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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Friday, June 2, 2017

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 2, 2017

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

POINTS OF ORDER

BILL C-44

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, during the Standing Committee on Finance's clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-44, I presented an amendment that the committee chair ruled inadmissible. Since the Standing Orders do not recognize us as members of the committee, I was not allowed to dispute the chair's ruling. I was not even able to ask the committee to overturn the ruling. That is how our parliamentary rules treat members of non-recognized parties.

The chair of the Standing Committee on Finance justified his decision on the grounds that it would have broadened the scope of the bill, thereby extending the charge on the public treasury. We disagree. Here is why. The employment insurance fund is no longer part of the consolidated revenue fund. It is managed at arm's length, so there is no burden on the treasury.

Furthermore, my amendment would not broaden the scope of the bill or the benefits. It is not a new benefit. It merely extends the qualifying period, much as Bill C-44 does anyway.

Bill C-44 makes it possible to go back further than 52 weeks when it comes to sick leave, preventive withdrawal, or compassionate leave, but not in the case of parental leave. This bill makes changes to the employment insurance program regarding maternity leave and seeks to increase the number of weeks a woman is eligible for benefits during her maternity leave. What happens, though, when the mother loses her job during her maternity leave or just a few days later? She will be penalized.

The current EI system penalizes women who lose their jobs right after giving birth. This government, which claims to be a feminist government, has been aware of this situation for at least a year, and yet it does nothing. It continues to allow women who lose their jobs to be penalized by the EI system, which it refuses to change.

Our amendment has only one purpose, which is to protect mothers and children when the moms lose their jobs. Imagine a single mother

who has just had a baby and then loses her job. That is truly heartbreaking.

I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to allow me to debate this amendment today on behalf of women. I am sure you understand how difficult it can be for women who find themselves in these situations, but I also understand that it is not up to you to change the rules of the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I thank the hon. member. The Chair will consider the matter and get back to the House shortly.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2017, NO. 1

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-44, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017 and other measures, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

[*English*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): There are 113 motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-44.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 87 will not be selected by the Chair as it requires a royal recommendation.

[*English*]

All remaining motions have been examined, and the Chair is satisfied that they meet the guidelines expressed in the note to Standing Order 76.1(5) regarding the selection of motions in amendment at the report stage.

Motions number 1 to 86 and 88 to 113 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

[*Translation*]

I will now put Motions Nos. 1 to 86 and 88 to 113 to the House.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting the short title.

Government Orders

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The Chair has received word from the member for Joliette that he does not wish to proceed with Motion No. 2.

• (1010)

[*English*]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP) moved:

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 7.

Motion No. 4

was not proceeded with.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP), seconded by Ms. Paupé, moved:

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 23.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP) moved:

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 24.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 42.

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 43.

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 44.

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 49.

Motion No.11

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 50.

Motion No.12

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 64.

Motion No.13

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 65.

Motion No.14

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 113.

Motion No. 15

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 114.

Motion No. 16

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 122.

Motion No. 17

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 123.

Motion No. 18

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 124.

Motion No. 19

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 125.

Motion No. 20

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 126.

Motion No. 21

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 127.

Motion No. 22

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 128.

Motion No. 23

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 129.

Motion No. 24

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 130.

Motion No. 25

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 131.
Motion No. 26

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 132.
Motion No. 27

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 133.
Motion No. 28

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 134.
Motion No. 29

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 135.
Motion No. 30

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 136.
Motion No. 31

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 137.
Motion No. 32

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 138.
Motion No. 33

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 139.
Motion No. 34

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 140.
Motion No. 35

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 141.
Motion No. 36

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 142.
Motion No. 37

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 143.
Motion No. 38

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 144.
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That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 145.
Motion No. 40

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 146.
Motion No. 41

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 147.
Motion No. 42

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 148.
Motion No. 43

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 149.
Motion No. 44

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 150.
Motion No. 45

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 151.
Motion No. 46

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 152.
Motion No. 47

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 153.
Motion No. 48

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 154.
Motion No. 49

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 155.
Motion No. 50

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 156.
Motion No. 51

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 157.
Motion No. 52

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 158.
Motion No. 53

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 159.
Motion No. 54

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 160.

Government Orders

Motion No. 55
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 161.

Motion No. 56
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 162.

Motion No. 57
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 163.

Motion No. 58
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 164.

Motion No. 59
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 165.

Motion No. 60
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 166.

Motion No. 61
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 167.

Motion No. 62
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 168.

Motion No. 63
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 169.

Motion No. 64
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 170.

Motion No. 65
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 171.

Motion No. 66
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 172.

Motion No. 67
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 173.

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That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 174.

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That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 175.

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Motion No. 71
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 177.

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That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 178.

Motion No. 73
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Motion No. 74
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 180.

Motion No. 75
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 181.

Motion No. 76
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 182.

Motion No. 77
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 183.

Motion No. 78
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 184.

Motion No. 79
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 185.

Motion No. 80
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 186.

Motion No. 81
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 187.

Motion No. 82
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 188.

Motion No. 83
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 189.

Motion No. 84

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 190.

Motion No. 85
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 191.

● (1025)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): With respect to the following motion at report stage, neither the mover of the motion, the hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, nor the members who gave notice of the same motion are in the House to move it. Consequently, Motion No. 86 will not be called.

[*English*]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP) moved:

Motion No. 88
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 312.

Motion No. 89
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 313.

Motion No. 90
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 314.

Motion No. 91
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 315.

Motion No. 92
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 316.

Motion No. 93
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 317.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 94
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 403.

Motion No. 95
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 404.

Motion No. 96
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 405.

Motion No. 97
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 406.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 98
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 442.

Motion No. 99
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 443.

Motion No. 100
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 444.

Motion No. 101
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 445.

Motion No. 102
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 446.

Motion No. 103
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 447.

Motion No. 104
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 448.

Motion No. 105
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 449.

Motion No. 106
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 450.

Motion No. 107
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 451.

Motion No. 108
That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 452.

Government Orders

Motion No. 109

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 453.

Motion No. 110

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 454.

Motion No. 111

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 455.

Motion No. 112

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 456.

Motion No. 113

That Bill C-44 be amended by deleting Clause 457.

● (1035)

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): This is to confirm that notice of Motion No. 4 had been given by the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie and by the hon. member for Victoria, neither of whom was present this morning to move the motion.

Accordingly, Motion No. 4 will not be proceeded with.

[*Translation*]

Resuming debate.

The hon. member for Joliette.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend you for reading that long list of amendments.

The situation is critical. Bill C-44 is a mammoth bill, an omnibus bill. It is 308 pages long, amends 47 existing federal laws, and creates five new ones. It covers a whole host of areas. The governing party promised to bring an end to the use of mammoth or omnibus bills, but here we are again. It does not make any sense. Improving legislation takes a lot of debate and a lot of work so that any changes do not infringe on other jurisdictions. This is not the way that things should be done, and I find it very unfortunate.

Clause 18 of Bill C-44 creates the Canada infrastructure bank, which is also being called the infrastructure privatization bank, because that is what it does. We are against the creation of this bank.

As proposed, the infrastructure bank or infrastructure privatization bank is completely at odds with the Liberals' election promise. They said that they were going to create an infrastructure bank that would give municipalities a line of credit so that they could build public infrastructure for less. The Liberals changed their minds. They said that this line of credit or assistance would be for private companies and the financial sector, starting with Bay Street.

There is an incestuous relationship between the government and the Bay Street financial lobby. I think that is deplorable. We have seen it in a whole raft of bills and decisions.

Last fall, in Bill C-29, the Liberals tried to make Bay Street exempt from the Quebec Consumer Protection Act. That measure was hidden away in a mammoth bill. We managed to get the government to back down on that, but it did so only at the last minute.

What is happening now with Bill C-44 is even worse. I would need a lot of time to cover everything in this bill that should be changed. The situation being critical, I will concentrate on the main

problem, a game-changing move that gives private investors on Bay Street and even from abroad an incredible, impossible advantage: the power to circumvent provincial laws, Quebec laws, and municipal regulations.

As it stands, with Bill C-44, we are no longer masters in our own house. This is unbelievable. This cannot be happening. Why? Because, in Bill C-44, the government is giving agent of the crown status to the infrastructure privatization bank along with all of the projects it handles, even the ones that are entirely private. That is no small thing. It means that private investment will enjoy all the privileges and immunities of government and be able to circumvent Quebec's laws and municipal regulations. This makes no sense. This part of the bill must be removed, and that is the subject of my speech this morning.

More specifically, in subsection 5(4) of the future Canada infrastructure bank act, this is stated in legal terms that seem fine at first glance:

The Bank is not an agent of Her Majesty in right of Canada, except when

(a) giving advice about investments in infrastructure projects to ministers of Her Majesty in right of Canada, to departments, boards, commissions and agencies of the Government of Canada and to Crown corporations as defined in subsection 83 (1) of the *Financial Administration Act*;

(b) collecting and disseminating data in accordance with paragraph 7(1)?(g); (c) acting on behalf of the government of Canada in the provision of services or programs, and the delivery of financial assistance, specified in paragraph 18(h); and

This is already confusing, but it gets worse in paragraph (d), which states:

(d) carrying out any activity conducive to the carrying out of its purpose that the Governor in Council may, by order, specify.

That is really quite something. This means that, by order in council, the government can give the infrastructure privatization bank the status of agent of the crown, thereby allowing it to operate outside of provincial laws and municipal bylaws. That must be removed from the bill, because it makes no sense whatsoever.

Worse still, according to paragraph 18(c), the privileges granted to the bank can be extended to completely private projects that go through it. That paragraph gives the bank the power to:

...acquire and deal with as its own any investment made by another person.

