (f) how many of the cases in (e) have resulted in convictions; and (g) what sentences have been imposed for each of the convictions in (f)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 692—Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault:

With regard to the Foreign Income Verification Statement (Form T1135) declarations submitted by Canadian taxpayers to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), since January 1, 1998: (a) how many Canadian taxpayers have submitted a T1135 form to the CRA, broken down by year and by taxpayer type, that is, (i) individual, (ii) corporation, (iii) partnership, (iv) trust; and (b) how many penalties for failure to declare foreign income have been charged to Canadian taxpayers, broken down by year and taxpayer type, that is, (i) individual, (ii) corporation, (iii) partnership, (iv) trust?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 693—Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault:

With regard to the enforcement of the Income Tax Act and the Criminal Code, since January 1, 2006: (a) how many prosecutions have been initiated under section 239 of the Income Tax Act; (b) how many prosecutions have been initiated under section 163.2 of the Income Tax Act; (c) how many files in (a) and (b) involved (i) accounting firms, (ii) tax experts, (iii) chartered accountants; (d) of all the files in (c), how many led to convictions; (e) how many prosecutions have been initiated under section 245 of the Income Tax Act; (f) how many of the cases in (e) led to convictions, and what were the amounts recovered; (g) how many accounting firms, tax experts and chartered accountants were prosecuted under section 22 of the Criminal Code; (h) how many firms and people in (g) were found guilty; and (i) what sentences were imposed for each firm or person listed in (h)?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 695—Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault:**

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and the Liechtenstein leaks, the “Panama Papers” and the “Bahama leaks”: (a) how did the CRA gain access to documents associated with these information leaks; (b) how many Canadian taxpayers were identified in the documents obtained in (a), broken down by type of taxpayer, that is (i) individual, (ii) corporation, (iii) partnership or trust; (c) how many audits did the CRA launch following the identification of taxpayers in (b), broken down by information leak; (d) of the audits in (c), how many were referred to the CRA’s Criminal Investigations Program, broken down by information leak; (e) how many of the investigations in (d) were referred to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, broken down by information leak; (f) how many of the investigations in (e) resulted in a conviction, broken down by information leak; and (g) what was the sentence imposed for each conviction in (f), broken down by information leak?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 696—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to immigration to Canada, between November 4, 2015, and December 6, 2016: (a) how many economic class immigrants have been admitted to Canada; (b) how many family class immigrants have been admitted to Canada; (c) how many refugees have been admitted to Canada; (d) how many temporary student visas were issued and how many individuals were admitted to Canada on a temporary student visa; (e) how many temporary worker permits were issued and how many individuals were admitted to Canada on a temporary worker permit; (f) how many temporary visitor records were issued and how many individuals were admitted to Canada on a temporary visitor record; (g) how many temporary resident permits were issued; (h) how many temporary resident permits were approved by the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; (i) for (a) to (h), what is the breakdown for source country for each class of migrant; (j) for applications for the categories enumerated in (a) to (h), how many individuals were found inadmissible under section 34 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act; (k) for applications for the categories enumerated in (a) to (h), how many individuals were found inadmissible under section 35 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act; (l) for applications for the categories enumerated in (a) to (h), how many individuals were found inadmissible under section 36 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act; (m) for applications for the categories enumerated in (a) to (h), how many individuals were found inadmissible under section 37 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act; and (n) for applications for the categories enumerated in (a) to (h), how many individuals were found inadmissible under section 40 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 698—Mr. John Barlow:

With regard to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada’s Investment Review Division and the proposed takeover of Retirement Concepts by the Anbang Insurance Group: (a) what specific connections between Anbang and the Chinese government is the Canadian government aware of; (b) what impact did or will these connections have in the review of the proposed takeover; (c) what steps are being taken to ensure that the Chinese government and its subsidiaries, including companies with close ties, do not play a major role in the implementation of health care in (i) British Columbia, (ii) Canada; (d) when was Anbang’s Canadian division incorporated; and (e) according to the incorporation application made to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, who is on the Board of Directors and who owns Anbang?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 699—Mr. John Barlow:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency: (a) what is the current number of outstanding cases where an objection has been filed; (b) what was the number of outstanding cases where an objection was filed as of December 1, 2015; (c) what amount owing in federal taxes do the current outstanding cases represent; and (d) for cases currently outstanding, what are the average, median, and longest expected processing times?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 700—Mr. John Barlow:

With regard to Shared Services Canada and its reference to the development of an integrated IT infrastructure to support the whole-of-government and private sector

effort to welcome 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada in 2015–16 outlined on page 7 of its Departmental Performance Report: (a) what is the total of all costs associated with this IT infrastructure program; (b) what is the detailed itemized breakdown of all costs; (c) what was the initial budget for the program; (d) what is the current budget for the program; (e) what IT infrastructure was developed by the program; (f) of the IT infrastructure items developed as part of the program, which ones are currently scheduled or planned to be used in a future government program; and (g) what are the details of any plans referred to in (f)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 701—Mr. John Barlow:

With regard to the government’s usage of collection agents, since November 4, 2015, and broken down by department, agency, and crown corporation: (a) how much has been spent on collection agents or agencies, including fees, commissions, salaries, recovery costs, and other expenses; (b) how many debts have been assigned to collection agents or agencies; (c) how many of the debts referred to in (b) have since been recovered in full; (d) how many of the debts referred to in (b) were (i) personal, (ii) corporate; (e) what is the total value of debts assigned to collection agents or agencies; (f) what is the total value of debts fully recovered to date by collection agents; and (g) what are the policies in place regarding fee structures paid to collection agents or agencies?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 703—Mr. Gordon Brown:

With regard to materials prepared for ministerial exempt staff since November 4, 2015: for every briefing document, memorandum or docket prepared, what is (i) the date, (ii) the title or subject matter, (iii) the department’s internal tracking number, (iv) the recipient?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 704—Mr. Robert Sopuck:

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency since January 1, 2016: what are the (i) vendors’ names, (ii) contracts’ reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contract values, (vii) final contract values if different from the original contract values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 705—Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to the government delegation led by the Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities to Brazil in July and August 2016: (a) who were the members of the delegation, excluding security and media; (b) what were the titles of the delegation members; (c) what was the total cost to taxpayers of the trip; (d) how much was spent on accommodation; (e) how much was spent on food; (f) how much was spent on other expenses, including a description of each expense; and (g) what were the contents of the itineraries of the Minister?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 706—Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to materials prepared for Ministers since May 4, 2016: for every briefing document, memorandum or docket prepared, what is (i) the date, (ii) the title or subject matter, (iii) the department’s internal tracking number, (iv) the recipient?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 707—Mr. Mark Strahl:

With regard to the Prime Minister’s trip to China in August and September 2016: (a) what was the final cost to taxpayers for the trip; (b) if final costs are not available, what is the best estimated cost to taxpayers for the trip; and (c) what is the itemized breakdown of each expense related to the trip, broken down by individual expense?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 708—Mr. Todd Doherty:**

With regard to relocation costs for exempt staff moving to Ottawa since June 8, 2015, and excluding expenses revealed in the government's response to Q-258: (a) what is the total cost paid by the government for relocation services and hotel stays related to moving these staff to Ottawa; and (b) for each individual reimbursement, what is the (i) total payout, (ii) cost for moving services, (iii) cost for hotel stays?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 709—Mr. Todd Doherty:

With regard to funding provided by the government, since November 4, 2015: (a) what contributions, grants, or other funding has any department, agency, crown corporation, or other government entity provided to either the Clinton Foundation or The Clinton Giustra Enterprise Partnership; and (b) what are the details of any such expenditures, including (i) date, (ii) recipient, (iii) amount, (iv) file number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 710—Mr. Todd Doherty:

With regard to the Small Craft Harbours program: since, November 4, 2015, what are the details of all project expenditures which have been made by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans under the program including (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) location, (iv) project description or summary, (v) constituency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 711—Mrs. Cathy McLeod:

With regard to Bill S-3, An Act to amend the Indian Act (elimination of sex-based inequities in registration): what are the details of all the consultations conducted by the Minister of Indigenous Affairs prior to the introduction of the bill including, for each consultation, the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) name and title of the First Nations, groups, or individuals consulted?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 712—Mr. Luc Berthold:

With regard to infrastructure funding by the government since November 4, 2015: (a) what projects have been funded; (b) what was the total value for each project; (c) what is the location of each project; (d) how much of the funding was provided by the relevant province or territory for each project; (e) how much of the funding was provided by relevant city or municipality for each project; (f) on what date was each project approved; (g) on what date was the expenditure made by the government for each project; and (h) what is the expected completion date for each project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 713—Mr. Luc Berthold:

With respect to infrastructure spending on federal assets: (a) how much money has the government spent or planned to spend on infrastructure in (i) 2015-16, (ii) 2016-17, (iii) 2017-18, (iv) 2018-19; (b) how much of the infrastructure spending in (a) was planned and announced under the previous administration; and (c) how much of the infrastructure spending in (a) is new spending announced in Budget 2016?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 714—Mr. Dean Allison:

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by Global Affairs Canada since June 14, 2016: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values, if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 715—Mr. Dean Allison:

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by the Canadian Human Rights Commission since January 1, 2016: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the

services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 716—Mr. Dean Allison:

With regard to the Prime Minister's trip to Liberia and Madagascar in November 2016: (a) who were the members of the delegation that visited Liberia and Madagascar, excluding security and media; (b) what were the titles of the delegation members; (c) what was the total cost to taxpayers of the trip; (d) how much was spent on accommodation; (e) how much was spent on food; (f) how much was spent on other expenses, including a description of each expense; (g) what were the contents of the itineraries of the ministers who were on the trip, including the Prime Minister; and (h) what are the details of all meetings attended by ministers on the trip, including (i) date, (ii) summary or description, (iii) attendees, (iv) topics discussed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 717—Mr. Bev Shipley:

With regard to Bill C-28, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (victim surcharge): what are the details of all consultations conducted by the government with either victims' rights groups or police associations prior to the introduction of the bill, including the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) organization consulted?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 718—Mr. Bev Shipley:

With regard to the Prime Minister's trip to Cuba and South America in November 2016: (a) who were the members of the delegation who visited Cuba and South America, excluding security and media; (b) what were the titles of each of the delegation members in (a); (c) what was the total cost to taxpayers of the trip, broken down by (i) accommodation, (ii) food, (iii) other expenses, including a description of each expense; (d) what were the details of the itineraries of the ministers who were on the trip, including the Prime Minister; and (e) what are the details of all meetings attended by ministers on the trip, including (i) date, (ii) summary or description, (iii) attendees, (iv) topics discussed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 719—Mr. Bev Shipley:

With regard to the hosting of foreign delegations since November 4, 2015: (a) which delegations were hosted; (b) what were the dates on which each delegation was hosted; (c) what was the size of each delegation; (d) what was the title of the highest ranking government official for each delegation; (e) which countries were represented by each delegation; (f) what were the total costs paid for by the Canadian government, broken down by delegation; and (g) what is the itemized breakdown of each cost referred to in (f)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 720—Mr. Bev Shipley:

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency since January 1, 2016: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 721—Mr. Alupa Clarke:

With regard to the Public Service Management Advisory Committee (PSMAC), since November 4, 2015: (a) what are the dates of all PSMAc meetings where either the topic of Shared Services Canada (SSC) or the Phoenix pay system was discussed; (b) what are the details of each specific decision made by PSMAc related to either SSC or Phoenix; (c) what was the date of each decision in (b); and (d) when did each decision in (b) take effect?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 722—**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:**

With regard to the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) since its introduction in 1988: (a) what amounts were allocated to the CVITP broken down by year, province and constituency; (b) how many volunteers participated in this program, broken down by year, province and constituency; (c) how many training sessions were given to volunteers, broken down by year, province and constituency; (d) how many training sessions given in (c) were online computer-based training sessions and how many were given in person by the Canada Revenue Agency and Revenu Québec, broken down by year, province and constituency; (e) how many organizations were involved in this program, broken down by year, province and constituency; (f) how many taxpayers have benefited from this program, broken down by year, province and constituency; (g) how many paper returns were filed, broken down by year, province and constituency; (h) how many online returns were filed, broken down by year, province and constituency; and (i) does the government plan to reinvest in this program in the coming year and, if so, how much funding is planned?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 723—**Mr. John Brassard:**

With regard to the use of prescribed medical marijuana by clients of Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC): (a) how many medical marijuana users are there, broken down by year from 2007 to present; (b) how many VAC clients are prescribed, on a daily basis, (i) 3 grams or less, (ii) 4 grams, (iii) 5 grams, (iv) 6 grams, (v) 7 grams, (vi) 8 grams, (vii) 9 grams, (viii) 10 grams, (ix) any other amount; (c) for each of the prescriptions in (b), what is the form of the marijuana being dispensed, is it (i) dried, (ii) oil, (iii) cream, (iv) suppository; (d) how many VAC clients are permitted to grow their own marijuana for prescribed medical use; (e) what evidence, reports, scientific studies or other studies have been used as a frame of reference to evaluate the use, prescription or denial of the prescription of medical marijuana; (f) have any of the studies in (e) been used as justification for the government's proposed reduction of the maximum allowed amount of medical marijuana prescribed to VAC clients to 3 grams per day in cases where there is no medical approval for prescribed amounts of medical marijuana of over 3 grams per day?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 724—**Mr. John Brassard:**

With regard to the cost paid by the government for prescribed medical marijuana and other prescribed pharmaceuticals for use by Members of the Canadian Armed Forces and Veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces, that are administered by Veterans Affairs Canada: (a) what has been the total cost, broken down by year, from 2007 to present, prepared in chart format, for (i) medical marijuana, (ii) Diazepam, (iii) Clonazepam, (iv) Trazodone, (v) Zopiclone, (vi) Wellbutrin, (vii) Effexor, (viii) Celexa, (ix) Serquel, (x) Ambien, (xi) Remeron, (xii) Nabilone, (xiii) Valium, (xiv) Prazosin, (xv) Oxycodone, (xvi) Demerol, (xvii) Dilaudid, (xviii) Fentanyl, (xix) Mirtazapine, (xx) Gabapentin, (xxi) Baclofen, (xxii) Propranolol, (xxiii) Targin, (xxiv) Pantoprazole, (xxv) Nortriptyline, (xxvi) Ketoconazole, (xxvii) all other prescribed pharmaceuticals, including opioids and other pain relief medications; and (b) what evidence, reports, scientific studies or other types of studies have been used as a frame of reference to evaluate the use, be it prescription use, non-use or non-prescription use, of the pharmaceuticals identified in (a)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 727—**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:**

With regard to the government's response to Q-258: what are the finalized amounts for all relocation costs referred to in the initial response to Q-258?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 728—**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:**

With regard to long-term accommodation in the National Capital Region (NCR), since November 1, 2015, and broken down by department, agency, and crown corporation: (a) what is the total amount spent on long-term accommodation (7 nights or more) for (i) government employees, (ii) individuals working on a contract basis for the government; (b) how many times has the government paid for long-term accommodation in the NCR; (c) what is the total number of nights the government has paid for in (a); (d) how much has been spent, broken down by vendor; and (e) what is the total amount spent on long-term accommodation for exempt staff or individuals working on a contract basis for a Minister or Ministerial office?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 729—**Mr. Dean Allison:**

With regard to employees of the Department of National Defence (DND) and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF): (a) how many general and flag officers, including those 'While So Employed' are currently authorized by the CAF; (b) how many general and flag officers, including those 'While So Employed' were authorized as of (i) March 31, 2014, (ii) March 31, 2015, (iii) March 31, 2016, and what are their ranks and position titles; (c) how many Executive-level (EX-1 and above) officials are authorized in the DND and Assistant Deputy Minister, Materiel organization and how many were employed there as of (i) March 31, 2014, (ii) March 31, 2015, (iii) March 31, 2016, and what are the classification levels and position titles; (d) what are the job titles of all staff who are employed or contracted by DND and CAF to support the Future Fighter Capability Project, and for each of their contracts (i) when were they signed, (ii) what time periods do they cover, (iii) what is the amount; and (e) broken down by directorate, how many civilians, CAF members (regular and reserve) and contractors were working in the Materiel Group as of (i) March 31 2016, (ii) March 31, 2015, (iii) March 31, 2014?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 730—**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:**