● (1040)

The privileges of the crown, which allow the government to be above everyone else, would be given to the infrastructure privatization bank, which could then use those privileges to give priority to any project it wants. As a result, foreign investors such as BlackRock, Asian investment firms, or Toronto banks could decide to build a bridge, a water system, or an oil pipeline, and those projects would not be subject to our laws. That is what the bill does. It is a major power grab. For the first time, elected members of Parliament are going to delegate to the government the power to grant crown agent status to the projects that it wants. We would be giving projects a power that we have here. That is unacceptable and must not happen.

Government Orders

Yesterday, constitutional expert Patrick Taillon gave a wonderful presentation in this regard before the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance. We consulted five legal experts, four of whom are constitutional experts, and they all agree. They say that the wording of that part of Bill C-44 raises serious concerns. One constitutional expert even said that the wording was making investors uncomfortable because they think that the legislation might be deemed unconstitutional and challenged in court. Investors would therefore be reluctant to invest in the bank with the wording as it now stands. Of course, if that were to happen, it would be fine with us, since we are against this infrastructure privatization bank. In short, this bill is poorly written and must be clarified.

In the past, the courts have deemed that Quebec laws were not applicable to federal projects, or at least that they applied as long as they had no effect. For example, in the case of energy east, Quebec laws have no bearing on the route, but they can affect the colour of the pipeline. That makes no sense.

When it comes to installing cell towers, we see that there is no compliance with municipal regulations. As for Canada Post and its mailboxes, we saw Denis Coderre, the mayor of Montreal and a former Liberal MP, take a jackhammer to the base on which the mailboxes were to be installed. However, officially, we have no power over that.

Federal infrastructure currently represents only 2% of Canada's infrastructure. However, this infrastructure bank could change things because private funding has a leverage effect. As for crown agent status, it makes no sense. We remember the expropriation of 40,000 hectares for Mirabel and Forillon National Park, among others. This must change.

A number of Quebec laws will go out the window because of Bill C-44. One of those laws is the Environment Quality Act. This means that the BAPE will no longer be able to hold public consultations. Another is the Act respecting the Preservation of Agricultural Land and Agricultural Activities. Quebec is large in terms of land mass but has relatively little arable land. Land use plans, urbanization plans, zoning regulations, and basically all of the infrastructure financed by the infrastructure bank would be exempt from these laws. We will no longer be masters in our own house.

At the Senate committee, the Minister of Finance said there was no link between the government and the infrastructure bank. He clarified that by saying that the bank would operate at arm's length from the government. That is what he said, but according to the constitutional experts we consulted, that is not what is written here. That is why the minister must clarify his intention and state it clearly in the act so that this bill does not end up before the Supreme Court for years, casting the whole thing into legal limbo.

The same goes for PMO spokesperson Olivier Duchesneau, who wrote this to Michel Girard of the *Journal de Montréal*:

Projects in which the bank invests will be subject to provincial and municipal laws and regulations. Projects financed by the bank will certainly not be exempt from zoning regulations or provincial environmental reviews such as the BAPE.

• (1045)

If that is indeed the government's intention, it must amend the bill now because that is not how it reads. We are going to run into problems. This is a major power grab.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my Bloc colleague for his comment.

When it comes to this bill, I think that two things are very clear. First, this is indeed an omnibus bill. The bill is over 300 pages long and amends 30 laws of our Parliament with a single vote. It is unbelievable. It is the very definition of an omnibus bill.

I would like to quote what the Liberals said during the election campaign. It was very clear.

[*English*]

We will not resort to legislative tricks to avoid scrutiny.... We will change the House of Commons Standing Orders to bring an end to this undemocratic practice.

On this undemocratic practice, this omnibus bill, the Liberals promised on a stack of Bibles in the last election that they would not do what the Harper government had done in burying important pieces of legislation inside of budgets.

What is one of the pieces of legislation buried here? It is a \$35-billion privatization bank whose associated risks are not understood. Even the Senate is giving more scrutiny to it than the Liberals are allowing in the House of Commons. Even the Senate has suggested amendments. Even the Senate has said that the bill needs to be broken up so that it has proper scrutiny, because it is a \$35-billion investment that is going to last generations.

Liberal members are going to vote for it without any clue as to what it is going to mean for our communities.

[*Translation*]

I have a very specific question. People in Quebec and in other provinces are concerned about the fact that this bill will make changes to laws governing critical infrastructure, such as water and roads. Will this law cause constitutional problems for the future of our country?

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent comments. I appreciate his question.

Our party denounces the fact that this is an omnibus bill. Since the Bloc is not a recognized party, we have to do a lot of work and research. The Liberals are not keeping their election promises, and that is fuelling cynicism. We have found two instances where they are trying to give their Bay Street friends improper gifts. That needs to change.

The Minister of Finance said that he had no intention of passing bills that would circumvent Quebec laws and municipal regulations, but that is exactly what this bill does. However, we have not heard what the Minister of Justice thinks about this.

I call on the Minister of Justice. I would like to know her opinion and her interpretation of Bill C-44, since the infrastructure bank and the projects that will go through it may be given crown agent status by order of the government.

Does she agree with the Minister of Finance, or does she agree with the five legal experts, including four constitutional experts, that we consulted?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Government Orders

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I would remind the members that there is a debate happening in the House right now.

[*English*]

I am having a hard time hearing it over the conversations taking place. If they have a conversation, maybe they could just whisper rather than talking out loud, or else take it into the lobby and then come back when the discussion has taken place.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Malpeque.

• (1050)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the member for Joliette as he spoke mainly about the infrastructure bank.

If I could put it simply, I would say the member sees a mountain where there is really only a molehill. The outrageous comments the member made about how this infrastructure bank would affect his province, municipalities, and other institutions in a province are just absolutely and purely wrong. It is simply wrong.

What is the infrastructure bank? This bill would establish the Canada infrastructure bank as a federal crown corporation and set out its powers, governance framework, and financial management and control. That is the same as other crown corporations that operate in this country.

As for the \$35 billion and making an opportunity for so-called friends, that is purely wrong as well. What this infrastructure bank would do is bring Canada up to the 21st century by providing the opportunity for private investors to partner with public investors to build the infrastructure that our children and grandchildren will need in the future. That is what this bank would do.

This is an opportunity for Canadians to set the foundation for our infrastructure going forward into the next decades. That is what it would really do.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Joliette has 45 seconds to answer the question.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I take great offence to the insults my colleague just levelled against me.

It is ridiculous to say that we are making a mountain out of molehill. I would remind the member of a unanimous motion passed in the National Assembly that supports my argument. It reads:

That the National Assembly affirm the application of all Quebec laws to any future projects supported by the Canada Infrastructure Bank and, in order to clearly reflect this legal obligation, that it call for amendments to Bill C-44, currently being studied by the House of Commons, to ensure that the Canada Infrastructure Bank is subject to the laws of Quebec.

We have the support of five legal experts and four constitutional experts, including Mr. Taillon, who gave an excellent speech yesterday. We also have the support of Michel Girard, who is very highly regarded.

It is not just me that the member is insulting, but rather all Quebecers. I take great offence to what he said. This must be

changed. If that is the government's intention, it needs to change it, because it is too vague. It is not clear.

If this is what it means to be an MP in the 21st century, it reminds me of Ireland's Home Rule movement. As members will recall, Ireland did win its independence in the end.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley. I remind the hon. member that we may have to stop at some point, and he can resume after question period.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to the amendments we have moved, because we are trying to help the Liberal government again. We are trying to help Liberals keep a promise they made to Canadians. It was a solemn promise that they would not abuse the legislative process and use trickery to hide important pieces of legislation and changes to what Canadians would expect to happen.

One of the tactics governments sometimes resort to is omnibus bills. Canadians became quite familiar with them during the last government and with governments before that, when they started piling a bunch of changes to different laws into one bill, calling it a budget bill, and passing all the changes at once.

This bill is over 300 pages long and amends 30 different pieces of legislation all in one act. My goodness, the Liberals are grimacing across the way at the idea of 30 pieces of law being amended in one bill. The Liberals promised in the last election they would never do something like that. They said, "We will not resort to legislative tricks to avoid scrutiny." They said, "We will change the House of Commons Standing Orders to bring an end to this undemocratic practice." So said the current Prime Minister, hand on heart. Well, this bill has 300 and some pages, and 30 different Canadian laws are to be changed in one stroke of the pen.

One might ask what is in here. There is a lot.

They are breaking a promise to our veterans. No, Liberals would not do something like that. They said they would provide lifelong pensions to injured vets. Well, there are changes to the veterans' pension act in this bill, but not that change. That is weird. One would think they could have gotten around to that somewhere in 300-odd pages.

What else is in here? They want to change the parliamentary budget officer, one of the watchdogs of Parliament, a key watchdog who provides oversight and scrutiny of how public money is spent. The Liberals said we have to strengthen the PBO. What did they do in the omnibus bill? They said the Speaker of the House and the Speaker of the Senate should review anything the PBO does, any plans the PBO has, and approve those plans beforehand.

They also said that individual members of Parliament should not be allowed to ask the parliamentary budget officer to do investigations into government spending. That is where some of the best ideas have come from, when individual members of Parliament, in seeking to answer questions on behalf of the people we represent, used the watchdog, the parliamentary budget officer, to go after government spending and find out what was really happening. Liberals do not want to continue that practice.

Then there is the privatization bank. They want to pop in \$35 billion. They say they want to de-risk investment for the largest pensions and hedge funds around the world.

We know what risk is like. Imagine someone going to Las Vegas and saying they would like someone to de-risk their trip. They would like to go, have a lot of fun, make investments, gamble, and bet on things, but they want to do it without any risk. Liberals say, “No problem. You can come in with all these multi-billion-dollar infrastructure investments and we will de-risk it for you.” Who will pick up the risk? The public will be happy to pick up the risk. That is what the Liberals have said.

I cannot believe I am saying this, but the Senate of Canada is providing more scrutiny over this bank than the Liberals are providing in the House of Commons. The Liberal finance committee rammed the bill through with less than two hours of study. The \$35 billion will last generations. It is going to impact our communities and municipalities as they seek to find the resources and make decisions.

Now the Liberals have opened up a can of worms. From public testimony, it appears that they are changing the way investments are done around key infrastructure like highways and water, which are entirely provincial jurisdiction. The centralized Ottawa infrastructure privatization bank would be making those decisions. Provinces like Quebec are now raising the alarm, saying those decisions have to be made as close to the ground as possible, as locally as possible, not by Ottawa. Enough of that happens already.

Our private investor friends, BlackRock and the like, even helped design this bank. Talk about the fox watching the henhouse. They actually held the pen with the finance department in designing this infrastructure bank. That is going to work out just great for the Canadian taxpayer, because BlackRock and hedge fund companies are very interested in protecting the public purse, right?

By the way, all those sell-offs—privatizing the ports, the railway stations, the airports—will have toll fees, because they will need revenue on all these infrastructure investments. What are these private companies going to want? They are going to want profit. They are going to want a return on investment. Where could they possibly generate revenue if they bought an airport? It would be through tolls. Who pays tolls? The public pays tolls.

● (1055)

The government, in the future, is going to say it is not the one raising tolls at ports for exporters. It is not the one raising fees to fly through Canadian airports. It is some private hedge fund no one has ever even heard of, because they are not public anymore. They are not public airports. They are not public ports. They belong to someone else, and someone else is making those decisions. The

Statements by Members

government will say that it footed the bill, that it put up the cash for it and took the risk, as outlined in the bill, but it is going to be someone else who gets the profits. Only in a Liberal world view would that make any sense at all.

The idea that the government would cram all these things into a massive bill and ram it through the committee process in the House of Commons, when even the Senate is taking more time for scrutiny, is deplorable. It goes directly against the promise of hope and hard work. What happened to all the hope? What happened to all the hard work by my Liberal colleagues? If it wants to make such a significant change to the way Canada is built, how we build our infrastructure, then allow us the scrutiny and take this piece out of the budget omnibus bill. It is far too important to us, to future generations, and to taxpayers.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member will have three minutes and 45 seconds remaining in his time when we return to this debate.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1100)

[English]

NHL'S OLDEST ROOKIE

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the value of a passionate and engaged teacher in the life of a student cannot be underestimated. He or she can mentor, guide, and create an environment where dreams flourish. Tommy Frew is one such educator. Listening to his heart, this proud father and teacher, and once top National Hockey League prospect, courageously faced physical and mental illness for 20 years. For the past 10 years, he has trained to play one game in the NHL, to inspire others as he was inspired, to raise awareness.

Tommy hopes to be the NHL's oldest rookie. Wanting to give back to his community, Tommy started his campaign to raise awareness in support of Raising the Roof, a leading organization for homelessness prevention, all by playing a single game in the NHL. The NHL's Oldest Rookie will be known as “Our Campaign”.

Tommy will prove that with a little faith, endless determination, and a lot of hard work, anything is possible. Tommy will prove that dreams are for everyone.

*Statements by Members***ARLEENE JOHNSON NOGA**

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, June 3, is National Health and Fitness Day. To mark this occasion, I would like to pay tribute to a baseball Hall of Famer, the late Arleene Johnson Noga, who sadly passed away on March 14 of this year.

Arleene grew up on a farm in Ogema, Saskatchewan, in my home riding. She is an excellent example of a pioneer and female athlete. Scouted out of high school, Arleene played for two teams in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League from 1945 to 1948. After that, Arleene went on to be a consultant for the film *A League of Their Own*, which tells the story of an all-American girls professional baseball league. Believe it or not, Arleene taught Madonna how to properly slide into a base and taught Rosie O'Donnell how to play shortstop.

Arleene is a great example of how participation in sport can enrich a person's life. I encourage all members to get out and get active in their communities this National Health and Fitness Day.

* * *

TALK WITH OUR KIDS ABOUT MONEY

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give members a heads-up about an event I am sponsoring on the Hill next week with the Canadian Foundation for Economic Education. The event is a money fair being put on by students from Ottawa's Immaculata High School and will take place next Thursday, June 8, at 11:30 a.m., at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building. MPs are invited to meet students who will share the money-smart lessons they have learned through a program called Talk With Our Kids About Money.

[*Translation*]

I am also taking this opportunity to inform the House that I have given notice of a motion on financial literacy under private members' business.

Motion No. 125 asks the Standing Committee on Finance to study the implementation of the national strategy on financial literacy to evaluate whether it is identifying the needs of various social groups using gender-based analysis plus.

* * *

PARLIAMENTARY PROTECTIVE SERVICE

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, every day, the officers of the parliamentary protective service ensure the safety of members and visitors with a smile, while being impartial and very professional.

It can sometimes be difficult to be impartial on Parliament Hill, when one's superiors report to the RCMP and the Minister of Public Safety.

The NDP is proud to support the demands of PPS members. These officers deserve the respect of the House and this government in their work and in their negotiations.

I also encourage the government to amend the Parliament of Canada Act in order for the protective service to regain its

independence in decision-making. This is a matter of principle and respect for the separation of powers in our democracy.

To the PPS officers, you have all our respect and we thank you for being here for us.

* * *

[*English*]

BARRHAVEN FOOD CUPBOARD

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the hard work of the Barrhaven Food Cupboard, which has been an important community group in my riding of Nepean for almost 50 years. This vital service is available because of the continued efforts of the Barrhaven United Church and the hard work of volunteers like David Rattray, David Sereda, and their team. I would like to thank them for all their hard work.

Since 2009, there has been a 150% increase in the number of families who use the Food Cupboard every month. This increasing demand for its support has outgrown its current space, and today the Food Cupboard volunteers are working hard on plans to build their own facility in Barrhaven. I call on the government to make the construction of food banks and other similar organizations eligible to apply for the infrastructure investments we are making.

* * *

●(1105)

BRITISH HOME CHILDREN

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, from the 1860s to 1948, over 100,000 children immigrated to Canada from the United Kingdom, all believed to be orphans. During World War 1, many British home children enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force; 146 died fighting at Passchendaele and 46 died on day one at Vimy Ridge. In total, 689 died in the battles of Vimy Ridge, Hill 70, and Passchendaele; 218 of their names are on the Vimy Memorial, and 122 are on the Menin Gate Memorial.

Victoria Cross recipient Claude Nunney was a British home child, as was Don Cherry's grandfather, Richard Palamountain. Today, two are still alive, 93-year-old George Bradshaw and 92-year-old John Vallance, both of whom served in the Canadian army. It is important to recognize and highlight the service of these children to Canada.

I want to thank Simcoe County residents Lori Oschefski and Steve Glover for the work they have done on behalf of British home children.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TOURISM IN LAURENTIDES—LABELLE

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the summer season approaches, I want to emphasize the importance of tourism in the Laurentian region.

The millions of tourists and vacationers who visit our region create jobs for thousands of people who can then work close to home, from Sainte-Anne-des-Lacs to Sainte-Anne-du-Lac, and from Notre-Dame-du-Laus to Estérel.

With its thousands of lakes and rivers, my region is the ideal playground for the tourism industry. It is crucial that we all work together to preserve this major asset. That is why I applaud the dedication of all those contributing to the protection of our lakes and watersheds, such as the members of the Coalition for Responsible and Sustainable Navigation and many other organizations working to protect our waters. With Eurasian watermilfoil currently in dozens of our lakes, there is no time to lose.

With awareness and prevention measures, we can preserve our lakes and rivers so that they may be enjoyed by future generations and everyone who wants to come and visit the beautiful Laurentian region.

* * *

[English]

BROOKLIN SPRING FAIR

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this weekend, Whitby will be hosting the Brooklin Spring Fair. Our community will welcome more than 30,000 visitors. I look forward to families participating in the parade, at the midway, and in learning about agriculture in our community.

I wish to thank the board of directors and volunteers for their hard work and dedication to the success of this fair. Each year they strive to make this a cannot-miss-event in Whitby. We certainly know how to end Tourism Week with a bang.

Today, third grade students will be enjoying education day. Families can explore farming in the 21st century at Agri-Land. New for 2017, the young and young at heart can enjoy the vintage car and truck show.

I look forward to seeing everyone along the parade route tomorrow, especially my Brooklin moms, as it is GBA+ Awareness Week. I am also excited to defend my title as a blue ribbon, award-winning pie-eating champion tomorrow at 1:45.

I hope to see everyone at the fair.

* * *

[Translation]

COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES POSITION

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on May 15, the lamest show on earth rolled into town starring a Liberal government scrambling to defend its deeply partisan choice to put Madeleine Meilleur in the official languages commissioner seat.

Such a high-ranking appointment must be the outcome of an apolitical, honest, rigorous, and transparent process without a hint of preferential treatment, which is certainly not the case with Madeleine Meilleur.

Statements by Members

It is unacceptable for the government to continue misleading members of Parliament even in the face of mounting evidence about this partisan appointment.

It is so sad to see my colleagues opposite held hostage by their Minister of Canadian Heritage, who made a very bad decision that she is still trying to justify even though it is an insult to everyone who has ever been appointed to a high-ranking position in Canada.