With regard to the announcement by the Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship on October 27, 2016, that the Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Case Processing Centre located in Vegreville would be moved to Edmonton: (a) what is the address where the new centre will be located; (b) what specific renovations to the new centre will be required to accommodate the move; (c) what is the total cost for the renovations required in (b); (d) what is the itemized breakdown of expected renovation costs; (e) what is the expected completion date for the renovations; (f) how many public servants are anticipated to work out of the new centre in Edmonton once it opens; (g) were any economic impact studies conducted related to the closure of the Vegreville centre on the Town of Vegreville and, if so, what are the details of these studies; (h) did the government do any analysis on the impact that the closure of the Vegreville centre would have on the tax base for the Town of Vegreville, and if so, what are the details of these analyses; and (i) does the government plan to compensate the Town of Vegreville for any lost revenue as a result of having a diminished tax base due to the relocation of this centre and, if so, what are the details of such compensation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 731—**Mr. Robert Kitchen:**

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by Elections Canada since January 1, 2016: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values, if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 732—**Mr. Robert Kitchen:**

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission since January 1, 2016: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values, if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 733—**Mr. Robert Kitchen:**

With regard to the commitment on page 25 of the Liberal Party Platform, that Access to Information Requests which take longer than 30 days to fulfill, require a written explanation for the delay to the applicant and the Privacy Commissioner and since November 4, 2015: (a) how many Access to Information Requests have taken, or are taking, in the event the request is still not fulfilled, longer than 30 days to fulfill; (b) how many of the requests referred to in (a) have resulted in a written explanation being provided to the Privacy Commissioner; and (c) what are the dates and file numbers of each written explanation referred to in (b)?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 735—Mr. Tom Lukiwski:**

With regard to government expenditures on travel by non-public servants (Financial Object Code 026), broken down by department and agency, since November 4, 2015: (a) what is the total amount spent; (b) what is the total amount spent which was approved by a Minister or exempt staff member; (c) what are the details of each expenditure related to (b), including the (i) date, (ii) travellers, (iii) origin, (iv) destination, (v) total cost of trip, (vi) itemized breakdown of costs; and (d) what are the details of each individual expenditure made by the either the Privy Council Office or Prime Minister's Office, including (i) date, (ii) traveller, (iii) origin, (iv) destination, (v) total cost of trip, (vi) itemized breakdown of costs?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 736—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:

With regard to the commitment on page 14 of the Liberal Party Platform and specifically the transfer of uncommitted federal infrastructure funds to municipalities via temporary top-ups of the Gas Tax Fund at the end of the fiscal year: (a) how much of a top-up of the Gas Tax Fund was provided near the end of the 2015-2016 fiscal year; (b) how much of a top-up of the Gas Tax Fund is expected to be provided near the end of the 2016-2017 fiscal year; and (c) what is the breakdown of (a) and (b) by municipality?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 738—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:

With regard to government expenditures since November 4, 2015: (a) what are the total expenditures related to the following companies, (i) Fairmont Chateau Montebello, (ii) Millennium Golden Eagle International Media Company, (iii) The Evergrande Group, (iv) Wealth One Bank, (v) China Cultural Industry Association; and (b) what are the detailed breakdowns of each expenditure related to the companies referred to in (a), including the (i) dates, (ii) amounts, (iii) itemized breakdown of each expense?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 739—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by Service Canada since January 1, 2016: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 743—Mr. Chris Warkentin:

With regards to expenditures by Minister's Offices, since November 4, 2015, and broken down by Minister's Office: (a) what is the total amount spent on external translators; and (b) what are the details for each of the contracts or expenditures in (a) including (i) date, (ii) vendor, (iii) amount, (iv) description of work or project, (v) file number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 745—Mr. Mark Strahl:

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by the Competition Tribunal since January 1, 2016: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 746—Mr. David Yurdiga:

With regard to forensic audits conducted on First Nations reserves: (a) what is the list of reserves where a forensic audit has either begun, is ongoing, or was ongoing as of November 4, 2015; (b) what is the current status of each audit in (a); (c) for each audit that was initiated since November 4, 2015, and stopped prior to completion, what was the reason for the stoppage; (d) for each audit in (a) which is still ongoing, what is the expected completion date; (e) for each audit in (a) which was completed, when was the final report delivered to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern

Affairs; and (f) for each completed report in (e), is the report publicly available, and, if so, how can the report be accessed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 747—Mr. David Yurdiga:

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by Employment and Social Development Canada since January 1, 2016: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 748—Mr. Jim Eglinski:

With regard to incidents involving passenger or cargo airplanes since November, 2015: (a) how many incidents involving lasers pointed at or near airplanes have there been, broken down by month and location; (b) how many incidents involving drones located at or near airplanes have there been, broken down by month and location; (c) how many incidents in (a) or (b) resulted in a departure from the plane's scheduled landing, flight path, or other flight procedures; and (d) what specific measures, if any, has the government taken to minimize the threat posed to aircraft from lasers or drones?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 749—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to the revocation of citizenship by the government, since November, 2015, and broken down by month: (a) how many individuals have had their citizenship revoked and in each instance what was the (i) origin of citizenship of the individual, (ii) age of the individual, (iii) sex of the individual, (iv) specific reason for their citizenship revocation; and (b) for each of the reasons listed in (a)(iii), was is the total number given, broken down by reason?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 750—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to citizenship fraud uncovered by Citizenship and Immigration Canada since November, 2015: (a) how many cases of citizenship fraud have been uncovered; (b) which country of origin has had the highest level of citizenship fraud; (c) what type of fraud is the most common; and (d) how many of these cases have resulted in a deportation order?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 751—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to grants and contributions provided by the government since November 4, 2015, to bowling alleys, golf courses, yacht clubs, concerts, music festivals, or breweries: what are the details of these grants and contributions, including for each the (i) date, (ii) recipient, (iii) amount, (iv) description or purpose of grant or contribution, (v) file numbers of accompanying press releases?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 752—Mr. Jim Eglinski:

With regard to the 2015 general election: (a) what is the total number of votes cast by incarcerated electors; (b) what is the breakdown of incarcerated electors by riding; and (c) what were the results by riding for the Special Voting group, which includes incarcerated voters?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 753—Mr. Jim Eglinski:

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by the Transportation Safety Board of Canada since January 1, 2016: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 754—Hon. Candice Bergen:**

With regard to responses or draft responses of questions on the Order Paper numbered Q-336 through Q-568, inclusively, which were submitted to PCO and subsequently returned for revisions: (a) which responses were returned; and (b) for each returned response, (i) to what department, agency, or crown corporation was the response returned, (ii) what was the number of the question, (iii) what was the nature of the requested revision?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 756—Mr. Chris Warkentin:

With regard to the mydemocracy.ca website: (a) what are the details of all briefing notes, memorandums or dockets related to the website or the contract with Vox Pro Labs, including the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title, (v) summary, (vi) file number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 758—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to the government's decision to explore purchasing 18 F-18 Super Hornet planes from Boeing: (a) what is the proposed acquisition and lifetime cost of the contract; (b) what is the government rationale for pursuing a sole source contract; (c) is the proposed sole source contract linked to a previous strategy and, if so, what was the approved strategy; (d) notwithstanding the approved strategy, is it feasible or affordable to compete the requirement and, if not, what are the details of the related rationale, including, but not limited to (i) cost, (ii) schedule; (e) does the vendor or its approved distributors have exclusive ownership of, and rights to use, the intellectual property for the goods or services in question, and if so, what rights, if any, does the Crown have to use the intellectual property; (f) are there alternative sources of supply for the same or equivalent materiel and support and, if so, what other options were considered and why were they not recommended; (g) is the proposal related to commonality and compatibility with existing equipment and, if so, what are the operational costs and implications of managing multiple versions; (h) according to Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) sole source acquisition guidelines, why is the cost in (a) fair and reasonable and how was the price support obtained; (i) are there any other factors that have led to a recommendation for a non-competitive process and, if so, what are the details and rationale; (j) what efforts were taken to identify a variety of suppliers; (k) what impacts on trade agreement thresholds or contracts directive contract entry or amendment limits does the government anticipate the proposed procurement strategy will have; and (l) given the nature of PSPC's mandate, what efforts were taken to put in place long-term procurement arrangements to address similar future requirements or activities in the future and were standing offers established?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 759—Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:

With regard to the government's participation in the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) Program: (a) what is the total amount the government has paid into the program since 1997; (b) how many individual payments have been made (i) broken down by date, (ii) broken down by amount of payment; (c) of the total amount paid into the JSF to date by the government, how much has been directed to Industrial Regional Benefits, broken down by individual payment; (d) what is the schedule for the remaining payments, including the date and payment amount; (e) how much of future payments are expected to be directed to Industrial Regional Benefits (i) broken down by date, (ii) broken down by amount of each payment; and (f) what options does the government have to leave the JSF program or end payments?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 760—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to the changes to the rules for mortgage insurance and eligibility announced by the Minister of Finance on October 3: (a) was an analysis done on the impact that these changes would have on the Canadian housing market; (b) was an analysis done on the impacts that this announcement will have on the Canadian economy; (c) what specific measures are in place to track the impact of these changes; (d) what are the details of all consultations that were undertaken by the government from November 4, 2015, to October 2, 2016; (e) what analysis did the Department of Finance conduct on the impact that changing the eligibility criteria for portfolio insurance will have on non-bank lenders; (f) what analysis was undertaken to determine what impact this announcement will have on the Canadian Mortgage

and Housing Corporation's (CMHC)'s mortgage insurance business; (g) what impact has this change made to the Department of Finance's forecast for CMHC's expected revenue; (h) what is the intended impact that a new stress test for low-ratio insured mortgages will have on first-time homebuyers broken down by province; (i) what is the intended impact for fixed and variable mortgage rates for the Canadian consumer; and (j) what are the details of any analysis reached related to (a) or (b), including (i) the date, (ii) the title, (iii) the summary of findings, (iv) who conducted the analysis, (v) the description of methodology, (vi) the file numbers of related reports?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 763—Mr. Earl Dreeshen:

With regard to the survey of 4273 people conducted by Vox Pop Labs between October 23, 2016, and November 22, 2016, that served to provide the base data for the survey conducted through the mydemocracy.ca website: (a) what were the questions asked during this survey; (b) what were the results for each question; (c) what were the properties of each of the clusters, or archetypes, identified in this survey; and (d) for each of the eight themes and graphs identified in the mydemocracy.ca website (i) how were the themes quantified, (ii) what was the range and distribution of answers, (iii) what was the mean of each cluster, or archetype, (iv) which of the clusters were statistically significantly different from one another?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 765—Ms. Rachael Harder:

With regard to data that are submitted through the mydemocracy.ca website: (a) can results be submitted successfully from outside of Canada and included in the overall results of the study; (b) can multiple results be submitted successfully from the same IP address and included in the overall results of the study; (c) is there an upper limit to the number of results that can be submitted from the same IP address and still be included in the overall results of the study; (d) can an individual successfully submit results without providing personal information; (e) is it clearly stated, on the survey itself, what the user must do to ensure his or her results are included in the overall results of the study; (f) if users submit a survey that will not be included in the overall results of the study, will they be informed of that fact; and (g) if users are not informed whether their submission is going to be excluded from the overall results, what quality controls have been put in place to ensure that results will not be skewed by the process, such as by the exclusion of people who wish to protect their personal information?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 766—Ms. Rachael Harder:

With regard to the personal information collected through the mydemocracy.ca website by Vox Pop Labs: (a) what are the authorized uses of this information; (b) what is considered to be (i) authorized, (ii) unauthorized, (iii) access, (iv) use, (v) modification, (vi) disclosure; (c) who has the authority to determine which uses can be authorized; (d) with respect to retention of personal information, (i) for which purposes and legal requirements will the information be retained, (ii) what is the estimated time it will take to meet these purposes and legal requirements, (iii) will the information be destroyed if these purposes and legal requirements are met, (iv) is there a maximum time that the information can be retained, (v) does the government have a means of ensuring that the information is destroyed after a reasonable time; and (e) with respect to the data collected, as related to electoral reform, what is the relevance accorded to (i) education, (ii) occupation, (iii) combined household income, (iv) interest in politics, (v) interest in current affairs?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 767—Mr. Blaine Calkins:

With regard to contracts signed by the government with the Bluesky Strategy Group or its principals, since November 4, 2015: for each contract, (a) what is the (i) value, (ii) description of the service provided, (iii) date and duration, (iv) internal tracking or file number; and (b) was the contract sole sourced?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 768—Mr. Blaine Calkins:**

With regard to investigations related to the possible leak of information related to the Task Force on Marijuana Legalization and Regulation, and the unusual stock trading pattern which occurred in November, 2016: (a) what related matters has the Minister of Justice referred for investigation; (b) on what date did the Minister refer the matter for investigation; (c) did the Minister refer the matter for an internal investigation, or to law enforcement; (d) were any matters referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions and, if so, what are the details of such matters; (e) what investigations are currently ongoing related to this possible leak; and (f) what is the employment status of any public officials currently under investigation related to the leak of information?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 769—Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages since January 1, 2016: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values, if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 771—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to the Enhanced Representation Initiative (ERI) run by Global Affairs Canada and its predecessors DFAIT and DFATD, since January 1, 2015: (a) what was the total cost of the ERI in 2015 and 2016; (b) what is the total cost of running each new consulate and consulate general implemented by the ERI, broken down by (i) year, (ii) type of cost, including, but not limited to, salaries and rent; (c) what is the total cost of employing each of the 20 honorary consuls taken on by the ERI, including housing and relocation costs, broken down by (i) year, (ii) city where each honorary consul is located; (d) what is the total number of formal meetings with United States officials, and business, trade, and foreign relations stakeholders held with each consulate, consulate general, and honorary consul, broken down by year; and (e) for all states and cities where a new consulate was opened, an existing consulate upgraded, and a honorary consul appointed, what has been the total economic effect for Canada as a result of implementing the ERI, including, but not limited to, economic benefit through trade and cooperation due to increased diplomatic presence, broken down by year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 773—Mr. Colin Carrie:

With regard to the visit to Ottawa of Joe Biden, Vice-President of the United States, from December 8 to December 9, 2016: (a) what is the list of agreements signed during the visit; and (b) what are the details of each agreement identified in (a), including the (i) title, (ii) summary (iii) signatories, (iv) content of the text of the agreement or the website address where it can be found?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 774—Mr. Kerry Diotte:

With regard to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), and the granting of a visa waiver for citizens of a foreign country: (a) what is the Temporary Resident visa refusal rate, for the past three years, and for which data is available, for citizens of the following countries (i) Mexico, (ii) Ukraine, (iii) Russia, (iv) Belarus, (v) Moldova, (vi) Romania, (vii) Bulgaria, (viii) Serbia, (ix) Albania, (x) Macedonia; (b) what is the rate of immigration rules violation, for the past three years, and for which data is available, for citizens of the following countries (i) Mexico, (ii) Ukraine, (iii) Russia, (iv) Belarus, (v) Moldova, (vi) Romania, (vii) Bulgaria, (viii) Serbia, (ix) Albania, (x) Macedonia; and (c) what are the thresholds or standards which apply when IRCC considers the above rates in granting a visa waiver?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 775—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to the 49 public transit projects announced for Alberta on September 1, 2016: (a) how many of these projects have been started to date, broken down by (i) project, (ii) municipality; (b) how many new jobs have been created through these projects, broken down by (i) project, (ii) municipality; (c) what is the expected or

estimated completion date for these projects, broken down by (i) project, (ii) municipality; (d) which projects had been funded in part or in whole by the previous government, broken down by (i) project, (ii) municipality; and (e) which projects had been implemented or started in part or in whole by the previous government, broken down by (i) project, (ii) municipality?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 776—Mrs. Cathy McLeod:

With regard to Table 51 "Organization Summary (dollars) – Health" in Supplementary Estimates (A), 2016-17: (a) what are the projects that receive funding from this allotment; (b) for each project identified in (a), and broken down by department or agency, what is the (i) amount allocated, (ii) amount spent, (iii) description of project, (iv) location; (c) for each project identified in (a), what is the total amount allocated to each department or agency; (d) for each project identified in (a), what is the total amount spent by each department or agency, as of present; and (e) for each program identified in (a) that has been awarded a contract and received funding from the allotment, what is the line by line expenditure, broken down by department or agency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 778—Mr. Don Davies:

With regard to anticipated outcomes by the government related to the Public Health Agency of Canada's HIV and Hepatitis C Community Action Fund: (a) how, by whom, and when will the amount of the "transition-based funding" to be provided, in each instance, be determined; (b) will the "transition-based funding" to be received by each funded organization be equal to the full amount payable to it for the 2016-2017 fiscal year under the current contracts, and if not, what amount of "transition-based funding" will each group be eligible for; (c) will any currently funded activities no longer be fundable under the "transition-based funding", and, if so, which ones; (d) as the "transition-based funding" is to be provided for the purpose of addressing "gaps in priority areas", how, and by whom, and using what criteria, will those gaps and priority areas be identified and assessed; (e) will currently contracted organizations eligible for "transition-based funding" be permitted any input into assessments regarding "gaps in priority areas" and consequent decisions; (f) is there to be any difference between the process and associated "transition-based funding" to be accorded to organizations approved for projects at lower amounts than current funding on the one hand and organizations that were unsuccessful in the application process on the other and, if so, what will those differences be; (g) what further opportunities to secure renewed or new contract funding will be accorded to the affected organizations during the 2017-2018 "transition year"; (h) how will provincial and territorial Ministries of Health and health authorities be engaged in this transition funding review process and decision making; (i) to what extent will decisions regarding fundable activities be based on areas previously identified by provincial and territorial governments as geographic and population gaps; (j) from what source will the "transition-based funding" be drawn; (k) will consumer organizations dedicated to Hepatitis C Virus Mono-Infection issues be considered for "transition-based funding" regardless of whether or not they were previously funded by PHAC, and will there be any opportunity for such organizations to seek further future funding during the next fiscal year; (l) will there be any funding available to assist in addressing identified gaps after March 31, 2018; (m) what further opportunities to secure renewed or new contract funding will be provided to impacted organizations during the 2017-2018 "transition year"; (n) when will the next Public Health Agency of Canada funding call occur for the HIV and Hepatitis C Community Action Fund; (o) of the 224 project submissions received by the Public Health Agency of Canada following an open call for Letters of Intent (LOI), which organizations were (i) invited to submit full project proposals with no changes required, (ii) invited to submit a full application at a reduced budget amount, (iii) not recommended for further consideration; (p) for organizations invited to submit a full application at a reduced budget amount, what is the dollar value of each reduction; and (q) for every LOI received, what was (i) the name of the organization or organizations submitting it, (ii) the response provided to item twenty of the Letter solicitation; (r) what criteria were used to evaluate LOIs in the review process; (s) what were the qualifications of reviewers evaluating LOIs; (t) to what extent were people with lived experience involved in the LOI review process; (u) what regions of Canada do those who were involved in the LOI review process reside in; and (v) how were Indigenous people engaged in the review process?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 779—Mr. Don Davies:**

With regard to the Federal Tobacco Control Strategy (FTCS), in fiscal year 2014-2015: (a) what was the budget for the FTCS; (b) how much of that budget was spent within the fiscal year; (c) how much was spent on each of the following components of the FTCS (i) mass media, (ii) policy and regulatory development, (iii) research, (iv) surveillance, (v) enforcement, (vi) grants and contributions, (vii) programs for Indigenous Canadians; (d) were any other activities not listed in (c) funded by the FTCS and, if so, how much was spent on each of these activities; and (e) was part of the budget reallocated for purposes other than tobacco control and, if so, how much was reallocated?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 780—Mr. Don Davies:

With regard to the Federal Tobacco Control Strategy, in fiscal years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014: was part of the budget reallocated for purposes other than tobacco control, and if so, how much was reallocated?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 781—Hon. Diane Finley:

With regard to the government's decision to explore purchasing 18 F-18 Super Hornet planes from Boeing: (a) what is the projected acquisition cost of these planes; (b) what is the Department of National Defence's projected operational life span of an F-18 Super Hornet; (c) what are the projected yearly operation costs and maintenance of the fleet of F-18 Super Hornets; (d) what measures are in place to ensure that there is a fair and open competition for the permanent replacement fleet; (e) what specific measures are in place to ensure that Boeing does not receive an unfair advantage due to its status related to the interim fleet; (f) what are the dates, times, locations, and lists of attendees of all meetings between the government and Boeing since November 4, 2015; (g) what are the details of communications which have been received from the United States government to date related to the interim purchase of 18 Super Hornets from Boeing, including the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title, (v) relevant file number; and (h) in the open competition for a full replacement of the F-18 fleet, how will the Statement of Requirements be developed, when and by whom?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 783—Mrs. Kelly Block:

With regard to Transport Canada's British Columbia North Coast oil tanker moratorium: (a) how many submissions were received during the consultation; (b) what are the names of the individuals and organizations who participated in the consultation; (c) has the government produced any studies on the impact the moratorium will have on (i) job creation, (ii) marine traffic, (iii) environmental protection; and (d) if the answer to (c) is affirmative, what are the findings of each study?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 784—Mrs. Cathy McLeod:

With regard to the 94 Calls to Action prepared by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: (a) what are the details of all the consultations conducted by the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, including for each consultation the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) name and title of the First Nations, groups, or individuals consulted, (iv) recommendations that were made to the Minister; and (b) with regard to consultations in (a), what is the (i) total of travel costs covered by the government, (ii) total of accommodation costs covered by the government, (iii) daily per diem rate to which stakeholders are entitled, (iv) total paid out in per diem?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 786—Mr. Mark Strahl:

With regard to the Northern Gateway Project: what consultations did the government undertake with the 31 First Nations and Métis communities who constitute the Aboriginal Equity Partners between October 19, 2015, and November 29, 2016, including the (i) date of meeting, (ii) location, (iii) First Nation or Métis community present, (iv) itemized breakdown of costs related to each meeting, (v) a summary of each meeting?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 787—Mr. Mark Strahl:

With regard to the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project (TMX) Ministerial Panel: (a) what compensation was provided to each member of the panel; (b) what were the itemized expenses filed by each member of the panel; (c) what were the itemized expenses incurred by the committee in each city where a public meeting was held; and (d) what were the total expenses incurred by the advisory panel?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 789—Mr. François Choquette:

With regard to the recovery strategy for the Copper Redhorse (*Moxostoma hubbsi*) and its population in Quebec, published in 2012 by Fisheries and Oceans Canada: (a) when will the proposed regulations to identify the species' critical habitat in southwestern Quebec be published in the Canada Gazette; and (b) when will the Order come into force?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 790—Mr. David Sweet:

With regard to Pre-Budget Consultations: who has met with the Minister of Finance for Pre-Budget Consultations in advance of the 2017 Budget, and for each meeting, (i) what are the names of individuals and organizations represented, (ii) what is the date of the meeting, (iii) what are the details of the meeting agenda, (iv) what are the details of any presentations or briefing materials provided?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 794—Mr. Bob Zimmer:

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

(Return tabled)

Question No. 795—Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to the Prime Minister's commitment to introduce an Indigenous Languages Act and specific plans the government has to implement this commitment: (a) when will the legislation be introduced in Parliament; (b) what proposals will be contained in the legislation; (c) what is the total amount of funding that will be attached to it; (d) what are the details of all the consultations conducted by the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs prior to the announcement of the upcoming bill, including for each consultation, the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) name and title of the First Nations, groups, or individuals consulted, (iv) recommendations that were made to the Minister; and (e) what are the titles of all briefing notes provided to the Minister regarding this proposed legislation between November 4, 2015, and December 13, 2016 from the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 796—Mrs. Cathy McLeod:

With regard to the Prime Minister's announcement on December 6, 2016, that the federal government had taken steps on 36 of the 45 Calls to Action prepared by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that are solely in the federal government's jurisdiction: (a) which of the Calls to Action has the government taken action on; (b) what action on each has been taken, broken down by the specific Call to Action; (c) has a cost analysis been undertaken on implementing each of the 36 Calls to Action the Prime Minister referenced; and (d) if the answer to (c) is affirmative, what is the cost of implementing each of the previously mentioned 36 Calls to Action?

(Return tabled)

Government Orders

[English]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

● (1525)

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

U.S. DECISION REGARDING TRAVEL BAN

The Speaker: Having had notice from the hon. member for Vancouver East of a request for an emergency debate, we will turn to her now.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 52(2), I am proposing an emergency debate on President Trump's ban on immigration and travel from seven countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

The ban will have disastrous implications for thousands of innocent travellers—family members, students, business people, indeed travellers of all kinds—but most disturbingly for the men, women, and children who are seeking asylum and fleeing persecution. Additionally, many Canadians are uncertain about the circumstances of their own travel to the United States.

Canadians are staunch defenders of human rights, and they reject a ban based on race, religion, or country of birth implemented by our closest ally and neighbour.

This matter needs the immediate attention of this House. An emergency debate would allow parliamentarians to address this unacceptable situation and allow the Government of Canada to hear suggestions from parliamentarians and develop and implement a response strategy. For example, the idea of Canada stepping up and sheltering the refugees being shut out of the United States is an important one, and lifting of the 1,000-application ban on privately sponsored refugees is a valid suggestion and should be considered.

Canada must do its part to address this urgent situation, and an emergency debate will greatly help begin that process.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for considering this request, and if granted, I respectfully ask that the debate take place tomorrow to allow for attendance at memorial events this evening.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for raising her request for an emergency debate. I am prepared to grant her request, and pursuant to Standing Order 52(9), I am happy to have the debate begin at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment tomorrow.

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I request unanimous consent to revert to presenting reports from committees.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to return to presenting reports from committee?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, in relation to a motion adopted by the committee on Thursday, April 21, 2016, entitled “Wild Atlantic Salmon in Eastern Canada”.

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

I want to thank all members of the committee, and certainly our analysts work worked very diligently, as well as our clerk.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

STATISTICS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-36, an act to amend the Statistics Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Geng Tan (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-36 would introduce the requirement that the new council's work be done in a transparent manner. It would also require that the council make public an annual report on the state of the national statistical system.

The new council's membership would also be much smaller and more focused compared with that of the existing council. The council would consist of a chairperson and up to nine additional members who would be appointed by the Governor in Council to hold office during pleasure. The chief statistician would also be a member of the council.

Unlike members of the current council, all members would be paid. The pay level would be fixed by the Governor in Council. Members would also be entitled to be paid any reasonable travel and living expenses incurred while absent from their ordinary places of residence to perform their duties under this act.

Given the reduced number of members compared with the current council, there would not be any additional costs associated with the new council.

Establishing the new Canadian statistics advisory council in the Statistics Act, as proposed under Bill C-36, would be beneficial in at least three ways.

First, it would strengthen the accountability of Statistics Canada, which would balance the increased independence secured under other suggested legislative changes.

Second, it would increase the transparency of the council's work, thereby increasing its own accountability in addition to that of the minister and the chief statistician.

Government Orders

Third, it would publish an annual report on the state of the statistical system, including the quality, relevance, accessibility, and timeliness of the data it would produce. This is particularly important given the critical role statistics play in evidence-based decision-making.

The statistical information produced by government must be high-quality and responsive to stakeholder needs. Otherwise, it will not be trusted, nor will it be used. Businesses, governments, non-profit organizations, the research community, and the public rely on the integrity and accuracy of this data.

Statistical information helps us better understand ourselves, our past, and our future by providing information on our economic, demographic, social, and environmental situation. As such, it is essential that statistical information be impartial, reliable, relevant, accessible, and timely. In essence, it must be of the highest possible quality.

The new Canadian statistics advisory council would play an essential role in ensuring that Canada's statistical system continues to be one of the best in the world.

This government is committed to ensuring that its decisions are evidence-based and reflective of the needs of businesses, institutions, non-profit organizations, and Canadians.

To meet this commitment, we need quality data. That is why we reinstated the mandatory long-form census, and that is why Bill C-36 is so important.

Together, the legislative amendments proposed to strengthen Statistics Canada's independence will ensure that Canadians can rely on and trust in the official statistics produced.

• (1530)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, although we appreciate the effort that was put into drafting this bill, I want to ask my colleague if he does not think it would be a good idea to listen to what was said by Canada's chief statistician, who recently resigned. He said that there are problems that this bill does nothing to address.

The budget cuts at Statistics Canada over the past several years have had serious consequences. I think it is very important to be able to evaluate all of our markets using statistics. In order to do our jobs properly, we should at least listen to what the former chief statistician has to say.

[*English*]

Mr. Geng Tan: That is exactly the purpose of Bill C-36, Mr. Speaker. In this society, where there is such a high pace, data is so critical, and we have to make decisions based on the accuracy of data and in a timely manner. This is why we have given the chief statistician the authority and have made the position very independent. We even introduced a fixed five-year term for the chief statistician so he could work independently, based on the evidence and the studies, and not under the influence of other political tendencies.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I get to my question, I want to correct a previous discussion

regarding the Phoenix pay system by my friend from Winnipeg North and also from the member for Windsor north.

I have worked on this probably more than anyone else in the House. It is very clear from the Gartner report, as well as access to information reports that have come in, that the Liberal government knew there were issues with Phoenix and went ahead with it anyway. Therefore, to blame it on the previous government is incorrect.

Regarding the new bill, the past president of Statistics Canada quit in a disagreement with the Prime Minister about shared services, specifically stating that having to go through shared services infringed on the independence of Statistics Canada.

I would like the member to explain this very clearly because it is not in the bill. Where is the government going to go? Will Statistics Canada servers be with shared services, like other government agencies, or will it be going it alone? I would like clarification, please.

• (1535)

Mr. Geng Tan: Mr. Speaker, I just mentioned that we would give independence to the chief statistician. We will also reduce the size of the board. We are bringing in more experts and giving them pay, so they become more dedicated in terms of time, energy and the quality of the decisions.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while New Democrats are happy to see measures that would promote independence of the chief statistician, as usual with the Liberals, the devil is always in the detail.

I am not sure how having a five-year term that is renewable makes people more independent than having essentially a career long term. I am also not sure when a Liberal government in its previous incarnation started the privatization of statistic service, handing over control of data to private organizations. When we get to committee, I think we will have a lot of very detailed questions.

Is the government open to additional measures in the act to ensure that the chief statistician is actually independent and the privacy of Canadian data is protected?

Mr. Geng Tan: Mr. Speaker, Bill C-36 proposes to make some changes to make our Statistics Canada more independent and ensure that its decisions are made based on the evidence and the studies. We also make this process more transparent.

Bill C-36 proposes that the new Canadian statistic advisory council will produce an annual report on the state of its job. Canadians will have access to review its work and to make comments.

Government Orders

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise today to speak to this very important legislation. Many listeners, or members, will recall that there was a campaign commitment by the government just prior to the election. We said that we believed in Statistics Canada and the fine work done by it. There are a multitude of reasons why it is so important to our nation.

We made a commitment to bring a higher sense of independence and to provide assurances to our chief statistician in an effort to see a stronger Statistics Canada and a more independent approach to dealing with what was so critical when it came to the gathering of information in order to see good, sound policy decisions being made. Therefore, it is a good day in Ottawa. We see another commitment that is being fulfilled by this government. We have consistently talked about the issues of transparency and accountability, the importance of information and science-based decisions. We have heard a lot about these types of things from the Prime Minister. Today we have before us yet another piece of legislation that advances the election commitments we made to Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Therefore, it is with pleasure that I rise to address Bill C-36.