We call on the minister to start showing some respect for the House, do the right thing, and remove Madeleine Meilleur from the process.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak about our government's commitment to affordable housing. Last week we announced over \$7 million in funding for transitional housing for survivors of domestic violence, for new seniors' units, and for renovations to existing units in Prince Edward Island. This is part of our ongoing commitment to affordable housing, building on our historic investment in budget 2017.

There is no doubt that we can and must do more. Sadly, a lack of affordable housing is not limited to major centres. I frequently see constituents in my office pleading for help in finding a safe, secure, and affordable place to live. It is a heartbreaking, hopeless conversation.

We know that one of the first steps in breaking the cycle of poverty is ensuring that our most vulnerable have a roof over their heads. One day we will be judged on how we treat those less fortunate. I believe this to be particularly true for those in leadership positions, which is why I am proud to be part of a government that is addressing this urgent need in Canada.

* * *

● (1110)

[Translation]

VERDUN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. David Lametti (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week I was honoured to visit the grade 2 and grade 4 classes at Verdun Elementary School. Mr. Angelo's students put on a parliamentary simulation showing their knowledge of our duties as members of government.

[English]

The mock parliament started with students singing *O Canada*, followed by an introduction by you, Mr. Speaker. Ministers and members of both sides of the House, as well as past members and famous Canadians, then rose to introduce themselves and share personal anecdotes. I was right at home, seated behind the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development.

Statements by Members

These budding parliamentarians recognize the significance of Remembrance Day and of Earth Day, and suggested that Winnie the Pooh be Canada's first official bear. They also ensured that I did not leave empty-handed, by giving me Flat Stanley as a travelling companion.

I want to salute the efforts of these engaged teachers at Verdun Elementary School. I am convinced that they are forming future citizens and parliamentarians. They have my full support.

* * *

MP FOR CALGARY FOREST LAWN

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 20 years ago, in the former riding of Calgary East, a man we affectionately know just by his first name was elected to this House. With his trademark quips like “our position has not changed”, or “wake up and smell the thing”, the member for Calgary Forest Lawn has become a cherished parliamentary institution. I am pleased to call him my friend.

He has been a tireless advocate of Canadian interests, not just here in Canada but throughout the world. As the former parliamentary secretary to the minister of foreign affairs, he clocked more miles, more air miles, than any other member, promoting our country with pride and championing international human rights. In fact, former minister John Baird even named him Canada's first intergalactic ambassador, on Twitter.

Born in Tanzania, he has proven that anything is possible in Canada, regardless of one's origins. He is, most importantly, a devoted husband to his wife Neena, a loving father, and grandfather to Davin and Evasha. From his trademark scars to his extensive knowledge of world affairs, I am sure all members will agree with me that the member for Calgary Forest Lawn is the complete “Deepakage”.

* * *

BRAIN TUMOUR AWARENESS MONTH

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last month was Brain Tumour Awareness Month.

[*Translation*]

Every day, 27 Canadians are diagnosed with a brain tumour. Brain tumours can attack the part of the brain that controls thought, emotions, or movement, and can drastically reduce people's physical and cognitive abilities as well as their quality of life. Tumours do not discriminate; they affect people of all ages and backgrounds.

[*English*]

Far too many of our citizens have had their lives changed dramatically by a brain tumour. I want to say a big thanks to the dedicated volunteers like Sharon McCutcheon and Joline LeBlanc of the Moncton brain tumour support group, who have worked so hard to improve the lives of Canadians living with brain tumours in our region.

Because May is over, it does not mean that we cannot make it our year-round effort to make sure we do all the education.

[*Translation*]

Let us continue to raise awareness about brain tumours.

* * *

MCMASTERVILLE

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Today, I have the great honour to rise in the House to recognize the 100th anniversary of the town of McMasterville. This lovely town in my riding is one hundred years old.

In 1917, the town was established to house the workers of Canadian Explosives Limited and was named after William McMaster, the company's first president. Located at the entrance to the Richelieu valley, McMasterville has a view of the river and the mountain. Over the years, the town has been well managed and has developed a strong sense of community; young families that live there enjoy a high quality of life.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the efforts of Gilles Plante, who has been mayor since 1993. He has ensured the viability of the town and this year has organized the 100th anniversary celebrations.

Happy 100th anniversary to the residents of McMasterville.

* * *

● (1115)

[*English*]**MP FOR BATTLEFORDS—LLOYDMINSTER**

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker,

Come and listen to a story 'bout a cracker named Ritz.
Who (first) won his SK riding in a '97 blitz.
Riled about the Crow Rate and the guns the Libs were banning,
He hitched his wagon to Reform, led by Preston Manning.

A builder and a farmer, with a deadly quick wit:
The member for Malpeque knows – he's felt the brunt of it.
One (of) his proudest wins when he was Ag Minister
(Was) blowing up the Wheat Board; Liberals brayed, “Sinister!”

The member from North Battleford has a lot of passions,
Chevys, guns and rifles (and) dressing in the best fashion,
Grandkids, fishing, golf and boots, and, – of course, Judy ...
Harleys, single malts, but always first is duty.

Rosetown's favourite son has earned all of our respect
Thanks to him food exports (are) more than any could expect
CETA, cold cuts, killing CAIS, and staff who got his pranks
For 20 years of service, (this) wisecracker has our thanks.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

SUMMER CELEBRATIONS

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just before summer recess last year, I invited my colleagues from all parties to the Quebec City summer festival, which is happening again this year. The festival is celebrating its 50th year from July 6 to 16 with a huge lineup, including Flume, Kendrick Lamar, Lady Antebellum, Pink, Gorillaz, the Backstreet Boys, Bernard Adamus, and others.

Mr. Speaker, last year, I forgot about you, but this year I want to invite you to the 2017 Rendez-vous naval, which is taking place in Quebec City from July 18 to 23. Forty magnificent tall ships, the giants of the sea, and their 3,000 crew members will gather in Quebec City.

[English]

What is more, Mr. Speaker, you can even become a trainee on one of the tall ships. In your case, I would recommend boarding the *Impossible Dream* from the U.S., kind of like getting order in this House from that side.

Speaking of that side, if the new leader of the Conservative Party wants to take a lesson in leadership, I would recommend that he board the ship *Rona II*, because he does have big shoes to fill.

As for the NDP contenders, I would recommend boarding the *When and If* from the U.S.

[Translation]

As for my Liberal colleagues, it goes without saying that I recommend the *Jolie Brise*, a majestic 24-metre ship built in 1913, because nothing goes better with sunny ways than a nice breeze.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Madeleine Meilleur's appointment as languages commissioner symbolizes everything that is wrong with the Prime Minister's approach, but he cannot seem to see the problem, so I will make it simple.

Meilleur is a former Liberal cabinet minister and donor with deep connections to the offices of both the Prime Minister and the heritage minister. This makes it impossible for her to objectively investigate either.

How can the Prime Minister not see that this appointment is deeply flawed?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our two official languages are at the heart of who we are as Canadians, and it is a priority for our government.

The experience, expertise, and integrity of Ms. Meilleur has been recognized by many, both in this House and in the official languages community across Canada.

Yesterday, the francophone community called on this House to end the political games and support this nomination. Ms. Meilleur will fulfill her duties with all the experience and impartiality required for this important position.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Actually, Mr. Speaker, the only people who seem okay with this absurd level of patronage are fellow Liberals. That is because the Prime Minister is wasting no time in rewarding his Liberal friends.

Generous Liberal donations from the new president of ACOA and the languages commissioner show exactly what qualifications the Prime Minister is looking for.

Why can he not simply be honest with Canadians about his appointment process and advertise that it is only Liberals who need to apply?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ACOA is dedicated to helping Atlantic Canada realize its full economic potential in terms of innovation, growth, productivity and competitiveness.

Our government would like to thank the former president, Paul LeBlanc, for his years of service to ACOA and the Atlantic Region.

The newly appointed president, Francis McGuire, is a known and respected individual in the Atlantic region, and he has extensive experience working in both the private and public sectors.

● (1120)

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, and he has donated over \$30,000 to the Liberal Party over the last 10 years. He forgot to mention that.

Yesterday, the Liberal House leader said that Canadians who want to be the next Ethics Commissioner can apply on a government website, but that was false. The posting for the Ethics Commissioner is nowhere to be found on the website.

The House leader is famous for avoiding questions and giving non-answers, but now she just seems to be making things up. Can the Prime Minister guarantee that when the Ethics Commissioner's job finally is posted that there will not be a Liberal Party donation link right beside it?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member very well knows, we have put in place a new open, transparent, merit-based appointment process, and any positions that are available are posted online so that Canadians can apply for those positions.

We are looking for a high—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I realize it is Friday and everybody is excited to get home for the weekend. The excitement is oozing in, but I am trying to hear the answer and I am having a hard time over the heckling. I would ask all the members to show some respect.

The hon. government House leader.

Oral Questions

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Mr. Speaker, this process is looking to identify high-quality candidates who will help to achieve gender parity and truly reflect Canada's diversity.

Under this process, we have made over 140 appointments. These are great appointments. We will continue to do the good work that Canadians expect us to do.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, another week ends under the pall of Liberal arrogance. It is a complete disgrace that the Minister of Canadian Heritage refuses to backtrack following her terrible decision to appoint Madeleine Meilleur as official languages commissioner, not because she lacks the skills, but rather for reasons that give a whole new meaning to the word partisanship.

When will the minister realize that Ms. Meilleur has already lost all credibility to fill the position before she has even begun, and that it is high time that the appointment process became transparent and apolitical?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the member for her question and for her work on the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

As the member knows, we promised to find the best person to be the official languages commissioner, and that is exactly what we did. Ms. Meilleur's skills, experience, and integrity have been recognized by members on all sides of the House. We are confident that Ms. Meilleur will carry out her duties with all the experience and impartiality this important position requires.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Canadian Heritage has misled the House day after day and has not even bothered to apologize. It is shockingly easy to talk out of both sides of one's mouth and to avoid the issue.

We are simply asking that the appointment of Ms. Meilleur to the position of official languages commissioner be rescinded and that a new transparent, fair, and non-partisan process be conducted.

Knowing full well that the opposition parties do not approve of this appointment at all, when will the minister do what is right and start over?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I already said, our two official languages are a priority for our government. Ms. Meilleur is a lawyer who has devoted a good part of her career to protecting our official languages and the vitality of our linguistic communities. She will be an important watchdog and ensure compliance with the Official Languages Act. We are confident that she will carry out her duties with all the experience and impartiality required.

* * *

[*English*]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' softwood lumber aid package comes after thousands of Canadians have already lost their jobs. The Liberals were so confident they

would get a deal done with Obama, that they walked away from the negotiating table and now with Trump in office, there is no deal in sight. Meanwhile, billions of dollars will flow out of Canadian communities and into U.S. coffers. Our forestry workers are the ones who are paying the price.

When will the Liberals get back to the negotiating table and secure a long-term solution to the softwood lumber crisis?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was the previous Conservative government that allowed the softwood lumber agreement to expire—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1125)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order. I will let the hon. minister continue.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, we strongly disagree with the U.S. Department of Commerce's decision to impose unfair and punitive duties. We are going to fight those duties in the courts and we are going to win because we always do. We are at the negotiating table. I met twice this week with Secretary Ross, but I want to remind all hon. members that we are going to get a good deal for Canada, not just any deal.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the government finally announced a plan to help the softwood lumber industry, which is going through a very rough patch that is only going to get worse with time.

The Kénogami and Dolbeau supercalendered paper mills are also in grave danger. Hundreds of jobs are in jeopardy, and if nothing is done, thousands of jobs will be lost all across the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean.

Can the Minister of International Trade tell us if the Kénogami and Dolbeau mills will be eligible for the measures in the plan announced yesterday?

[*English*]

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's forest industry sustains hundreds of thousands of good middle-class jobs across our country. Our government continues to fight vigorously to defend the interests of the Canadian lumber industry, including through litigation. We are taking immediate action to help Canadians who are affected by these unfair and punitive duties.

Our announcement yesterday includes investments to diversify forest products and markets, support for affected workers and financial products, and services at commercial terms. These measures will defend Canadian interests and promote the long-term health and transformation of the industry.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the NDP tried to tease out more information about the appointment of Ms. Meilleur, a former Liberal minister, to the non-partisan official languages commissioner position. The Liberals say they have nothing to hide, but they prevented the committee from looking into it.

Let us not forget that Gerry Butts, who spoke to Madeleine Meilleur before she was appointed, answers to the Prime Minister.

If the Liberal government truly had nothing to do with preventing the committee from investigating this, will it tell Gerry Butts to appear before the committee voluntarily?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Commissioner of Official Languages is an important position, and we are committed to finding the best possible candidate for the position.

To respond to my colleague's allegations, I want to make it clear that at no time was the official languages commissioner job discussed. There is a process in place, and it was followed.

[English]

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals say they are so proud of the nomination, yet they cannot explain why Madeleine Meilleur testified that she had special access to the Prime Minister's closest advisers. Yesterday the Liberals blocked an investigation into the entire appointment process. If they are proud of this appointment, why are they preventing us from understanding exactly how Madame Meilleur was selected? If the Liberals are so proud of this appointment, why do they keep acting like they have something to hide?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows well, committees of the House are independent and are masters of their own affairs. Our government believes in the importance of the office of the official languages commissioner and in the protection and promotion of our two official languages. After a rigorous, open, and merit-based process, which included 72 candidates, a selection committee, multiple rounds of interviews, and testing, Madame Meilleur clearly emerged as the most qualified candidate for this important position.

As for the allegations of the member opposite, I would like to clarify that at no time was the position of official languages commissioner discussed. There was a rigorous process in place and it was followed.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all week opposition members have been asking the heritage minister to explain the inappropriate appointment of Ms. Meilleur as the Commissioner of Official Languages. We have read that testimony from committees, requested a list of the final 10 candidates, proven incestuous ties to Liberal fundraising campaigns, and clarified shared staff between the minister and Ms. Meilleur.

When will the minister stand up and start taking this question seriously, stop reciting the Liberal-appointed commissioner's resumé, and admit that this appointment is nothing but Liberal patronage?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our two official languages are at the heart of who we are as Canadians and are a priority for our government. The experience, expertise, and integrity of Ms. Meilleur has been recognized by many, both in the House and in official languages communities across Canada. For 30 years, she has worked tirelessly to promote official language rights and services, including the protection of the Montfort Hospital to ensure access to health care in both official languages in Ottawa. Ms. Meilleur will fulfill her duties with all the experience and impartiality required for this important position.

● (1130)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is a shameful response. The Liberals are not answering our questions.

They say that they are holding open and transparent appointment processes, but then they always seem to end up hiring a candidate with a Liberal history. People can apply online, but only Liberal donors get a FastPass.

Since the Liberals have been in office, sunny ways have become streets paved in gold for Liberal friends. Will the Liberals stop rolling out the red carpet for partisan appointees, rescind Ms. Meilleur's appointment, and finally show some respect for the House of Commons?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, we committed to finding the best person for the job of official languages commissioner, and that is what we did. After a rigorous, open, and merit-based process, which included 72 candidates, a selection committee, multiple rounds of interviews, and testing, Ms. Meilleur clearly showed that she had the experience, skill, and impartiality required.

In addition to the letters that the Prime Minister sent to the party leaders in the House and the Senate, we also consulted the opposition critics for official languages. It will be—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton.

[English]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the heritage minister does not seem to understand that the official languages commissioner must be non-partisan in order to execute her role with impartiality. Madam Meilleur was a Liberal cabinet minister up until a year ago. She has donated to the Liberal Party and the Prime Minister's own leadership campaign. She even said she met with the Prime Minister's closest advisers about her appointment, which the heritage minister denies.

The minister claims one thing while Madame Meilleur says the opposite. There is a clear contradiction. Someone is not telling the truth. Who?

Oral Questions

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to finding the most qualified candidates for each position. We also believe that taking part in public life should not exclude anyone from serving Canadians in a new capacity. Once again, it is the qualifications that matter. In fact, we appointed Kim Campbell to lead the Supreme Court of Canada advisory board. Like Kim Campbell, we firmly believe that Madeleine Meilleur will be able to serve Canadians with all of the accountability, impartiality, and rigour required.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I would like to remind hon. members to have a little better control on their inner voices.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the puzzle is starting to show that there was no coincidence in anointing Madeleine Meilleur as the official languages commissioner. The pieces show that Madeleine Meilleur went down a familiar path known to many Liberals. If they want some patronage, they talk directly to the Prime Minister's friends.

We know that at least two members of the heritage minister's staff used to work for Madeleine Meilleur when she was a Liberal minister. We also know that someone from the minister's office was part of the selection committee. Who was it?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after a long, open process based on merit, Ms. Meilleur clearly demonstrated that she will fulfill her duties with all of the experience and impartiality required.

As already mentioned, we take the appointment process for the Commissioner of Official Languages very seriously. A selection committee composed of a majority of public servants gave the minister a short list of recommendations, which informed the final nomination. All measures required were taken to ensure that these employees be excluded from the appointment process.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): JMr. Speaker, he should just stop it, really.

Reading the same lines over and over in the House does not make it any better. This is a complete and utter train wreck, and like a train wreck, this is not going to end very well. How can the minister say that her staff was not in conflict with the Meilleur nomination? They used to work with her at Queen's Park. I am asking the minister to show proof of this so-called firewall that she says exists.

Will the minister commit right now to tabling the conflict of interest documents signed by her staff?

• (1135)

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Actually, Mr. Speaker, those were not the same lines, but these are.

There was a long, open process based on merit, and Ms. Meilleur clearly demonstrated that she will fulfill the duties with all of the experience and impartiality required. A selection committee composed of a majority of public servants gave the minister a short list of recommendations, which informed the final nomination. All measures required were taken to ensure that these employees be excluded from the appointment process.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is just embarrassing to listen to this parliamentary secretary repeat the same sophomoric drivel over and over again.

The Ethics Commissioner is investigating the Prime Minister. The Lobbying Commissioner is investigating cash-for-access fundraising. The Liberals made a shambles of watchdog appointments when they botched the official languages commissioner appointment through obvious patronage.

Will the Prime Minister agree, and guarantee, that as they search for an Ethics Commissioner, the Liberals will not simply recruit another Liberal insider?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said time and time again, we have put in a new process, an open, transparent, merit-based process, to ensure—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

An hon. member: What happened?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): What happened is that there was screaming going on, and I thought I would calm things down.

The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Mr. Speaker, we have put in a new, open, transparent, merit-based process to ensure that Canadians can apply. All available positions are posted online. When it comes to the work that the Ethics Commissioner is doing, that the Lobbying Commissioner is doing, and so forth, we value their work and we know that they do their work well. We will let them continue to do their work. Any information that we can provide, we will continue to do so, as has been said.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, they say the devil is in the details. Well, as it turns out, Bill C-50, which is supposed to put restrictions on fundraising activities, leaves the Liberals' Laurier Club untouched.

Well-to-do individuals who want to donate more than \$1,500 will still be granted privileged access to ministers and the Prime Minister. In essence, this measure is about as hard-hitting as what they did with electoral reform.

Why is the Prime Minister refusing to put a stop to this power brokering?