It is important to point out right at the beginning some of the things the bill would do. When I talk about reinforcing Statistics Canada's independence, I am talking about things such as assigning authority to the chief statistician to make decisions on a number of things, such as statistical procedures, methods and professional standards employed for the production of statistics, the content of statistical releases and publications, the timing and methods of dissemination of statistics that have been compiled, and the operations and the staff at Statistics Canada. We are looking at increasing the transparency around the decisions and directives, all of which are in the legislation we are debating today. We are also appointing the chief statistician during good behaviour for a fixed renewal term of five years. I am very much aware of the concerns of the New Democrats, and we look forward to them presenting those concerns at committee.

The legislation deals with the creation of the Canadian statistics advisory council, and makes some changes which the Conservative Party across the way has expressed some interest. Again, we look forward to seeing this bill go to committee to hear in more detail with respect to this, as well as listen to possible amendments being brought forward.

It is important to recognize that we are removing the penalty of imprisonment, while retaining financial penalties. As a member of Parliament, I have often heard, "If you don't fill out the form, the Government of Canada will throw you in jail." This is one of those things that is probably long overdue because it never really happened in reality. I think it might have happened once over the years, and it was likely because of the individual wanted to protest it by going to jail. Therefore, it is good to see that aspect being removed.

We are removing the requirement to seek consent for the transfer of census-related data to Library and Archives Canada, 92 years after the taking of the actual census. In the bigger picture, with respect to the way we have evolved, that is a positive initiative.

There would be a number of technical amendments made, such as modernizing the language to better reflect the current methods of collecting statistics and information, correcting errors in the wording of statutes, and so forth.

I have already had the opportunity today to ask a number of questions of others.

● (1540)

I have always recognized the important and critical role Statistics Canada plays, whether it is with respect to governments at the national level, the provincial level, municipal level, school division level, and non-profit groups and private groups. A great many stakeholders have a huge interest in what we are talking about and the type of mandate and legislation that provides the guidance that is absolutely necessary for us to continue to be proud of Statistics Canada well into the future. This legislation would be a step forward.

It is important for us to recognize that Statistics Canada, and the public service that has made Statistics Canada what it is today, is virtually recognized around the world as a professional organization that knows how to get it right. When the previous Harper government changed the mandate by saying it no longer wanted the long-form census done in a mandatory fashion, people were quite disillusioned. They could not understand why a government would make such a decision. The Liberals indicated that we would bring back the long-form census. I look at from a practical point of view. Often there is a difference in approach in dealing with Statistics Canada, but I want to raise the issue of why we need it from a practical perspective.

Prior to getting involved in politics I was quite involved in community revitalization. I was on a western revitalization board. I was on a housing co-op board. Having strong and sound information and statistics was really important. I can remember community profiles. Municipalities still invest a great deal in community profiles. The type of information that community profiles draw upon often comes directly from Statistics Canada. It is the things that really matter in deciding what sort of program is needed in a community that would allow it to be safer, or an area that needs a bit more attention with respect to revitalization than another, or getting a better sense of the economics of that particular community, such as what types of stores might be necessary. There is a litany of things and when broken down into those small communities, it really makes a difference to have accurate information. There is no other organization like Statistics Canada. It is second to no other organization that I am aware of, not just nationally but in the world, with respect to providing critically necessary information. That is talking strictly at the community level.

Government Orders

At the national level, we can talk about how important it is to the provinces that Ottawa gets it right with respect to everything from population numbers to demographics to transfer payments. Many provinces are have-not provinces and they are dependent on those social transfers or equalization payments. Those billions of tax dollars are absolutely critical to the provinces to assist them in ensuring they get it right. Imagine the importance of health care and long-term policy development in health care. Imagine knowing where our senior population is based and being able to predict how to provide sound health care policy that could see access centres opened up, certain types of home care services delivered, all of which are dependent on good, sound statistical information for both long-term and short-term planning.

By making Statistics Canada that much more independent in the way it operates, by providing the type of support this government has provided in legislative and moral support, it will assist Canada and the many different stakeholders to make good, sound, solid policy decisions which would be to the betterment of all Canadians. That is why I would encourage all members of the House to get behind the bill. Let us get it to committee, because it would be good for all of us.

• (1545)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is good to hear from my friend from Winnipeg North again.

I have two quick questions with respect to the member's speech and this legislation. Maybe I misheard, but he seemed to imply that the previous government had done away with the long-form census, which I am sure he knows is not the case. A decision was taken for it not to be mandatory, and we can debate that decision, but I am sure the member would want to at least be clear about the facts with respect to it. There was no desire to do away with the long-form census.

Also, I want the member to explain the rationale for that one aspect of the bill where the government essentially is doing away with an existing committee and replacing it with a different committee providing oversight. It is not clear to me why we are switching from one committee to another. A good point was raised by the New Democrats with respect to the smaller number not as effectively facilitating those opportunities for regional representation. It is the sort of thing where it makes people raise their eyebrows and wonder what is going on behind the scenes. I wonder if the member could reflect on that as well.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I welcome my colleague from across the way. I enjoy his interjections in the House and I anticipate there will be a good number of them in the coming months.

Having said that, the member is right that the Harper government did not get rid of the long-form census, but he needs to recognize that the Conservative government did make it non-mandatory. The criticism of the Harper government back then was very extensive, from virtually every sector and every stakeholder that understood the importance of the census being mandatory.

If the member across the way were to reflect on it, I am sure he would not suggest that it should be non-mandatory. By making it mandatory, we will have better information.

As I tried to illustrate in the limited amount of time I had, that information is very critical for all levels of government, not to mention the non-profits, the private sector, and many other stakeholders that are in need of the type of information we know Statistics Canada can provide, as long it is afforded the right tools, and one of those tools is a mandatory long-form census.

• (1550)

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague how not having the census be mandatory in the past impeded historians, genealogists, scientists, and many other researchers, and how implementing Bill C-36 will benefit researchers in his community and across Canada.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to recognize that when these long-form surveys are sent out to Canadian residents, depending on the numbers and the draws, and I am not a stats person per se, a certain percentage will get that long form.

If a significant number of people in certain areas chose not to fill them out, it would have a profound negative impact on the overall collection of information. It could create a bias for a number of different reasons. I wish I had the time to expand on those biases. At the end of the day, it would not give the best type of information that we require. That is what Canadians and others have expected of Stats Canada. That is why it was great to see the census being made mandatory once again.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad my colleague from Winnipeg North admitted he is not good with stats. I think if the Liberals were, we would not be sitting on a \$30 billion deficit this year.

This is the same question I asked previously about Shared Services. Wayne Smith, the highly respected past head of Stats Canada, who had been there for 30 years, quit specifically because the government would not address his concerns with Shared Services. He wanted StatsCan to go to a separate server. Is the government going to have StatsCan on a separate server or keep it on Shared Services? If it goes to a private server, how much is the cost going to be?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I did not mean to confuse the member. I am a big fan of using and reviewing statistics. They are incredibly important. They enable us to make good, sound policy decisions. The member raises some concerns and I would highly recommend he detail those concerns and bring them before committee. It would be most helpful. If the member chooses to speak to this legislation, maybe he could expand on his point.

I assure the member that the government is open to looking at what opposition members have to say on ways to improve legislation. A number of members have brought up the issue of why it is a five-year term appointment. I served in the Manitoba legislature and independent officers usually are fixed-year appointments. To indicate why it is five or six versus four could be a good question for the member to present at committee. I do not have the specific answer at this point.

Government Orders

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise and address this important legislation.

It is good to be back in this place. Maybe I am the only member who thinks this, but when I am away on the long breaks, I do kind of miss the House of Commons, so it is good to be back and speaking again.

Before I proceed to discuss this legislation, I hope members will indulge me with a few brief remarks on the events of the weekend.

Canada as a nation is defined by unity in the midst of our diversity, and an attack on one person or one community is an attack on all of us. Indeed, we must respond and we have already responded together across faith lines and across party lines, and that response has to continue.

Details remain unclear about the motivations of the attackers, but in whatever sense, I think we know that this terrorist attack which targeted the Muslim community in Quebec seeks to undermine our unity. I have already seen comments by those who want to blame this on our commitment to pluralism, and this is precisely what terrorism seeks to do: to undermine our values and our sense of solidarity. Terrorism does not just seek to take life, it also seeks to undermine our way of life, so today we must continue to stand together, fight back, and downgrade and defeat radical violent extremism in all of its forms.

I also want to extend my well-wishes to those across the way who have been affected by the cabinet shuffle. We know that in the current government, there are those in cabinet and there are those working hard to join it. Therefore, congratulations to those who have succeeded.

In particular, I want to extend my best wishes to the former foreign affairs minister. The member has been relentless in his service to Canada. Of course, given my interest in the foreign affairs file, we have had a chance to cross swords quite a bit over the last year and a bit. I know the member is intelligent and deeply thoughtful. His vision for foreign policy was one with which I passionately disagreed, but it must be said that he did articulate a vision for Canadian foreign policy which reflects his values, and it was a vision he developed with sincere motivation. Perhaps more importantly, his ideas about the commitment to the idea of a unified Canadian nation have stood and will stand the test of time. I wish him very well in whatever next steps he takes.

I look forward to debating with the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, although I was hoping that the member for Winnipeg North would get that position so that he would be travelling more and I could finally catch up to him on the word count.

Today we are debating Bill C-36, which is an important piece of legislation about the Statistics Act. The government introduced this legislation on December 7, so we see that we are moving along relatively quickly with the debate and discussion on this. Certainly, it contains some important measures that we are looking at. We have heard different and thoughtful arguments from members throughout the House today. I will start by reviewing some of the substantive content and also what appear to be the objectives of the bill, which I will react to and discuss.

I will say at the outset that my objective in rising today is not to speak definitively for or against the bill, but rather to raise some issues that I think require discussion and consideration in the context of this legislation. Following that, I intend on listening to the ongoing conversation that happens on this legislation and evaluating some of the pros and cons going forward.

With that in mind, certainly for those who are watching or perhaps reading the transcript of the debate afterward, I look forward to hearing substantive feedback from my constituents and others on how they see this debate proceeding with respect to this important legislation.

When most people hear that we are talking about the Statistics Act, they might imagine something fundamentally dry and technical. Of course, there are technical aspects to all legislation that we deal with in the House, but the bill before us is very practical and important for the collection and use of statistics in the real world. Indeed, it is the kind of information gathered by government, the way that the gathering of this information is overseen, and the way that information is shared and used that can influence research, which then touches on every aspect of our lives.

Before being elected, I had the honour of working for an opinion research company. Being involved in this process first-hand I saw all kinds of different ways research and statistical information impacts all sorts of practical aspects of our daily lives.

We live in a world today of big data. Every aspect of our lives is influenced by data, from the choices and prices we see at the store to the social outreach activities of religious institutions. These things are often informed by all kinds of complex calculations involving data.

● (1555)

Certainly, with the advent of the Internet and then of social media, there is more data out there about the world, as well as about us, than would have been imaginable even a short time ago. This use of data has many positive impacts for our lives. It also raises lots of different kinds of questions that perhaps were not at the forefront of our public conversations, again, a relatively short time ago.

The role and approach of government in the collection and use of statistical information is a critically important and very interesting discussion, especially if that information interacts with other data sets that are collected privately. The information gathered by the government can be used as a basis for weighting other kinds of data, everything from social research to medical research, to market research, to political polling. I generally believe that the government should stick to doing the things it does best, but gathering important baseline data is certainly one of those things, and there is a very important role for government involved in that.

Government Orders

As I mentioned, my prior life of working in the private sector, as the vice-president of an opinion research company, involved using data gathered by government as part of the benchmarking for the various research initiatives in which we were involved. The use and also, by the way, the misuse of data, which we often see in the context of politics as well, shapes and will continue to shape many different aspects of our regular daily lives. Of course, the government does not just gather data for the use of others. It also conducts policy research that shapes its own decisions, and I will return to that insofar as how this legislation might interact with policy research as well.

Here again, we can see both the use and misuse of data. I think we would agree in principle, notwithstanding the possibility of misuse, that governments should always try to base their decisions on the best available information and be diligent about identifying and utilizing opportunities to actually gather that information.

With that general introduction about the importance of this area, let me return to the specific provisions of the legislation we are talking about.

Bill C-36, introduced by the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development in December of last year, proposes amendments to the Statistics Act with the government's stated objective of strengthening the independence of Statistics Canada. Part of what we are evaluating is whether it actually would succeed in those objectives, and there are some other things that are, at best, tangentially related to that identified objective.

Under this legislation, we would have the appointment of a chief statistician for a fixed, renewable period of five years, removable only for cause, as identified by the Governor in Council. It also assigns to the chief statistician the powers related to methods, procedures, and operations of Statistics Canada. The minister would still be able to issue directives on statistical programs, but would no longer be able to issue directives on methods, procedures, and operations.

The chief statistician might require that any directive given be made public and in writing before acting on that directive. Therefore, there is still the opportunity for the government to direct a particular statistical program, but there is a level of independence within the general ambit of that in terms of the chief statistician being able to define exactly what kinds of operations, methods, and procedures make the most sense in that context.

This may perhaps not be the direct intent, but the legislation also means that the chief statistician might have authorization to make decisions about where the data is housed. This raises, of course, another set of questions in terms of what this means for the practical use of data.

The chief statistician, in the context of methods, procedures, and operations, would have authority to develop questioning within surveys. That is quite a bit of flexibility to be held independent of the government, and there is a discussion to be had about what the role is for the elected government in terms of the development of those things versus an independent officer like the chief statistician.

I raised this separate issue in questions and comments a number of times. The bill would establish what it calls the Canadian statistics

advisory council, which would replace the National Statistics Council.

• (1600)

The new council would comprise 10 members. This council would advise the chief statistician and the minister and focus on the quality of national statistical systems, including the relevance, accuracy, accessibility, and timeliness of statistical information that is produced. As well, as part of its responsibilities, the council would be required to make an annual public report on the state of the statistical system.

The question I would ask the members of the government, and maybe we will hear an answer to this soon, is just what motivates this replacement. This is an opportunity to appoint new people to this body. It would be important, if the government felt there was a need for something new to exist, for it to develop some arguments about what was wrong with the old model and new about the new model. It is the sort of thing that needs to be explained, and so far, I do not think it has explained what the objectives in mind are.

The other thing to note, which has been raised by other colleagues as well, is that the existing National Statistics Council being replaced by the Canadian statistics advisory council has representation from 13 provinces and territories, hence the number of members. We can presume that the new council means that three provinces or territories would lose representation. Again, this speaks to the question of why we are moving from one council to another. Those of us participating in the debate are asking legitimately why this is happening.

The bill no longer requires the consent of respondents to transfer census information to Library and Archives Canada, and that is a point of important discussion in terms of whether that consent should be required. It also repeals the penalty of imprisonment for every survey except the mandatory short-form census. As members of the government have said, I think this particular provision is a common-sense change, that people not be imprisoned for failing to fill out the long-form census. This was a concern we had when we were in government and that we spoke about; again, not doing away with the long-form census but moving back on those mandatory provisions, with a concern about some of these issues, for instance the possibility of imprisonment.

It is worth underlining, in the context of the discussion about mandatory versus not around the long form, that the bill does not change whether the long-form census is mandatory. That specific element is not affected one way or the other by specific provisions of the bill.

Those are the different details we are debating. Some of them have a clearer rationale than others, and hopefully, over the course of this debate, we will hear a little more about those rationales.

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On the question of independence with respect to methods, with respect to the types of questions we are being asked, there is an important discussion to be had here, because on the one hand, it is important for the government, which is elected by the people, to be able to get the statistical information it needs to answer policy questions that they feel are important and need to be answered. On the other hand, it certainly makes sense to have experts defining what methods make sense for achieving those objectives.

That is generally the model that is envisioned, but we could also imagine a case where a minister might have an opinion about the kind of method that was most suitable for getting certain kinds of data. We could also imagine possible problems with that.

In the context of this debate, we should think about the government's experience with the MyDemocracy.ca website, because it was an example of the government wading into what it claimed was an exercise in research, in gathering Canadians' opinions. However, we know that there are horrendous problems with the kind of survey that was developed and the way it was developed. It did not actually ask clear, direct questions in terms of people's opinions about specific issues. It did not get clear feedback from people, and there was ambiguity about whether people had to actually give their information or not.