Oral Questions

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of introducing Bill C-50 on Wednesday. It will bring a new level of openness and transparency to political fundraising events. Canadians will know where and when events took place, who attended, and whether the Prime Minister, a member of cabinet, a party leader, or a party leadership candidate was there. This is a first for Canada, and I am looking forward to debating this in the House.

[English]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on the very day that 180 Liberals broke their promise to Canadians to make every vote count, they chose that day to promise to fix the cash-for-access mess. Who created this mess in the first place? It was the Liberals.

Bill C-50 has a Liberal loophole so big we could drive a limo through it. Wealthy Liberal Laurier club donors can drop their cash at a Liberal convention and the bill does not apply. That is good news for the wealthy and the well connected.

Where did the Liberals summon the political courage for such breathtaking cynicism?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this legislation, for the first time, is going to let Canadians know when, where, and who attended fundraisers. This will take place during appreciation events and fundraisers that have a cost of over \$200, where a party leader, leadership contestant, cabinet minister, or Prime Minister is present. This legislation is important. It is creating more openness and more transparency.

We know that all parties in this place require money to operate, and that is an important form of democratic expression.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister stated that the infrastructure bank would be arm's length from government, but the legislation clearly states that the Minister of Finance and cabinet approves and guarantees the loans, appoints the board of directors, and approves the CEO. They can fire these people at any time without cause.

As well, they used BlackRock executives to develop the legislation, so not only is there a blatant conflict of interest. There is potential for significant interference.

Could the minister tell the House exactly what he meant by arm's length?

• (1140)

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pretty sure the hon. member, who served on city council as mayor, would like to join me in welcoming the Federation of Canadian Municipalities delegates to Ottawa. These are the people who are helping build sustainable communities in partnership with the federal government.

As far as the member's question is concerned, we have been able to create the right balance between making sure the bank is accountable to Parliament, and at the same time, its being a crown

corporation that makes decisions on its own to build the infrastructure that our communities require.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the BlackRock scandals and the shady relationship with KPMG have made it clear that there are a lot of players literally manipulating the Liberals.

On a related note, parliamentarians got a whole hour and a half in committee to study the infrastructure bank that the Liberals created so they could help their friends with a \$35-billion injection of taxpayer money. The Liberals are trying to shut us up, but we have no intention of letting them do so. We will continue to fight for all taxpayers.

When will the minister have a talk with the Prime Minister about scrapping this scandalous idea?

[English]

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have put forward a very ambitious agenda to build and rebuild Canadian communities, with a tripling of the federal investments, up to \$186 billion. The infrastructure bank is one way to build more infrastructure.

Who is going to benefit from this? It is Canadians and Canadian communities, when they build more housing, build more public transit, and build more recreational and cultural facilities. It is not the cronies who are going to benefit from this bank. It is Canadians who are going to benefit from this bank.

I understand the hon. member is not—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, currently, governments force infrastructure builders to cover cost overruns through fixed-price contracts and to buy bankruptcy insurance to protect taxpayers in the event the contractor goes under. The infrastructure bank would instead put all of these losses on the shoulders of taxpayers through loan guarantees. Why are the Liberals giving all of the profits to crony capitalists and all the losses to Canadian taxpayers?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, is the hon. member calling the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, the teachers' fund, OMERS, the Caisse de dépôt, the Alberta Investment Management Corporation cronies? They are the ones who will partner with our government to build the infrastructure that our communities need. They are the ones who have been helping build infrastructure in other countries, so what is wrong with the people who manage our pensioners' funds investing in our own communities, to create jobs for the middle class, help grow our economy, and create opportunity—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Carleton.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the top public servant responsible for the infrastructure bank said it is designed for “underwriting sophisticated, highly complex projects”. The word “underwriting” comes from the 17th century London insurers who would literally write their names under a list of cargo on shipping vessels. If the ship sank, so did the underwriter's money. Why is the government forcing Joe Taxpayer to write his name under billions of dollars of losses?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the bank is one very important tool to create economic growth across Canada, to create jobs and grow the economy. Let me share with the hon. member what the International Monetary Fund has to say about the infrastructure bank. It says, “Infrastructure investment is a cornerstone of the government’s growth strategy and the proposed Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB) will be an effective instrument in achieving this goal.” This comes from a reputable international organization that monitors our government’s finances.

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MARIJUANA

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have made a real mess of their plan to legalize marijuana. First, they left the provinces and the justice system in a state of utter confusion. Then they refused to decriminalize, which led to the thousands of arrests under their watch. Next, they sent mixed messages on pardons, which could have terrible consequences for young people, and now, they are risking violating a major UN treaty because they cannot get their act together. Cheech and Chong could have managed this file better.

Why have the Liberals bungled this file so badly? They know it is not legal yet, right?

• (1145)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is taking a regulatory approach to better protect the health and safety of Canadians. That is our priority. We are currently examining a range of issues including our international commitments. As the member opposite should know, eight American states have already decided to legalize recreational cannabis. We are committed to working with our global partners to best promote public health and combat illicit drug trafficking.

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LABOUR

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, public safety should be a top priority for any government and the safety and security of Parliament Hill is of importance to us all. Currently, there is a labour dispute involving our protective services where the employer is refusing to negotiate. Will the minister address this issue and what it means for public safety?

Specifically, will the minister consider modifying the Parliament of Canada Act so that the independence of our protective services is enshrined in law?

Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure this is a matter before the House. The

question was ruled out of order yesterday, but I will say that every single day that I walk through those doors, every single day that I have walked through those doors since 2004, the men and women who serve this place do us an incredible honour and I want to rise and thank them for the contributions that they make.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I believe this item was ruled on yesterday by the Speaker who was sitting in the chair.

We will continue.

The hon. member for Northwest Territories.

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada 150 is an opportunity to engage Canadians in our communities from coast to coast to coast. It provides us with an opportunity to think about the past, reflect on all we have accomplished so far, and look toward the future with optimism. We know that many crown corporations and government agencies are joining us in the celebration. Will the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance please share how the Bank of Canada is participating?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are proud to support the Bank of Canada as it introduces the Canada 150 banknote. The commemorative note, which went into circulation yesterday, will mark the first time that a Canadian woman and indigenous Canadian are depicted as the portrait subjects on a banknote of Canada. As we celebrate Canada 150, we are reminded of what makes us who we are. We are strong because of our diversity, not in spite of it.

I thank Governor Poloz and the Bank of Canada for their contributions to this truly national celebration and encourage all Canadians to keep an eye out for the new note.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, energy is a very vital sector for the Canadian economy. It provides jobs from coast to coast to coast. As a matter of fact, it puts food on the tables of all Canadians. We are now having forces come up that are going to obstruct this energy sector, put roadblocks to the energy sector. What can the Liberals tell us and what promise from the Prime Minister can we rely on to ensure he stands up for the jobs in Canada?

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister said:

The decision we took on the Trans Mountain pipeline was based on facts [and] evidence, on what is in the best interest of Canadians....

Regardless of a change in government, in British Columbia or anywhere, the facts and evidence do not change.... We understand that growing a strong economy for the future requires taking leadership on the environment.

We have to do those two things together. That is what drives us in the choices we make, and we stand by those choices....

Oral Questions

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is evidence and facts also of a litany of broken promises by the Liberal government.

This is about jobs. Let me repeat that very clearly. This is about jobs. This is about putting food on the table. It is very important that the Liberal government go to British Columbia and tell the people there how much they have benefited from the energy sector. Only then will they know that they are part of this country and the energy sector has benefited them.

Will the Liberals tell them? Can we rely on the Liberals, or will this be another broken promise where they will not stand up for jobs for Canadians?

• (1150)

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we would not have approved these projects if they were not in the national interest and did not have the support of Canadians.

We have said many times that the choice between climate action and pipeline approval is a false one. We are committed to an approach that does both. We recognize that there is a diversity of opinion with respect to major energy projects and we will continue to work with all parties and provinces. Our goal right now is to make sure that projects move forward in order to build a stronger future and good-paying, middle-class jobs for Canada.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since the U.S. withdrew, high-level TPP discussions have continued in Chile, here in Canada, Vietnam, and will happen next in July in Japan.

The message coming out of these meetings is always positive. The remaining countries will continue to work to bring the TPP into force by the end of this calendar year. Silence from Canada though. Japan and New Zealand have already ratified and Australia and Mexico are not very far behind. Japan has also said we will not get a better deal in the bilateral agreement than we have in the TPP.

When will our trade minister join our allies to bring a TPP into force here in Canada?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my approach is to be on the road promoting Canada. As the member well knows, I was in Vietnam. I was also in Korea, Singapore, and Japan just last week.

What we said in Vietnam, and my colleague knows this well, is that countries have recommitted to making sure that we have open, fair, and balanced trade in the Asia-Pacific region. Principled trade is what people want. We have committed to taking action, so we are going to have the next meeting of officials in Japan. We remain with a set of options, because that is what Canadians expect.

I can reassure all Canadians who are watching at home this morning that Canada will be at the table when it comes to trade—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Battlefords—Lloydminster.

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful that the minister is getting his passport stamped, but we are here to see results.

During the final TPP negotiations we had the CETA agreement signed in principle and used it to obtain better outcomes for Canada in the TPP. We must now do the same with the TPP and use it with Mexico as leverage in the upcoming NAFTA renegotiations.

Why will the new trade minister not do the right thing and ensure that Canada enters NAFTA negotiations from a position of strength by ratifying the TPP?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague knows that Canada is taking a leadership role. We owe it to Canadian families and Canadian workers, and some may be watching us this morning. When it comes to trade, Canada is taking a progressive approach, an inclusive approach.

Canada stands up in a world where there is uncertainty and instability. We are the beacon of stability, predictability, and rule of law. Our progressive trade agenda is making a difference not only at home for our workers but around the world.

* * *

[Translation]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals refused to support my bill, claiming that the Minister of Transport already has the power to guarantee the creation of safe railway crossings, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Minister of Transport cannot defend only the interests of rail companies. He has a duty to protect the safety of Canadians.

When will he take action? Would he rather wait until there is an accident?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

As mandated by the Prime Minister, we are improving rail safety. That is our top priority. We remain committed to reducing the number of accidents and incidents on the Canadian rail network and at federally regulated crossings.

Oral Questions

There are new technologies that have proven to be effective. We are investing more than \$55 million across the country through the new rail safety improvement program.

* * *

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, their names are Chantel Fox and Jolynn Winter. They were only 12 years old, and they were loved. The Human Rights Tribunal found the government culpable in their deaths because the Minister of Health refused the plea for emergency mental health services in what the tribunal ruled was a “life and death situation”. That negligence led to their deaths and 24 other children being put into emergency care. They died while the justice minister was spending \$707,000 fighting the tribunal. Why are lawyer fees more important to the government than the lives of first nation children?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government remains fully committed to ensuring that first nations children and families have access to the services and the supports they need. To this day, more than 4,900 requests have been approved under the child-first initiative.

With respect to the tribunal's decision, we are reviewing the decision in those areas where the CHRT has determined that full compliance has not been reached.

We will keep working with our first nations partners, the provinces and territories, to make sure that first nations children have the care and services they need.

* * *

• (1155)

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first let me pay all my respects to my friends from Battlefords—Lloydminster and Calgary Forest Lawn. Today we celebrate the 20th anniversary of their being elected to the House of Commons. I did not know that at that time one could be a candidate at 14 years old. Also, I pay all my respects to the President of the Treasury Board.

[Translation]

This week the parliamentary budget officer—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It is pretty bad when your own side is heckling you.

I would just like to calm everything down, as I would like to hear the question from the hon. member.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary budget officer released a report this week, which, once again, is devastating to the government. Even worse, the PBO

again indicated that he is finding it difficult to obtain the important information that he needs to do his job.

Why is the government hindering the parliamentary budget officer's work?

[English]

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a great respect for the work that the parliamentary budget officer does on an ongoing basis. We work closely with the parliamentary budget officer, and we will continue to do so.

It is notable that in terms of his work with the Department of Finance, he was provided with the information requested. That happened for the budget decisions and the budget decision-making process that occurred under our government's mandate. We provided that information. Finance did provide that information to the parliamentary budget officer.

I appreciate the congratulations from the hon. member as part of the class of—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, those were the good old days. The hon. member was on the right side of the podium.

[Translation]

With all due respect for the President of the Treasury Board, what he said is not exactly what the parliamentary budget officer said. He once again indicated that he has difficulty obtaining information. It is not surprising given the example set at the top. When this government spends recklessly, it is clear that all levels of the federal administration will deem that if the Prime Minister does not keep his word about expenses, there is no reason to stay within budget.

Will the government clearly spell out for the public service that we must live within our means in Canada?

[English]

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I first want to respectfully correct the hon. member. He said that I had been a Conservative. In fact, I had been a Progressive Conservative. Since that party dropped the “progressive” moniker, both in name and reality, I chose to join a party that I am very proud of, the Liberal Party, which continues to give me the opportunity to serve and work on behalf of all Canadians, even the hon. member.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every day accused criminals are being set free due to court delays. A father accused of breaking his infant's ankles was set free. A man accused of shooting an Ottawa area man twice in the head was set free.

The Minister of Justice said that she is proud of her record. How can the minister possibly be proud of her record of negligence in failing to fill judicial vacancies, which has resulted in accused criminals like these being set free?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am certainly very proud of the 67 substantive judicial appointments that I have made to the superior courts across the country. We are going to continue to work within our open and transparent process. I look forward to introducing more judges in the very near future.

With respect to court delays, I take these issues very seriously. That is why I am working with my counterparts in the provinces and territories. We have identified priority areas where we are going to collaboratively address the court delays that exist in the country.

* * *

● (1200)

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know the importance of clean water and waste-water treatment to building healthy and sustainable communities. This is fundamental to the well-being of Canadian communities, and after years of underinvestment, these systems need significant investments. Can the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities update this House on the investments that the government is making in clean water and waste-water systems across Canada?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government knows how important our water and waste-water systems are to the health and well-being of Canadians. That is why we introduced a \$2 billion clean water and wastewater fund. Last week, we announced 730 water projects across Ontario, with a combined investment of \$1 billion, including in the member's own riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. We have announced more projects in one year than the previous government did in four years combined.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the Government of Canada provides \$25,000 to the Legion for a new floor, the Legion is required to publicly account for every penny. When it sends billions of dollars in transfers to first nations, the community members who are supposed to benefit the most are too often left in the dark. The minister said that she cares about transparency. It has been 18 months now, and the Liberals have done nothing. When will they provide basic information to band members that every other Canadian has and deserves?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for everyone, including first nations, the government supports transparency and accountability. Since last summer, we have been working with indigenous organizations, including the AFN and the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association, on ways to enhance mutual accountability. The government is also reaching out to community members and leadership through a comprehensive online engagement, and is planning in-person sessions across the country over the coming months. We will continue to work in full partnership with first nations to improve mutual accountability and transparency.

[Translation]

SCIENCE

Mrs. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is Gender-based Analysis Plus Awareness Week. I am proud to be a member of this feminist government with a feminist Prime Minister who is committed to gender equality.

Recently, the Minister of Science announced new measures to improve gender equality in the Canada research chairs program.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary for Science tell the House how increasing the participation of women in academia will help make Canada a better and more prosperous country?

[English]

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary for Science, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government understands that by increasing diversity, we bring different experiences and ideas to the table to advance Canadian science, grow our economy, and create the good well-paying jobs of the future. We reinstated the university and college academic staff system survey, and strengthened equity provisions in both the Canada research chairs and the Canada excellence research chairs programs. As a scientist, the minister has spent 25 years fighting for women in science, and she and I will continue to do so.

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals were warned by pork producers that weakening the biosecurity measures would spread the PED virus and put the livelihood of farmers at risk. It turns out that due to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food's lack of action, there has now been another confirmed case of PED, the ninth this month. Farmers are sick and tired of the Liberal government's lack of action. When will the current Liberal government stop ignoring this biosecurity risk and work with the Manitoba pork producers to find a solution?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a concern. The health and safety of Canadians is the government's first priority. The CFIA is monitoring the program in place for this product, and if unacceptable levels are detected, the CFIA will take action, including product retention and recall. We are addressing the problem.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I call on the Minister of Justice. Bill C-44 makes it possible to grant private investors in the infrastructure bank the same privileges as the government itself. Simply put, that means that the financial sector will be above Quebec laws and municipal regulations.

The Minister of Finance can say all he wants that this is not his intention, but that is what his bill says. Constitutional experts agree with us, and the Quebec National Assembly is unanimous on the subject. The finance minister is all alone.

I call on the justice minister to act, since she is responsible for ensuring compliance with our laws. Can she intervene and set things straight?

• (1205)

[English]

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the bank has been set over the same legal structure and framework as many other crown corporations. Any project undertaken by the Canada infrastructure bank will be required to follow all provincial, territorial, and municipal laws.

We have committed to invest a historic amount of resources to build Canadian communities and rebuild infrastructure where there is a need. We will do that for every province, while respecting the regulations that are currently in place.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice does not seem to have a voice, and I am wondering whether the Minister of Environment has one.

Quebec has put in place tools such as the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement, or BAPE, to ensure that environmental impacts are taken into account for all development projects. With the infrastructure bank, projects will be able to ignore our environmental protection laws. The government is trying to attract foreign investors by allowing them to circumvent Quebec laws. That is unacceptable, and it does not make any sense.

Will the government change the law so that the infrastructure bank is not an agent of the crown?

[English]

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the bank is one very important tool that is available to our municipalities and provinces to build the infrastructure they need.

As I said earlier, I want to assure the hon. member that the bank would have to abide by all the laws that are in place in provinces, territories, and municipalities.

Our goal is to make sure that our provinces, territories, and municipalities understand that we are here to help them build the infrastructure they need, whether it is housing or recreational facilities or any other amenities they need to build strong, sustainable, and inclusive communities.

[Translation]

Mr. Simon Marcell (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the members across the aisle told us simply not to worry. This is hard to say with a straight face. They said that just because they gave wealthy foreign investors the right to expropriate does not mean they will use it. In Mirabel, we have seen what happens when the federal government uses its power of expropriation. Indeed, 97,000 hectares were seized by a previous Liberal government.

Through Bill C-44, they want to give their bank the right to disregard agricultural zoning and do whatever they want with our lands. Does anyone over there understand that no one is interested in their privatization bank?

[English]

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been in touch with the Province of Quebec to assure it that the role of the bank is not, in any way, to undermine the regulations and laws that are in place in every province, territory, and municipality. We work very closely with all provinces to be sure they are rightly supported to build infrastructure, whether it is housing, public transit, or recreational and cultural facilities, or building shelters for women fleeing from domestic violence, or seniors care facilities, or helping to welcome newcomers into our communities, all multicultural communities, or any other support that they need. We are here to stand with them while respecting the laws that we have.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, after yesterday's very disturbing announcement from the rose garden, the surrealistic orchestras striking up on the deck of the *Titanic* as Trump announced that the U.S. would leave the Paris agreement, which it cannot legally do for four years, it opens up a chasm where there will be insufficient action. There was already insufficient action in the commitments that had been made by all governments in order to meet the Paris accord.