• (1605)

This, perhaps, speaks to the importance of having independence when it comes to developing statistical surveys because it really looks like MyDemocracy.ca was developed, clearly, with certain objectives in mind by the government, which is to obscure the information, to not actually do what seems much more natural and straightforward and obvious, which is to ask people questions about their opinion.

There is a worry, when it comes to an elected government being involved in information-gathering, that there is a loss of independence and that the government seeks to use its desire for certain policy outcomes to obscure the collection of information.

Over the break, I had a constituent write to me about his experience with the MyDemocracy.ca website. It speaks to some of the problems with statistical information, so I want to share what he had to say. His name is Mike, and he said I could share his name because I think this is important information.

He wrote, "I live in Sherwood Park and I received a card to fill out the survey at MyDemocracy.ca. I went to fill it out and ran into a major issue. I spent a bunch of time and when I got to the profile section, which states that it's entirely optional, it would not let me proceed. I called the number and spoke to someone. He told me that it was a failsafe to ensure it was filled out, even though it is optional to fill out that portion, and he suggested that I could put in false information if I did not want my real info in."

He continues. "This is insane and defeats the entire point of the survey. For a federal government employee to suggest putting false info in is unbelievable. It's clear this is a skewed survey. At the end of the day, my opinion was not registered, and something is wrong with that. The deadline for this survey is December 30. I received this card yesterday, December 7. The fact that the government sent this out at the busiest time of year, with only three weeks to contemplate

it and with a major flaw that eliminates certain people's responses, is a major problem. Most people will not take the time report this problem. Who knows how many people's opinions have been excluded. This survey has no validity now. I cannot adequately express how troubling this is and makes me wonder what the federal government's real motivation is. Further to the above, the survey questions are very repetitive, and they basically ask the same questions two or three times."

That is correspondence that I received from a constituent about MyDemocracy.ca. Of course, it is correspondence that has important implications for the electoral reform discussion, but it also has important implications for our examination of what the relationship should be between the elected government and those developing statistical tools. It speaks to the fact that we have a government here that is, I believe, trying to set up a system for gathering information that is designed to produce the kinds of outcomes that it wants, rather than engaging in a more serious, sincere consultation or survey to figure out what either those who want to participate in giving us information think or what a representative sample of Canadians think.

This speaks to the importance of independence. On the other hand, would the change to the Statistics Canada Act actually affect this kind of ad hoc, one-off policy research the government might choose to do?

Maybe we should look at saying that, specifically, when the government has these kinds of political objectives in mind, that is where that independence would be critically needed so we do not run into this sort of false research exercised by the government when it is trying to get specific outcomes it wants in order to justify a course of action that it has already identified. That is not meaningful research. That is certainly not meaningful consultation.

Another point I want to make, just on reflecting on the content of the bill, is that we would be changing the council that provides oversight to the activities with respect to statistics. Again, the old council was the National Statistics Council, or NSC, and we would be moving to the Canadian statistics advisory council.

There is a possibility that this is actually a tactic that compromises independence because it opens up an opportunity for the government to appoint an entirely new council whose members, presumably, would all be appointed by the government, which might not be as effective in exercising oversight as the existing council, with the existing people, with the existing infrastructure that is in place. That transition would create an opportunity for the government to appoint a wholesale group of new people.

Again, we have yet to hear from the government some degree of explanation or rationale with respect to what the objective is, what it would be trying to achieve with this new council.

• (1610)

To summarize, the ongoing discussion on the bill before us is important. There certainly are some important objectives here, but there are also some outstanding questions about what the real objectives are and whether some of these changes would actually achieve the objectives that the government has defined. I look forward to that continuing conversation.

Government Orders

•(1615)

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful to ask my first question in this role.

I will take a moment to express my sympathy for the victims of the terrorist attack in Quebec City last evening. Our hearts and souls go out to all of those people affected by it.

I would like to ask the hon. member for a bit more clarification on the matter of the long-form census. I think he is technically right, but maybe he has missed an important element of the facts.

It is true that the mandatory long-form census was not eliminated by the previous government, but the Conservatives did make the political decision to render it non-obligatory. Then, and this is the part that perhaps this bill would hopefully correct, they tried to pass off that decision on Canada's chief statistician and say that he was in agreement. However, he said that he was not, and he effectively resigned over the matter.

This is the part that I think the hon. member is missing. This is what the bill is trying to correct, to increase the transparency and make governments responsible when they do issue that kind of political directive. I would ask the member to comment on that.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, in terms of the premise of the member's remarks, he said that I am technically right. Well, there is only one kind of being right, and I am glad he acknowledges that everything I said about the mandatory long-form census was correct. The fact is there was no intention and there never was a plan to do away with the long-form census and it never happened. In terms of that, he should acknowledge, as I said, the bill would not change any of that with respect to the mandatory long-form census.

Again, it has come up in discussion and it is sort of approximately related that one thing the bill would do is repeal the possibility of imprisonment for those who do not fill out the survey. I am glad the government has at least come along with us that far in terms of realizing that incarcerating someone is not an appropriate response to someone choosing not to fill out or perhaps forgetting to fill out the long-form consensus. That at least is a step toward proportionality.

The objectives in a lot of the bill are important, but it is just a question of whether or not the provisions realize the objectives.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since we are talking about statistics in general and the census, I would like to talk about a problem I am seeing in my riding. I wonder whether my colleague is facing a similar problem.

The census is done in the summertime, in early spring, in May. Along with the census there is also an agricultural census, and all agricultural businesses must participate. This happens at the worst time of year, since that is when farmers need to be sowing their fields and getting ready for summer.

Does the member think that that is the best time to encourage census participation? Since we are talking about the census and statistics, should we not try to find a solution that allows farmers to participate more fully, and make sure that it does not happen at a time that is really difficult for them, since it only makes life harder?

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I do have the honour of representing a constituency with a significant farming community. It is not a majority of the population in my riding, but it is certainly a vital part of the community.

The member makes an excellent point about the timing of the agricultural census. I certainly think that is an issue worthy of ongoing consideration in terms of looking at possible alternative times when that could take place.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was listening to my colleague underline his concerns about the use and misuse of data. With the last voluntary survey that was done, it was noted that some jurisdictions in Canada had a low response rate in their survey, and that certain groups within Canada tend to respond to voluntary surveys better than others. Therefore, we get a real hodgepodge of data that comes in, and in some places in Canada it leads to an absolute black hole. Some communities reported that there were problems with their data. They did not know where their citizens worked, what their education levels were, what their marriage status was or their immigration status, or what the poverty levels were. Therefore, there were no socio-economic statistics that could help these local communities make policies to help their citizens.

I know that my colleague is withholding judgment on this particular bill, but I would like to know his thoughts on the long-form census. Does he personally believe that a mandatory long-form census should be instituted? Is this something the committee should be studying and implementing to make sure that the data across Canada is used appropriately to help Canadian citizens where they need it?

•(1620)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for the question, and I thank him for the information he has shared and the point he has raised.

My response may be somewhat technical, but it is important to clarify. The short form census continued to be mandatory. The long form census, for a time under the previous government, was not mandatory. However, when we have a short form census that everyone is still filling out, we still have the opportunity to benchmark or weight the data we are collecting from a long form survey based on the data we are collecting from the short form. In other words, we can make up for the possibility of under-representation of certain groups in a response sample by weighting, given that we still have the data from the short form.

He might have a point about a data black hole if the short form census were no longer mandatory. That was certainly never undertaken and, as far as I know, never contemplated.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was listening to one of the responses the member gave. He was talking about an important aspect of the legislation, which ultimately says that if someone refuses to complete a census form they would no longer be going to jail. People have not really been going to jail, even though the legislation allowed for it.

Government Orders

The member is trying to give the impression that the Conservatives support that aspect and it is good to see that our government is bringing it in. The Conservative government at the time was very anxious to make the long-form census forms non-mandatory, yet it seemed rather odd that they never got rid of what it is we are getting rid of, the jail time penalty. Perhaps the member could explain why the Conservatives did not deal with that particular issue when they had the opportunity.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, let us be very clear. The law allowed someone to be sentenced to jail for not filling out the long-form census at the time when it was previously mandatory. It is a problem that it says that in the law. Do I know offhand the number of people who were sentenced recently under that provision? No, I do not. However, it is not a matter of small consequence that it is still, at the present time, the law. Of course, at the time the government made the decision to have the long-form census not be mandatory that particular provision was not relevant because it was not mandatory. Under a framework where it was not mandatory, there was not a need to repeal the provision.

However, the government has made the decision to make it mandatory. It has taken quite a while to get around to repealing the provision, but at least it recognized the fact that people should not be incarcerated for not filling out the long-form census. That, at least, is progress.

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the years we have been very reliant on outside expertise to bring some fresh perspective to things and make sure that programs being presented and executed are still grounded in the real world. Back in about 1985, the Mulroney government established the current National Statistics Council. It had representation from all 13 provinces and territories. People have served well. I have not heard any complaints about it, ever.

I was wondering if the member could comment on why there would be a need for a new council and any concerns he might have about losing institutional memory of the members who have sat on that council for quite some time, replacing them with people who would be brand new out of the chute.

• (1625)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the critic for her question and also for her great work in this area.

This is a great point. The government has a part of the bill that really is not explained at all in terms of the rationale. It removes people who have experience, who have been working in this area and have the intimate knowledge. It creates an opportunity for the government to appoint a whole new slate of people. When the government appoints an entire slate of people all at once, that has the potential to really compromise independence, because the same government is appointing all of those people right out of the gate. There is a loss of institutional memory and experience.

Sometimes, what we see from the government is change for change's sake. There are benefits to change if there are benefits of change in a particular case, but we should not just be changing things for the sake of changing them. In the absence of some kind of rationale around this, that is kind of what it looks like.

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I should note that I am sharing my time with the hon. member for Brampton North.

It is an honour to take part in this debate after two illustrious members of the House from both sides. While I will not claim that my word count is anywhere near either one of theirs, I think I am not too shabby myself.

[*Translation*]

I rise to speak about Bill C-36, an act to amend the Statistics Act. The purpose of this bill is to strengthen the independence of Statistics Canada. The government is committed to evidence-based decision-making. This bill supports the production and distribution of statistical information that is reliable and impartial.

Bill C-36 ensures that Canadians can have full confidence in their national statistical agency and the quality of the information it produces. The purpose of this bill is to ensure that decisions made about data collection, analysis, and dissemination rest with the experts in the field of statistics, not the politicians.

Statistics play an essential role in modern democratic societies. They are critical to good government and evidence-based decision-making. They inform the decisions made by businesses, non-profit organizations, governments, and the public. Public confidence in the quality of official statistics is critical, as is the public trust in the institution that produces official statistics.

[*English*]

For those reasons, Canada's statistical agency is a world-leading organization and must have a high level of independence. In fact, the agency must be able to operate at a healthy distance from day-to-day political direction and oversight. Statistics Canada must be guided exclusively by professional considerations on decisions relating to its operations and data-gathering methods. Any perception of interference inevitably leads to a loss of public trust.

The decision by the previous government to turn the 2011 mandatory long-form census into a voluntary survey highlighted a vulnerability in Canada's statistical legislation. It raised public concerns about Statistics Canada's independence, and it compromised the quality and detail of the census data. This unilateral decision prompted a swift reaction from Canadians who objected to this change.

[*Translation*]

Historically, Statistics Canada has been treated at arm's length by convention rather than by legislation. Because this practice was not enshrined in the Statistics Act, it left the agency and the chief statistician of Canada vulnerable to political interference in statistical matters.

Government Orders

This bill strengthens Statistics Canada's professional independence by enshrining it in law. The bill accomplishes this goal in a number of ways. First, it protects the independence and integrity of the chief statistician. Under the current Statistics Act, the Governor in Council appoints the chief statistician of Canada to be the deputy of the minister. The chief statistician also holds office during pleasure of the government.

The act sets no specific terms or conditions about the employment of the chief statistician. In effect, the chief statistician can be removed arbitrarily from office at the government's discretion with or without cause. This legislative gap potentially leaves the chief statistician vulnerable to political pressure. It also risks undermining the chief statistician's ability to make decisions based on professional statistical and ethical principles. Furthermore, the chief statistician could effectively be dismissed at any time without public justification.

• (1630)

[*English*]

This legislative gap potentially leaves the chief statistician vulnerable to political pressure. It also risks undermining the chief statistician's ability to make decisions based on professional, statistical, and ethical principles.

Bill C-36 would address these legislative gaps. It proposes to appoint the chief statistician, on good behaviour, for a five-year renewable term. It would protect the chief statistician from being dismissed for arbitrary reasons. It would provide greater clarity on the chief statistician's terms and conditions of employment. As well, it would place a greater onus on the government to explain a decision to remove the chief statistician.

[*Translation*]

Taken together, the proposed changes contained in Bill C-36 will protect the integrity of Statistics Canada. They will strengthen public confidence in the agency's ability to protect the confidentiality of their information. They will also enable Statistics Canada to continue to produce high-quality statistical information that all Canadians can rely on. A fundamental role of government is to safeguard the integrity and quality of the statistical data that is produced on behalf of all Canadians. Bill C-36 allows this government to fulfill that responsibility.

[*English*]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his new role and for his first speech in the role.

One of the things that is important is this. With the chief statistician taking over the responsibility for choosing methodology and choosing data and all that kind of thing, it is very important that the chief statistician have some credentials or some understanding of statistics. I wonder if the member could tell me what the current chief statistician's credentials are.

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I do not have the chief statistician's CV in front of me.

What we hope to do in this legislation is improve the quality of the chief statistician. How? It would be by subjecting the appointment of

the chief statistician to our Governor in Council appointment process, which we have revised to make into a process of the highest quality and the highest transparency to get the single most qualified person in the job.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to congratulate my colleague on his insightful speech. This is obviously a subject he is very interested in. It is a first and I congratulate him. However, given that we are focusing on the chief statistician, let us talk about the former chief statistician. As we all know, he quit because he knew that the former government's vision for Statistics Canada was problematic. Will he appear before the committee so that we can hear what changes he would make?

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. We are indeed talking about two chief statisticians, not just one, because there are two who resigned. The first, Munir Sheikh, was consulted throughout the process. We took his recommendations into consideration. That does not mean that we accepted all of them, but we consulted him.

The second chief statistician, Wayne Smith, was also part of the reform initiated by our government. He therefore played a role in the process. Once again, I am not going to say that he completely agrees with the recommendations contained in the bill, but some aspects of it reflect his views.

• (1635)

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, another thing that my constituents often mention about the census is access to a paper copy. In the past, there were people available to help those who are somewhat less educated or who have trouble reading or understanding the questionnaire.

Is it not important to ensure that this service continues to be available to people who need it? Paper copies of the census must be made available, and people who want a paper copy should not have to wait on the phone for an hour and a half to get one. It is also important that those who call are able to speak to someone in the official language of their choice, and staff must be available to help people who, for whatever reason, need assistance filling out the form.

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, once again, I thank my hon. colleague for her question.

My colleague is talking about the methodology used for any survey. We will give the chief statistician and his advisors, as well as his department, the authority to take such practical matters into consideration. Such things should not be up to the government because they have to do with methodology. We will delegate decisions about methodology to the department under the leadership of the chief statistician, and we will count on the expertise there. Practical matters that should be delegated will be, and that process will be transparent.

Government Orders

[English]

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by taking a moment to express my grief for the victims and family members of the terrorist attack in Quebec against our Muslim brothers and sisters. I know that all of my colleagues stand with me in solidarity with them at this terrible moment.

I am pleased to speak about one important particular amendment to Bill C-36, an act to amend the Statistics Act, which relates to the release of census records 92 years after any given census. Consistent with this government's commitment to open and accessible data, Bill C-36 proposes to remove the requirement to request consent before transferring census records to the Library and Archives Canada after 92 years, beginning with the 2021 census of population.

Researchers, historians, and genealogists require this information to conduct research to help us better understand our past and to build our future. There has been little opposition to the release of these records and as many other countries have come to understand, preserving information about our past is of great value.

The U.S., New Zealand, the U.K., and Australia are among many countries that preserve census records for release. In the U.S., the time lapse is 72 years. In New Zealand and the U.K., it is 100 years. In Australia, it is 99 years. Until recently, Australia's and New Zealand's census records were actually destroyed. Then they passed laws, in 2000 and 2005 respectively, to allow such records to be released. They recognized the value of these records. They did this after campaigns by networks of family historians, genealogists, and interested citizens.

In Canada, we are fortunate that there has never been a policy to destroy census records. The notion that such records provide valuable historical information has always been upheld in our country. Until 1993, census records were routinely released after various lengths of time, ranging from 70 years to 98 years, with no restrictions. In fact, it was not until requests for the release of the 1901 census records that an impasse over access arose.

It was noted that legislation at the time did not allow for the release of individual records from censuses after 1901 because of confidentiality provisions. On the other hand, the National Archives, heritage and genealogical groups, and others argued that census records constituted a national historic treasure that should be preserved. They argued they should be made available after a sufficient number of years for privacy concerns to no longer exist or hold sway. They believed 92 years to be in accordance with existing regulations in the Privacy Act.

Why 92 years? At the time that the Privacy Act was adopted in 1983, data from the 1891 census had yet to be released. To facilitate its release, the Privacy Act regulations included a provision for the release of census records after 92 years, the number of years between 1891 and 1983. That 92-year precedent was applied to the Statistics Act when a section about releasing census records was added as a result of the passage of Bill S-18 in 2005. The enactment required that Canadians consent to release their census records beginning with the 2006 census. It also provided for a parliamentary review of the administration of that requirement. The experience of the past three censuses indicate the support of Canadians for the release of census records after 92 years.

● (1640)

It is important to note here that in 1999, the hon. John Manley, the minister of industry, called for the creation of an expert panel on access to historical census records. That panel, which was chaired by a former Supreme Court justice, issued a report after an in-depth inquiry. It found no evidence that legislators in the early census days intended census records to perpetually be confidential. The panel recommended allowing public access after 92 years. The government at that time stated that this issue would be considered as part of the review of privacy legislation. In our view, the passage of Bill S-18 only partially resolved this issue.

Our government believes that census records constitute a national historic treasure and therefore should be preserved, and more importantly, should be released for research purposes after 92 years.

Census records are essential to understanding our society's past, present, and future, which cities like Brampton, the city I am from and represent, that have large immigrant populations, can definitely benefit from. There are so many Canadians who are desperate to find out more about their roots. That is why Bill C-36 proposes amendments to the Statistics Act to remove the requirement for consent for all census records, beginning in 2021.

As Canada becomes more diverse, cities like Brampton could use this historical data to see if policies made by previous governments reflected their populations. It would also help emerging cities compare their growth patterns to Brampton and better compare policies that did or did not work for their people.

Records for the 2006, 2011, and 2016 censuses, for which consent was required, would be released only if consent was given.

Two key considerations in deciding to include this amendment in the bill related to privacy concerns and response rates. On the privacy front, as in other countries, the proposed amendments strike a balance between the right to access and the right to privacy. We believe that 92 years is a sufficient lapse in time.

Government Orders

The other issue relates to the potential, however remote, for response rates to fall if people think the data will eventually be released. We are talking about more than nine decades after a person has taken the census. Experience has shown that the automatic transfer of census records after a sufficiently long period of time does not adversely affect census participation. Response rates to a census have remained high over time, whether or not consent was sought before the release of census records.

In making this change, we are ensuring that researchers can eventually access what many consider a national historic treasure, a treasure that may help us understand both our own individual lineage and the evolving social fabric of our country.

• (1645)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question is on the council we would be getting rid of. The National Statistics Council would be changed to the Canadian statistics advisory council.

I have never heard a complaint about the good work the National Statistics Council has been doing. I have actually had a hard time finding out who the members serving on the council are. From what I gather, there are many senior journalists on it, who usually specialize in social and economic affairs. There are junior journalists. There are also members from the Statistical Society of Canada. When I did find the list, I noticed that there are provosts of universities and many professors on it.

The council is being reduced. It is not quite clear why the government is going in this direction. I am not saying that it is right or wrong. I am interested to hear from the member why she thinks the government has chosen to do this.

We heard from the minister this morning. He did not indicate whether the previous council had done a bad job. In fact, he just said that it is moving on and the previous people will have their appointments rescinded.

Does the member know why the government is moving ahead with removing the previous council and creating this new one, even though there have been no complaints about the work of the previous group?

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, my colleague has said he has not heard whether there were complaints. I also am not sure and cannot validate whether there were or were not complaints.

I understand that the new Canadian statistics advisory council would be focused on presenting quality statistical data to Canadians, and that is something I believe all of us can be proud of and can benefit from in the future. Having accurate quality statistics is important for all of our cities in order to develop good policies.

It is hard for me to comment on something that is unknown to me or the member, but it is something we can inquire about. Whether that information is available, I do not know.

Quality is what we are concerned with, and we can trust that the new advisory council would make that its focus and its main mandate.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we will certainly be looking forward to this

bill going to committee so that we can give it the proper scrutiny it deserves. My question is sort of related to the bill, but is more on the government's policy. The previous chief statistician of Statistics Canada resigned from the agency, and his main reason for doing so was, he complained, that there was a lack of independence that the organization had; that it was sort of tied down to Shared Services Canada.

I wonder if the member can inform the House of what the government is going to do to inoculate Statistics Canada against any kind of interference from Shared Services Canada, and how it plans on making it a truly independent agency in which Canadians can have full trust.

• (1650)

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, creating this council that will advise the chief statistician, with the combination of having open transparency and creating that distance between the minister and the advisory council that will then inform the chief statistician, is a great step to putting a distance between the two departments and making sure there is more independence going forward for the chief statistician working with the advisory panel alone. That, in itself, is a good measure to take.

I, too, look forward to this bill going to committee and the committee working on making sure that this bill has the proper amendments in place to make sure it serves Canadians as it should.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague another question, because the response given by her colleague a little earlier worried me somewhat.

When we were talking about the chief statistician, Mr. Smith, the parliamentary secretary said that although he did not always agree with everything, he was definitely consulted.

Can we at least expect Mr. Smith to appear before the committee, or did the Liberal government make an executive decision and simply decide that one consultation was enough?

[*English*]

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if I fully understood the question, but when it comes to the council or the parliamentary committee that this bill is going to go before, I believe it would be up to the parliamentary committee, of course, to decide on the experts it wishes to hear from. As we know, our committee consists of members from all parties, so I can only have faith that the committee will make good decisions when choosing the witnesses to come before it.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to echo some of the comments that were made earlier today about the tragic murders in Quebec. I did not think I would ever see the day when people would be murdered at worship in Canada. Our hearts go out to them. Our prayers are with them, certainly.

That said, I want to say how nice it is to be back in the House of Commons and to welcome all my colleagues back. What a delight it is to be discussing an issue that is near and dear to my heart; I may be one of the few, but I will try to keep this lively.

Government Orders

I am rising to speak on the subject of Bill C-36, an act to amend the Statistics Act. First, I want to thank the minister for the work that he put into the bill and for recognizing the importance of meaningful, accurate statistics.

I do know a bit about the subject of statistics. As a chemical engineer, I did study statistics at Queen's University. Later in my career, I was fortunate to receive a degree in statistics from the University of Tennessee as part of Dow Chemicals' implementation of Deming's quality practices. I was then certified as a black belt and master black belt under GE's Six Sigma statistics program, and I served as a statistical specialist to a global business for several years. So I do know a little bit about the subject.

[*Translation*]

The bill aims to change the role of the chief statistician, making the position more independent, change how respondents' information is archived, and amend the penalties for offences committed by respondents. The bill also seeks to change the terminology used in the Statistics Act to modernize it, as well as ensure French-English concurrence. In addition, the bill would replace the National Statistics Council with a Canadian statistics advisory council.

[*English*]

First of all, I would like to outline some of the principles that I think should apply to this discussion. Canadians need to be able to trust the data that comes from Statistics Canada. The government needs to support the work that Statistics Canada does. The government needs to be accountable to Canadians to strike the right balance between protecting their privacy rights and collecting good quality data.

I am going to highlight some of the things I like about the bill and then I will highlight some of my concerns.

First of all, it has been very concerning to have had two chief statisticians quit their job over issues which I believe have now been addressed in the bill.

The first issue was the long-form census. I have been clear that I support a long-form census and that the only correct statistical method for a census is the mandatory one.

When I first took the role of science critic, I made my census position known in my party and in the House. I believe that Canadians, through one of the best participation rates in history, have also shown that they value the census and the statistics it collects. They know that many organizations use this information to make plans to improve our country. To be better able to provide for Canadians, we need to understand the Canadian makeup, including age, gender, region, and culture. From a wider scope, having data on economic, social, and regional variables in Canada is also invaluable for legislators as well as for our countless researchers.

However, I want to say that with the implementation of the long-form census, there were quite a number of problems which I did highlight for the minister as soon as they were brought to my attention. Many people were unable to log on. There was a huge overload on the system. Some people did not receive their log-in IDs properly. There were really long wait times on the line if people were

phoning in to address a concern. Those are things we would want to see fixed going forward.

One of the questions I had personally was that I received a form at my apartment in Ottawa and the same one also at my home in Sarnia. I filled both of them out, but no one seemed able to answer whether that would result in doubt counting or not. That would be fundamentally important from a data integrity point of view.

When it comes to the responsibility of the chief statistician, I am happy to see that under the bill the responsibility to select statistical methods and the data to be collected is to be the responsibility of the chief statistician, as it should be. I believe the autonomy provided to this role under the bill would ensure good science aligned to world statistical language and good practices would result.

As chair of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, I have seen countless witnesses, both inside and outside government departments and agencies, testify that there simply is not the data available to answer certain vital questions. More specifically, segregated data is lacking to continue much needed research in the fields of women in the Canadian economy or more broadly on the subject of violence against women.

For all of us who took gender-based analysis training, and I believe there were 1,000 parliamentarians and staff who did so, we will know from the training that segregated data is very important in making sure that we can see that all of the legislation we are putting forward is fair for all. Again, we need to have the correct data.

I look forward to having a chief statistician who, upon receiving the requests for data which are needed to address, based on good science, the difficult issues of our time, has the autonomy to act.

The term of office being five years with good behaviour seems reasonable, but there is no definition of what constitutes a cause for which the Governor in Council could remove him or her. I am assuming that it must be the standard government employee criteria; otherwise, it needs to be clarified in the bill.

I do not see where the qualifications required for a chief statistician are defined. I would expect as a minimum that someone serving in this capacity would have training in statistics, but I am not familiar with the credentials the current chief brings and the parliamentary secretary was unable to comment. I would like to see a minimum of university statistics training as a requirement. In order to apply methods, define data collection, and interpret the data, people actually need to know something about statistics or they could get into trouble. We have all heard the saying, lies, lies, and statistics.

Government Orders

• (1655)

One thing that was not clear in the bill was how the budget for Statistics Canada would be proposed and approved. One would expect that if the chief statistician has the ability to determine what data Statistics Canada would be collecting, and to have control of the operations, the hiring of temporary, contract, and full-time employees, he or she would be in the best position to propose a budget that the minister would submit for approval. What would happen if the finance minister decided not to adequately fund Statistics Canada? This would limit the ability of the chief statistician to really have autonomy over the department and what if he were fired for the cause of not achieving his goals because he was underfunded?

• (1700)

[*Translation*]

This bill also seeks to modernize the language of the Statistics Act to better reflect linguistic standards and current methods of collecting statistical information, and to make the English and French consistent. It is important to ensure that we are saying the same thing in both official languages. It has been known to happen that officials say one thing in English and quite another in French. We do not want that to happen at Statistics Canada.

Given the ongoing evolution of data collection and analysis in Canada, revised legislative language will enable statisticians to use the most effective and current technologies to better understand Canada's population, society, and economy.

[*English*]

I am also glad to see some ability for the chief statistician to ensure that data is kept secure and tamper free. This would address the concern of protecting the independence of Statistics Canada from decisions made by shared services that could be detrimental to the operation of Statistics Canada.

One concern I do have is that with this ability to choose data storage solutions that may not align to shared services, we must also add protections to ensure that our data is not stored with a third party that could lead to security concerns. We can imagine, for example, if the data was outsourced to a company with any linkages to terrorists or other organizations that would be interested in having the private information of Canadians, that would not be a good thing.

Having already had the Chinese hacking into our systems and with the government currently allowing the Chinese to buy an IT technology firm in Canada against the recommendation of CSIS, we certainly need to have Canadians interests top of mind. We can be aware that this IT technology firm that is being allowed to be purchased by the Chinese did research into anti-hacking with specific recommendations around the Canadian systems. Therefore, that is a real area of concern for me. We have seen in the past where the Canada Revenue Agency had leaks. Certainly protecting the data security, this is the private information of Canadians, is top of mind.

One of the other mandatory census items I wanted to discuss is that of the agriculture census. We heard something about it earlier from one of my colleagues. I strongly support the need for the census, but I will share with the House some concerns I have heard from farmers on this subject.

Many farmers have told me that they have received a call at the worst possible time, while they are in the fields, from Statistics Canada, not a form or an email survey. Several have been on their tractors when they get the call and are asked about specific facts and figures regarding their agricultural operations.

When they inform Statistics Canada that they would rather check their numbers and call back when they are in their office, they are told to just guess or estimate the numbers, and that they cannot do the call later when they are in the office.

This calls into question the integrity of the numbers, so I would definitely like to see an amendment to the method of collection for the agricultural census to be along the same lines as the long-form census, with a deadline to complete and hopefully at a different time than when they are in the field.

There is an opportunity to improve the efficiency and reduce the cost of data collection. A large percentage of the population are computer savvy and are quite capable of completing information online, thus making it much less costly to collate the data. Wherever possible, we should move in that direction, since in very short order everyone will be computer literate. I know there have been improvements from the 2011 census, which 60% of people responded electronically to an even better time, but we need to continue to move in that direction.

The bill also proposes the creation of an advisory council.

[*Translation*]

The role of the Canadian Statistics Advisory Council would be to advise the minister and the chief statistician in a transparent manner on many different subjects, particularly the overall quality of the national statistical system, including the relevance, accuracy, accessibility, and timeliness of its data. The council would also make public an annual report on the state of the national statistical system.

Personally, I would be pleased to have an annual report on the state of Statistics Canada, because I see the real value in accurate and well analysed statistics. I believe that an annual report will show both the progress made every year by Statistics Canada and the areas where progress is still required. We cannot underestimate the importance of quality statistics and ensuring that our statisticians have the feedback and the support of the House and Canadians.

• (1705)

[*English*]

I do have a concern about this new council. The previous National Statistics Council had 13 members, one from each province, to ensure that geographic representation existed. The new council would have 10 members appointed by the Liberals. I worry that we would lose the geographic representation and that if the Liberals appoint their buddies to the council as plum appointments, there would be a partisan interference potential, which has no place in science and statistics.

I have also indicated that it is important for people in this kind of advisory role to have some background in statistics. I also do not see that requirement for any of the people on the council.

Government Orders

The terms of office specified for everyone, such as the chief statistician for five years with a chance for a second five, and others at five years and three years, are fine. However, if people are doing a great job, then why limit them? If we get people in these roles and they are experienced, it can be an efficiency and reduce the waste of turnover.

In addition, there is another aspect of this bill that might be controversial. Bill C-36 would make it so that Statistics Canada would no longer require the express consent of the respondent to transfer information to Library and Archives Canada after 92 years. Personally, I do not have an issue with that. Once my seven years of tax records that are required by the CRA are taken care of, it could archive any of my other information and it would not matter to me. However, there are Canadians who are more sensitive on the issues of privacy, so perhaps a checkbox on the information collected that grants permission to archive after 92 years would be a good amendment. I do realize, though, that even if we had filled out our first information at age 18, and it was archived 92 years later, we would be 110 years old. Therefore, I think it may not be such a huge concern.

This bill would eliminate the penalty of imprisonment for any offence committed by a respondent. We have heard today that everyone is happy to see that because it is ridiculous that one would go to jail for not filling out a form. The financial penalty that remains is an adequate control. If we look at history, there have been very few instances, in fact I could find none, where people were imprisoned for not filling out the census. There were several where it went to court but was not pursued. Therefore, the controls outlined for ensuring that information is forthcoming from corporations and other organizations is also adequate and appropriate.

In summary, I believe the bill addresses the need for more autonomy for the chief statistician. However, I would like to see additional protection for data storage that would recognize potential security threats.

Mechanisms to allow ministerial intervention are adequate. Penalties for not providing data are appropriate. I would ask that the archiving of information without consent be revisited for those Canadians who may have a concern. While I support the mandatory census for agriculture, I would ask for enhancements to ensure the responses received reflect the best data integrity possible. I would also ask that the National Statistics Council be maintained, with its geographic representation of all provinces and territories, and with non-partisan appointments.

[*Translation*]

I would like to again thank the minister for his bill and to thank all the other members who took to time to speak to this matter this afternoon. As a statistician, engineer, and parliamentarian, I understand the real value to our country of accurate statistics that are properly collected.

[*English*]

At the end of the day, statistics reflect the Canadian population. The closer that reflection is to reality, the more closely the government can respond through well-informed and well-thought-out legislation.

•(1710)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments in her concluding remarks with respect to how the statistics should reflect the population. Overall, Statistics Canada has done such an incredible job of ensuring that it is as aligned as possible, especially if we draw a comparison to how we are doing as a nation versus other organizations, as well as within Canada, where other groups attempt to get an understanding of the different demographics and the needs of the different communities. Therefore, I think all members of the House owe a great deal of gratitude to those public servants who have done such an incredible job at Statistics Canada.

My question to the member is specifically related to this. One general gist of the legislation is to move forward with a more independent Statistics Canada. In good part, that is done through the chief statistician. At the very least, would she acknowledge that it would be a positive thing for Statistics Canada to be a little more independent of government, allowing those who have the ability and knowledge to ensure that there is more discretion, and that they have the authority to do so, whether with respect to the types of questions or whatever else that would be? Would she see that as a good thing?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Statistics Canada for the work that it does. It is so important.

This bill moves us in the right direction in giving more independence to Statistics Canada. There is the right balance in the bill as the minister still has the ability to overrule. That provision still exists.

What we have here is the chief statistician determining the methods and what data is going to be collected. It is so important to have somebody who really understands the difference; otherwise a decision can be made which may be well meaning but may result in a problem where voluntary data, for example, is skewed in a way that is unknown, because it cannot be determined why people do not return the survey.

We are moving in the right direction with the right balance of independence of Statistics Canada and a bit of oversight from the minister, and a little bit of independence from having to go with whatever Shared Services is going to dictate, because let us keep in mind that this is very confidential information with different criteria. If we put some extra protection in there to make sure the data is secure and does not go to interests that might not be friendly to us, that would be a good thing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. We can once again see how generous and knowledgeable she is from her contribution to the parliamentary system. I thank her for that. I am learning a lot from her.

I think that everyone can agree that this bill is a step in the right direction but that it is incomplete. There are quite a few loose ends that need to be tied up.

Government Orders

Does the member have faith in the committee process? Does she believe that it will be fair and conducted in the best interests of Canadians?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

[*English*]

I believe that although the government is well intentioned with respect to trying to address all of the things, the detail is important. If I look at the other things I have seen the government do, I think there is a high potential for getting the government's buddies involved and having a partisan influence in this system, especially with the statistics council that is being proposed.

I must say that gives me concern. Also, there is concern about the data storage being done by a third party, maybe a Chinese third party, because there seems to be a lot of goodwill to try to create business there. That could be a very dangerous thing from a security point of view.

I hope the committee will get the details, but my experience is that they will not get the details and that will fall through the cracks.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been sitting here all day listening to different members present their views on this piece of legislation.

I want to bring it back to the National Statistics Council that is basically being replaced, essentially dismissed. This is what I heard from the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development this morning. On this council, however, we had provosts of universities, senior professors with decades of experience in statistics, economics, and social affairs. We also had journalists on this council. This may not be the case going forward, because it is being restricted down to 10 members. I have never heard a complaint about this particular council from any constituent, ever. In fact, it was very difficult to find out who the members of the council were.

Moving toward a GIC model might serve the government well in this one particular area, but restricting it down to 10 members might actually limit the amount of expertise the chief statistician will have available.

I would like to hear the member's thoughts on restricting the membership to 10 and appointments by GIC. Will it truly be open and transparent? Can the chief statistician have the requisite amount of human capital, human knowledge for all these individuals from different parts of the country?

• (1715)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. Certainly, if we go from having representation from all the provinces and territories down to 10, we are not going to be able to have that geographic representation.

The point is well made that nobody has heard anything bad about those who are on the existing council. We have enough problems to fix in government where there really is something wrong that we do not need to throw things out that do not have anything wrong with them.

There is a balance of expertise on the committee. In addition to the amount of time spent, some of the people are academics who

actually have an appreciation of statistics. This could be the one time in the House of Commons that I say something nice about journalists, but the fact is they would bring that transparency, because if something were awry, we can be assured they would bring it to the attention of Canadians.

I like the balance we have with the existing committee. I do not see anything wrong with it. Therefore, I really do not understand why the government is changing it, and I worry.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I certainly enjoyed my colleague's speech. It is really refreshing to hear her belief in statistics and of course her mastery and background involved in that.

As I have pointed out before, the previous chief statistician, Wayne Smith, resigned because of what he thought was unnecessary interference by Shared Services Canada. He felt that having to meet its expectations compromised the integrity of the agency he was trying to head. He really tried to fight for the complete independence of the agency to make sure that it really was doing its job.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that. I know the bill does not specifically address that, but it is important in this debate that we address not only the legislation before us but the context and environment in which it is being formulated. I would love to hear her thoughts on the former chief statistician's resignation and what she thinks the government should be doing to make sure that does not happen in the future.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, the concerns Wayne Smith had with Shared Services had to do with the data storage component, which I think has been addressed by what the bill says in terms of giving the chief statistician the autonomy to determine how that should be done and the criteria for that.

Also, he was not happy about the interference he perceived from folks who knew less about the subject than he did. With the chief statistician being in charge of the methodology and what data would be collected and being in charge of the operation of the department, that really gives the right amount of direction for him.

Does it solve all of the problems that he brought up? No, there are probably other issues that are not addressed, but in the main, it moves in the direction of good, so that is fine.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have to apologize because I missed a portion of our hon. colleague's speech. I apologize now if she addressed this, but over the course of the questions and in the debate, I was confused by some of the answers. She is a good colleague of mine. I have a lot of respect for her.

Government Orders

I have concern, and I think Canadians should have concern, when we have a single source in control of all of our data and private information. Canadians' information should be kept private. That being said, a single source should not have the ability to farm out the storage of our data to a third party. In some of the comments we heard, there is a concern that this could be done. In an earlier answer, my hon. colleague mentioned China as another source. We hear day in and day out about cyber threats and attacks and the stealing of personal data. I would like our hon. colleague to clarify her point that she is absolutely against a third party storing Canadians' data and that indeed going to a single source, or a single group, or chief statistician with all-encompassing power, we could see this, and it could spell doom for a lot of what we collect.

• (1720)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I forgive my colleague for missing my riveting speech. Definitely, he did get the main point, though. I am very concerned about Canadians' private information. There are a lot of people in the world with ill intent, who would love to have Canadians' private information. The government has a responsibility to protect that information. In the past we have seen hacking into the Canada Revenue Agency. There have been other rumours of Chinese hacking. We have to make sure that the data storage is secure. In my experience, that means not to give it to a third party.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House late in the day, after hearing so many contributions to the debate.

I will say that, unlike the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, I am not happy to be back. I would much rather spend more time with my family, probably like some members here. I like them all, but not enough to lose that time with my family.

Bill C-36, an act to amend the Statistics Act, is an interesting subject to bring up on a Monday.

As I always do, I have a Yiddish proverb today. It is more of a saying. If one has two bundles, a bundle of books and a pouch of gold, and one drops both of them, the saying is that first one would pick up the bundle of books. The knowledge it represents is far more valuable than the gold one would lose in a pouch of gold. I think that saying speaks to how much we as a society, as communities, working together, value knowledge first and foremost.

We pay for knowledge. Very often companies or individuals pay large sums of money to obtain information they consider of value to them, either for market purposes, if they are expanding a company, or for personal genealogical reasons. Perhaps they are interested in their family's past. We have large companies that profit from this sharing of information. They produce information for people who want or need it for purposes of their own design.

I think this Yiddish saying speaks to the worth of knowledge and the value we place on it. In Canada, we place so much value on it that we have an entire agency of government devoted to the collection of information and the dissemination of information across society to community organizations, businesses, and government officials so we can make better decisions on behalf of Canadians.

The bill purports to modernize Statistics Canada. There are certain sections of the legislation I want to go through to lay out what I think are opportunities lost. I have some questions on some sections and how they work with others. I have not yet taken a positive or negative stance on the bill. Mostly I want to go through the legislation with members of the House and mention some concerns I have and things I would like to know about.

Under duties for the chief statistician, there are three or four points laid out on what he or she must do to fulfill the requirements or obligations under the legislation. In the bill, under proposed paragraph 4(5)(b), we have:

advise on matters pertaining to statistical programs of the departments and agencies of the Government of Canada, and confer with those departments and agencies to that end;

I wonder if this will be made public. The government has made a big deal of being open and transparent. I am wondering if in the future, the government will be making that type of information, those discussions between departments and the chief statistician, public. Will they share with Canadians the conversations departments are having on how they are using, sharing, distributing, and disseminating the private information of Canadians that they have collated?

In this day and age, that is a concern many Canadians have, and businesses as well. How is this information they are providing the government being protected, and how is it being used? I think it would be great if they perhaps clarified for us in the House, either the minister or the parliamentary secretary, whether they intend to share this information with the public.

Proposed subsection 4.1(1) reads:

Directives on any methods, procedures and operations may only be issued to the Chief Statistician by the Governor in Council, by order, on the recommendation of the Minister.

There are a bunch of commas in there that make it really unclear what the purpose is. It is actually quite broad. It is not quite clear whether the chief statistician will be told what to do in certain circumstances, under the operation of a particular survey program, or whether it will, in fact, be the minister, upon a recommendation, who will be passing ideas that the chief statistician believes to be right.

Having worked before with statistical data for a professional association in Alberta, I had a chief executive officer and a board of directors I was responsible to. Like any CEO or head of an agency, a person does not want to be micromanaged by a board of directors. One would want to be given a broad mandate that would be in the contract signed, in this case with the government, and one could then go forth and fulfill the mandate. The last thing one wants to have is, by directives, being told to do something a certain way.

In proposed subsection 4.1(1), exactly how would that be applied, and is this the clarity level the government wishes to have?

Another proposed subsection I am interested in is 4.2(1). If independence is to be assured, why would this particular clause exist? It says:

The Minister may issue directives to the Chief 5 Statistician on the statistical programs that aim to collect, compile, analyse, abstract and publish statistics on all or any of the matters referred to in section 22.

Government Orders

•(1725)

Again, more information being made available would help us understand exactly how this section is going to be applied to the chief statistician. It is not a value judgment, good or bad; it is more information about how exactly it is going to work in the day-to-day life of the chief statistician.

The points I am going to be touching on are mostly about the replacement of the existing National Statistics Council with a new council, the technological issues that happen in the news and are covered by national media that talk about the delay in the release of economic reports that depend on the collection by Statistics Canada, as well as some of the IT problems that the previous chief statistician at Statistics Canada kind of laid out for us and potential delays that may happen if information is shared or not shared in a timely manner.

As well, I want to touch upon the influence Shared Services Canada can have and the substantial control it may be able to exercise on Statistics Canada's work, whether good or bad. In my previous professional life, I worked for a professional association that was going through a major software upgrade. There are always issues with it. There is always a question about where our data is actually being stored, who has control of the data, how we can change it or not change it. A lot of those questions can be resolved pretty quickly just with more information. It is not a value judgment. It is just that more information would be of interest to us. Can the minister still issue directives to the chief statistician on statistical programs? I mentioned those two sections. It is not quite clear how those would work.

We know that Statistics Canada will be made to use Shared Services. There was a recent report entitled, "Heightened Program risks at Statistics Canada", which enumerated the challenges in terms of reliability, timeliness, effectiveness, and affordability that are being experienced, according to the director general of the Statistics Canada informatics branch. The report went through some of the issues it could see potentially happening down the road.

According to a CBC article in July 2016, Statistics Canada put \$38 million toward Shared Services Canada "with the promise to upgrade IT infrastructure". It was told that Statistics Canada would then have to cover the cost of migrating all information to new data centres. In general, my thought on this is to move forward carefully with an agency such as Statistics Canada. Again, with experience in my past life at a chamber of commerce and with a professional association, it should be careful about how data is being transferred to different places.

The last thing it wants to do is to go from an older system to a new system and realize it has lost 20% of the data that it used to have for historical purposes. It would always want to keep it. A lot of that historical data is very good for graphing trends. Trends are the most important thing that businesses are interested in. One data point does not tell the whole story; a trend tells the story. It is how businesses sell products and convince people to take policy decision A versus policy decision B. The historical data is needed to make the case to individuals in business, charities, and whatever type of environment one is in.

Another thing I want to mention is the recurring theme that surfaced in the report that Shared Services Canada had, that it cannot or will not meet Statistics Canada's IT requirements, because it refuses to upgrade computer infrastructure. It goes back to the point that we do not want to be losing data potentially or constricting the type of data that can be collected because of moving from one type of software to another.

I again want to quote from an analysis of the report, which states:

Having to delay their release would be unprecedented and will impact the ability of key users (e.g. Bank of Canada, Department of Finance, commercial banks, etc.) of making timely decisions, translating into considerable embarrassment to the government of Canada.

Of course, we want to avoid situations where a Department of Finance document cannot be released because there are missing valuable Statistics Canada tables that we may want to use for a release.

I want to mention a Reuters article with the headline, "Canada to make statistics agency independent amid data concerns". It says, "The agency was criticized earlier this year for technological issues that delayed the release of some economic reports on its website". Again, going back to my time working for the Alberta government, when it was upgrading the licensing system at the time, Telus was responsible for an analog system when moving it online. With large IT infrastructure projects like this, the historical data is very valuable for organizations. Retention, production, and transferring of the data are all important, especially when it is a government agency like this one, where the Government of Canada has collected large volumes of very personal information. It should make sure the businesses and individuals affected do not somehow have that data compromised during the transition between different systems.

•(1730)

In another Canadian press article, this time in December 2016, with the headline "Liberals Move To End Political Interference At Statistics Canada", the background says that ministers:

...would retain the right to decide on the "scope of the statistical program," or what information Statistics Canada collects.

The government would also be able to make changes to "methodological or operational matters" — which includes how data are collected — through a cabinet order should the government "deem it to be in the national interest."

Again, I would like to know how the government will be defining that national interest. I could not find it in the legislation. I am just curious to know how that will be defined and what will be the conditions under which cabinet will be able to order Statistics Canada to produce or not produce certain data on a certain form, and what those national interest grounds would be. Again, it is not in the legislation. I am interested to know how that will work, whether that will perhaps be published online somewhere or if the government intends to bring another piece of legislation on it. It is an open question. We do not really know.

Government Orders

We know that we had a resignation. One of the chief statisticians of Canada, Wayne Smith, resigned. At the time he mentioned, “It is my view that the Shared Services Canada model does not respect the provisions of the Statistics Act which does not permit that such information be in the hands of anyone who is not meaningfully an employee of Statistics Canada...”.

Again, I wonder how the amendments to the act would address the concerns that Wayne Smith expressed at committee, and whether this would fully address his concerns. I have not heard from him in particular, so again I do not know whether it fully addresses all our concerns. However, some of the sections I mentioned earlier, like section 4 and subsection 4.1, kind of indicate that perhaps there will not be that independence.

I also want to take a moment to highlight a section I do like. Section 31 would remove the jail time for non-completion of the censuses or the survey work that Statistics Canada would produce. We know that in 2011, Statistics Canada received 13 million completed census forms, a 98% response rate, not necessarily completion rate. As well, the 2016 survey had 98% and 14 million households completed the national census, 96% for the long form. It had 330 refusals back in 2011, and overall Statistics Canada referred 54 people at the time for prosecution for failing to complete the mandatory census form. We have known this. People could face a fine of \$500 at the time, or three months in jail.

There are three people I want to highlight who actually went to court on this.

Janet Churnin, 79, who refused to fill out the mandatory census, was handed a conditional discharge, which means she will have no permanent criminal record after she completes her sentence of 50 hours of community service within a year.

Audrey Tobias, 89, was a peace activist who refused to fill out the census because of its link to a U.S. military contractor, whose name has been mentioned before in debate. She was found not guilty of violating the Statistics Canada Act. That was the decision of a Toronto judge at the time.

Sandra Finley, 61, was found not guilty of not filling out her long-form census in 2006. Again, she appealed her census case in which she received an absolute discharge. After losing an appeal of her conviction for not filling out the federal form in 2006, again she received a conditional discharge.

Now I see the government has moved away from this jail time hanging over people, kind of like the dagger of Damocles over them. I do want to ask questions, though, on why the Liberals have kept \$500 and \$1,000 penalties. We note here that they are kept in section 32, that by summary conviction people could face being liable for a fine of up to \$1,000. The government has also kept a \$500 fine. For refusal to grant access to records, it is \$1,000.

I want to compare it to some other fines people may face from different provincial and municipal governments. If I am caught speeding 30 kilometres an hour over the limit set by the Alberta government, I could face a \$253 to \$474 fine from the peace officer. That is by summary conviction. Speeding 30 kilometres an hour over the limit is far more dangerous than my not filling out a census or a survey from the government, just in comparison. Say I run a red

light. A red light violation carries a fine of \$287 in Alberta, and speed-on-green infractions are on a sliding scale. Again, it is \$287 if I run a red light with the camera present taking a picture of my licence plate and a potential \$500 fine if I do not fill out a survey because I may have lost it, I may have moved, I may have gone on vacation, or I may have shredded it for whatever reason. How much are we fining people, and why are we fining them?

Say I run a red light and I am actually stopped by a peace officer. That carries a \$488 fine back in my home of Alberta. Failing to stop at a signal or a crosswalk, or advancing into an intersection controlled by a flashing red light in an unsafe manner is \$233. That is far more dangerous than not filling out a survey or not being willing to release information in the case of a business or I could be fined a \$1,000.

● (1735)

In 2015 by comparison, a man was fined \$1,400 for selling fur animals without a licence in Alberta. Off-leashing a dog in a provincial park in Alberta can set an individual back \$1,000 by court order. Building and cleaning an illegal bike path in a provincial park, Bow Valley, which does happen, is a \$400 fine, plus penalties assigned to the individual by the court.

As a father of three kids, all of whom use car seats, I know this one very well. I double-check my car seats, because if I am stopped by a police officer, it is \$155 fine. I think that is a far more egregious violation of the law as there are danger and safety concerns for small kids. That is far more dangerous than not filling out a census form and being fined \$500, or a business not willing to release proprietary information and being fined \$1,000.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the former MP for Elgin—Middlesex—London, Joe Preston, who tabled private member's C-625, the removal of imprisonment in relation to mandatory surveys, which received unanimous support and moved on to committee.

Government Orders

This is just a concern of mine. I have open questions for the government to consider. Do the fines outlined in the legislation fit with other similar federal legislation? Was there an assessment done on whether these fines would pay for the administration and collection of the fine? Did the government undertake any work on how many fines it expects to hand out? If the fine levied is actually higher than the cost to government of collecting, then why are we doing this? Again, maybe more tongue in cheek, do the Liberals expect these fines to fill the government coffers to pay for perhaps some of the \$30 billion deficit they have managed to run up in the past year, because with the 40 million Canadian households, I think we ought to stop taking the census for several years in order to pay off the deficit.

These are open questions wondering what the government is doing. This is not the first time I have asked. I actually tabled an Order Paper question, Question No. 255, way back last year and did not receive an answer regarding exactly who is being referred for prosecution by Statistics Canada.

We heard earlier today from the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development who said that the National Statistics Council would be replaced by the Canadian statistic advisory council under proposed section 8.1. Again, what will happen to the previous members? The understanding I had from his speech in the House was that they would all be dismissed. They would all be removed from the council. I just wonder, why are we reducing it? Why are we reducing it to 10 members from 13 members, which is my understanding of how many members there were before, and what did these particular individuals do that was so egregious that they should be removed? I have heard no complaints in my constituency office on the work they were doing. Judging from the members who served there in 2010, they were university provosts, professors, very senior members of the academic community, as well as journalists. I just think it is perhaps arbitrary to move in this direction, but perhaps there is a great reason for it. I just did not hear it from the minister on exactly why we are moving in this direction.

On the Statistics Canada website, the mandate was to advise the chief statistician on the full range of Statistics Canada's activities, particularly on overall program priorities. We know from the proposed legislation that they are moving to a smaller group of people. Perhaps this is the right way to go, but they have not really explained the rationale for it and why they have changed it. Perhaps they will be keeping some members of the previous group as they go forward. Again, there is no rationale. I am just asking an open question.

We know that Statistics Canada also uses professional advisory committees in major subject areas. It has bilateral relationships with federal departments. It has federal-provincial-territorial consultative councils on statistical policy with a focus on health, education, and justice.

Statistics Canada already broadly collaborates with civic society, with organizations like the Canada West Foundation, universities and others. I am just wondering how that knowledge would be used, how it would be disseminated, and how these relationships would be leveraged. I do not see that really in the legislation.

I will mention one last thing, because I am running out of time. How does proposed section 8.1(1)(b) fit with section 6? In one section it talks about being forced to table an annual report with the annual report of the minister, and then in section 6 it talks about tabling a different report on statistical policy in Canada, one for the council, one for the chief statistician. The two do not really match, because one would be tabled here in Parliament with the minister's tabling of his annual report, and another one would be perhaps tabled publicly. It is not very clear whether the council has to table with Parliament, table with the chief statistician or whether it tables with the minister's report.

Those are the open questions I have. The tabling of new reports is nice, but I just want to know in exactly which direction they are going.

• (1740)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, I just want to pick up on that point. It is encouraging. The member appears to be supporting the legislation to possibly allow it to go to committee stage. At least, that is what I decipher from his comments. One of the reasons it appears they are supporting it is that we would be taking away the imprisonment element, which is a good thing. I think the consensus would be to do just that.

I do not know if I agree with the member's assessment with regard to comparing traffic tickets, or red light tickets, or camera flash tickets to the census. I do not know if that is a fair analysis. However, I am curious. To what degree does the member across the way believe there needs to be some sort of incentive for people who might not necessarily be inclined to fill out the form, recognizing how important it is that we do get these forms returned? That is what enables us to make good sound policy decisions, as the national government, or other levels of government, or as I said earlier, private sector and non-profit groups. We need to get people filling in these forms. It is in the collective best interests to get them in.

What would he suggest those fines be?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, obviously, over the winter break his deciphering has gotten a little worse. By no means have I indicated whether I am going to vote for or against the government. I am asking open questions. Once I have the answers, I will be able to make a decision.

However, on fines, I do not think it is right to levy a punitive fine on a family where perhaps both breadwinners are out of work. I think it is actually punitive to levy a fine on a family where everybody is unemployed and they are looking for work and being told they must fill out the census or be levied a \$500 fine. I think it is a fair comparison across governments, because these are Canadians paying the fines, to ask, comparatively speaking, what the public policy goal is of levying this fine. Is it to compel a person to provide information, or is it to compel someone to drive more responsibly to avoid hurting someone else? I think those are perfectly reasonable questions to ask, with the purpose behind levying a fine being the goal at the end of the day. Again, we should be prioritizing the safety of Canadians over, perhaps, raising revenues through a punitive fine.

Government Orders

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after listening to my colleague's speech, I looked up clause 31 of the bill, which is the specific section of the bill that deals with the fines. It should be important for every member of this House to note that, if people are found guilty of an offence, the fine shall be not more than \$500—so that could be the maximum, but it could be anywhere from zero to \$500 and is at the judge's discretion.

Furthermore, if people had a lawful excuse—if they were moving and did not get their mail—of course, there would be leniency applied.

Therefore, we should not be too worried about the draconian measures in the bill, because I think there are enough escape clauses.

That being said—and I realize that he is going to withhold his judgment on this particular bill—I want to follow up on the question of the member for Winnipeg North about what incentives we put forward to Canadians to make sure we are getting the data. It has been shown that when voluntary surveys are put forward, the information that comes back leaves huge information gaps. Certain sectors of society are more likely to fill out the data, so some parts of Canada may not get any responses. Therefore, we are going to have local city councils and provincial governments acting with a complete information vacuum. I would like to know the member's thoughts on, specifically, a long-form census being mandatory. Does he believe it should be mandatory? Surely he has given some thought to that and he can inform this House of his personal views on that specific question.

● (1745)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, the member asked an interesting question.

In my previous life, I was a registrar in the human resources profession, where I dealt with large volumes of personal information. As the registrar, I was also responsible for making sure our 6,000 members in the province of Alberta were doing their due diligence when dealing with their employees' private information. I would ask what types of incentives were wanted. When I was there, we started an Alberta human resources trends survey all across the province with 6,000 of our members. We did not need punitive fines. We actually offered incentives. We would say that if all 6,000 members filled out a survey, we would have better data, so there was some self-interest at play for people to fill it out correctly. We also put their names in a random lottery draw, and that was our way of enticing people to fill out the survey.

I am not saying Statistics Canada should go this route, but in a not-for-profit private sector that is what we did. Our response rate was nearly 20%, which is well above what most people expect to get in a public information survey or a public policy poll. We were getting steady 20% responses over the lifetime of the survey.

That survey has now expanded to all western Canadian provinces. It is called the western HR trends survey, and every single professional association from British Columbia to Manitoba is now participating in it. Well over 10,000 members are filling out a survey without any type of fine being levied. There is some self-interest in knowing more about their particular field. The same

applies for all Canadians. Canadians are interested in knowing about Canadian society, and businesses are the same way. With that valuable information, I do not believe necessarily that a fine needs to be levied. In some cases it might have to be levied, but not all the time.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is such a curious experience to hear the Conservative Party debating Bill C-36, the restoration of data and evidence and the restoration of the long-form mandatory census. We are in another universe now.

I was elected to local government at the time that the mandatory long-form census was removed by the federal government. I was part of the movement of elected people who were deeply alarmed at the lack of data, the brokenness of our access to data, whatever it was we were measuring, whether it was measuring success, whether it was environmental protection, or whether it was service delivery. Then the alarm went through every local government convention around how we were going to know that we had the data that was going to point to where our federal and provincial dollars should go to support the social safety net. It was very alarming. We are glad to see this moved back.

I am curious as to whether the member wants to update the House on whether he shares the former views of the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka, who said the value of the data is not worth the intrusion of privacy rights, and that is why the Harper Conservative government removed the mandatory long-form census.

I would love to hear the member say that he now recognizes the importance of data for service delivery and the strengthening of our social safety net.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify that the long-form census was made voluntary. It did not just vanish.

Speaking as a member who used to be in the private sector, I will say that my board of directors saw it as an opportunity. We created labour market information with our members. We started an entirely new product and service line because we saw a gap that we could fill privately and then sell to other organizations with the permission of our members. It was information that was much more malleable and flexible and responded to our members' needs. Not all information coming from the government is either necessary or has value to everybody who is using it. I will put an asterisk to that.

When I worked for the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, I used Statistics Canada data on a daily basis when we wrote reports, either aboriginal business connection series or Métis labour reports. While I value what Statistics Canada produced in terms of information, it is not the only source of available information. There are private sources, not-for-profits and charities that produce valuable, high-quality information that we should all be using.

● (1750)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a few items for my colleague, which I could just ask him, but I would like his comments on the record.

First of all, I am hoping Edmonton City Council is not watching CPAC right now, because I would hate it to get the idea that there is upward movement available on traffic fines.

Government Orders

When Wayne Smith, the former head of Stats Canada, quit he made it very clear that it was an independence issue. It is a bit ironic that we are hearing that this is all about independence for Stats Can when the past head gave up a 35-year career and walked away from it over a disagreement with the government about Shared Services. He said specifically that the relationship with Shared Services is inconsistent with internationally recognized principles of independence of national statistics offices, something that the government endorsed but walked away from. We have asked repeatedly today if the government would stick with Shared Services or if it would go to a private server. We have not had an answer, although it does appear it will stay with Shared Services.

I am curious if my associate shares my same concerns that the government is not looking into the issue with Shared Services fully.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for allowing me to put this on the record. I share his concern.

I am interested to know how the information that Statistics Canada will hold within its agency will be transferred, whether to Shared Services or others, or whether there will be a private server. This is something I get emails on in my constituency. I get phone calls on this, too. There is a lot of concern out there about how private information is used by government. There are other members in this House who have mentioned this. We do hear about cases, with our government and governments in the United States and our allies in Europe, where they have problems retaining and protecting the private information of citizens.

The previous chief statistician of Statistics Canada had a very valid point when he raised the fact that there may be some independence issues that arise. Perhaps the government has resolved all of these issues or has a method to do it but has not tabled it before the House. Without it, we are unable to know whether it has resolved all the issues within government or whether Wayne Smith does have a point.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we go to resuming debate with the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, I will let him know that there are only about three minutes remaining in the time for government orders this afternoon. We will get started just the same, and he will have the rest of his time, of course, when the House next resumes debate on the question.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by saying that I will be splitting my time.

Before I start speaking about Bill C-36, on this day I feel it is very important to add my voice to those of all the hon. members who have spoken before me, to express my condolences to the families and friends of those victims in Quebec City, and to say that I stand here in support of my Muslim brothers and sisters against racism,

xenophobia, fear, and intolerance, and that everyone in this House stands with them today and later tonight at the vigil.

Today, we have been debating Bill C-36, an act to amend the Statistics Act. From the preamble of the bill, we know that this bill's aim is to strengthen the independence of Statistics Canada. It would assign to the chief statistician powers related to the methods, procedures, and operations of Statistics Canada. It would repeal imprisonment as a penalty for any offence committed by a respondent. It would also modernize the language of the act to better reflect the current methods of collecting statistical information.

These are all changes that New Democrats agree with. We, of course, will be supporting this bill at second reading because we believe it deserves to go to committee so that we can call witnesses to give the expert testimony and feedback, to see if there are ways that we can make this bill an even better one.

We have long stood for the transparency and independence of data from Statistics Canada, because we know how important that data is to public policy and to all of the various levels of government and civil society that depend on it.

I would like to give a shout-out to the hard-working men and women who work at Statistics Canada, because I do not think we, as elected representatives, often give acknowledgement to those hard-working men and women and the data that they supply us. It is their data that allows us to make the policy decisions that best reflect the needs of Canadians.

I want to extend personal thanks to all of those hard-working members of Statistics Canada. They provide statistics that help Canadians better understand their country, whether it is the population, resources, economy, society, or culture, just to name a few. In addition to the census that is held every five years, there are an additional 350 active surveys on all aspects of Canadian life.

In their words, "Objective statistical information is vital to an open and democratic society".

I would love to carry on with this point at a later date. I see my time is up. I appreciate the opportunity to open my remarks on this bill.

● (1755)

The Deputy Speaker: Rest assured, the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford will indeed have another seven and a half minutes for his remarks when the House next returns to debate on the question.

It being 5:55 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 5:55 p.m.)

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