I wonder if the Minister of Environment can commit that Canada is prepared to do more, to look at our targets, to look at our developing country partnerships, and to work with subnational levels of government within the United States to keep moving to climate action.

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for her long-time advocacy work on climate change. We are all in this together. We have only one planet. Canada is steadfast in our commitment to the Paris agreement. If the U.S. administration is going to step back, we are going to step up.

I am very happy to announce that next week we will be introducing a motion in the House to support the Paris agreement. I certainly hope that all members will stand to indicate their support for our planet.

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in your ruling regarding the admissibility of a question, you also mentioned that you would take the time to examine the blues and the content of the question.

If I may, I would like to point out that the two key elements of the question from my colleague from London—Fanshawe had to do with, first of all, the reaction of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness with respect to the implications of the issue raised, and second, an amendment to the Parliament of Canada Act, which is a federal jurisdiction.

[*English*]

In closing, I would like to say that perhaps if the parliamentary secretary had listened to the question, he would not have hidden behind a Speaker's decision and stood up with more than words for the brave men and women who protect us.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I would like to thank the hon. member. After the question was asked, we examined it again and discussed it. Indeed, the question was valid. The way it was phrased yesterday was different. However, the content of the question asked today was admissible. I believe the hon. member received a response to his question. I thank him for his point of order.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union respecting its participation at the Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations in New York, February 13-14, 2017, and the 61st session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York, March 17, 2017.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Kildonan—St. Paul, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, entitled “Supplementary Estimates (A) 2017-18: Votes 1a, 10a and L20a under Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development”.

* * *

INDIAN ACT

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.) moved that Bill S-3, An Act to amend the Indian Act

Routine Proceedings

(elimination of sex-based inequities in registration), be read the first time.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

* * *

PETITIONS

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of residents of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, I rise to present two petitions today.

To end the runaround on abandoned vessels, to fix vessel registration and get the costs off taxpayers, to build a coast-wide strategy in co-operation with local governments, to act before vessels spill oil and contaminate our coasts, and to create good, green jobs, I present this petition. I am grateful local government leaders are supporting my Bill C-352 and have been pushing for a decade and a half for solutions to the problem of abandoned vessels.

We all recognize that the \$1 million a year announced this week by the government is deeply inadequate, just a drop in the bucket. We are going to continue to push hard together for a long-term solution to abandoned vessels.

BEE POPULATION

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, because bees are in peril, because they are facing habitat loss and pesticide deaths, because they are vital pollinators and contribute over \$2 billion a year to Canada's agricultural economy, I present to Parliament petitions signed by members of the Nanaimo Beekeepers Club. They gathered these signatures in support of federal action to protect bees on the Day of the Honey Bee.

• (1215)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to present two petitions.

The first is from residents of Kipawa, Quebec, who are very concerned about the Lake Kipawa system. The ecosystem there is threatened by a rare earth project, and petitions continue to come in asking the federal government to work to protect this ecosystem from the proposed Matamec Explorations Inc. mine.

AGRICULTURE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands who are looking to the government to ensure that our aid policies are allowing and encouraging small family farmers in the developing world, the global south, to save seeds.

It is an ancient practice in agriculture for farmers to have the right to save and use seeds in the following season. It is increasingly under threat. The petitioners hope that the Government of Canada, through the work of our international aid agencies, will support family farmers, many of whom, if not most of whom, are women.

Government Orders

FALUN GONG

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have five petitions to table, all dealing with the same issue.

Back in July of 1999, the Chinese Communist Party launched an intensive nationwide persecution campaign to eradicate the Falun Gong. Hundreds of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners have been detained in forced labour camps, brainwashing centres, and prisons, where torture and abuse are routine, and thousands have died as a direct result. There are many other concerns. The petitioners are calling upon Parliament to do what it can in terms of bringing more attention to the issue.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

CANADA CHILD BENEFIT

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Friday last week, the member for Kootenay—Columbia asked a question about the Canada child benefit, and I promised to come back to the House with clarification on a policy. It was a very significant question that requires a very significant response.

The issue had to do with whether women escaping violent domestic situations have to return to their spouses to get permission or a signature in order to receive the Canada child benefit.

In fact, that is an option, but it is only one of five options, and it is certainly not the most recommended. Front-line workers also instruct women that they are entitled to have a social worker, police officer, lawyer, or faith leader to confirm that the mother is, in fact, in charge of the family's children. We do not require women to return to dangerous situations in order to receive that benefit.

The situation had been resolved before the question was asked. I have also made sure that the member opposite has the correct information. I wanted to make sure that members of the House and Canadians who are listening know that we take this issue very seriously. Gender-based analysis was applied to this process to make sure that women are not put in danger to receive the benefits to which they are entitled.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***CANNABIS ACT**

The House resumed from June 1 consideration of the motion that Bill C-45, An Act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code and other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise on this bill, particularly given the fact that the policies that pertain to cannabis have been nothing short of abject failures.

We have, over successive decades, let our young people down. In fact, if we look at the numbers, for the cohort from 15 to 19, there is a 21% prevalence in the use of cannabis. If we go the next cohort up, 20 to 24, it is 30%. It represents the highest level of cannabis use by young people on the planet. In fact, one-third of young people will try cannabis before the age of 15.

I know I have heard many times from members opposite that they are concerned about cannabis being in the hands of young people. The problem is that it is already happening, and it is already happening at higher levels than it is happening anywhere else on the planet. The only way we can categorize being dead last on the planet is as a failure, and certainly to me it speaks to the need to do something differently.

We cannot be ostriches on this. We cannot bury our heads in the sand and pretend the problem does not exist. It is not just our young people who are being let down. We spend \$2 billion to \$3 billion in the enforcement of these failed laws. About \$7 billion or \$8 billion of profit goes to illegal organized crime organizations that fund illicit activities. Having been on the Police Services Board in Durham region, and seeing the impact of grow-ops and the danger our front-line officers are placed in when trying to enforce these disastrously failed policies, I know first-hand just how much this change is needed. It is time to stop play pretend. It is time to stop ignoring this issue and to finally do something about it.

I look at the example of my time at Heart and Stroke, where I was the executive director, and what we did with tobacco. We targeted tobacco, and through a sustained effort of denormalization and public intervention, took prevalence rates among young people of well over 50% to half the level of where cannabis is today. Here is cannabis, an illegal substance, double that of a legal substance.

The example of what we did in tobacco with those campaigns on denormalization offer an excellent path for us to move forward. We know we have two objectives at the front of our minds. Number one is to keep cannabis out of the hands of young people, something we have done an abysmal job of doing to date. It is a total failure. Number two is to dry out the billions of dollars in illicit profit that is flowing to criminal organizations. If those are the two markers we want to go for, the bill takes us a long way in that direction.

Government Orders

I want to thank the task force on cannabis legalization and regulation, headed by the Hon. Anne McLellan, and the incredible work done by experts in public health, justice, policing, public safety and substance abuse, and mental health who came together and were instrumental in creating the bill. It would now make cannabis legal for adults. Thirty grams dried, either for personal use or to be shared, would be legal. Small quantities would be allowed to be grown, so if individuals wanted to grow marijuana, they would be able to do so. They could have four plants no higher than one metre in height per residence.

At the same time as we bring in that regime to legalize it for adults, we would bring in very strict regulations to keep it out of the hands of youth. That is particularly important, because the research shows us that cannabis is most deadly and most concerning for young people and their mental health. We will obviously have to invest in public education campaigns and the type of denormalization efforts we had for tobacco.

On top of that, for the first time, the bill would make it a criminal offence to sell to a minor. It would create severe penalties for anyone who engaged youth in cannabis-related offences. Very importantly, it would block marketing and advertising to children, something we should have done from day one when dealing with tobacco.

To make sure that a young person who makes an error is not burdened with a criminal record that would, frankly, wreak havoc on their later life—and unfortunately we see that all too often—minors who are caught with an amount under five grams would not get a criminal record.

• (1220)

Make no mistake: this bill would target full force the use of cannabis by young people. It would come down like a hammer on anyone who would seek to sell to or use young people, under an age determined by the provinces, in the conduct of anything having to do with cannabis.

On the supply side, this legislation would also bring in a number of important measures. One of the big concerns with cannabis today is that people who are purchasing it have no idea what they are getting. They do not know the level of THC or if anything else has been cut into it. The bill would ensure that the supply was safe, that it was securely cleared, and that it was federally licensed. For adults who make the decision to use it, the bill would ensure that it was done in a way that causes the least amount of harm.

Concurrent with this bill is Bill C-46. While that is a different bill, it is very important to mention that the two would work in tandem with one another.

Some have asked about driving impaired, as if the problem does not exist today. The problem, unfortunately, does exist today, and law enforcement has been given no tools to deal with someone who has been driving under the influence of drugs, not just cannabis. We know the deadly impact of impaired driving. We have made great strides in dealing with the impact of alcohol. Bill C-46 would go even further. It would make further advancements in public safety when it comes to drinking and driving.

Bill C-46, for the first time, would set up a regime. The government would be providing resources to ensure that law

enforcement had the ability to recognize and charge anyone who was driving high. That is an important part of the fabric of this bill.

I want to state in closing that the balance in public safety between, on the one hand, ensuring that illicit, dangerous substances are kept out of the hands of people generally, and on the other, ensuring that when the regime we have is not working we find a different path, is incredibly important. What we are seeing here with respect to cannabis is that appropriate balance. We are making sure that young people are protected. We are making sure that we keep cannabis out of their hands and that we have robust education to tell them about the damage cannabis can do to a developing mind. On the other hand, we are looking at the fact that existing policies have been complete failures. When almost a third of the population is using it, it is time for a different approach.

• (1225)

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talked about the need for robust education with regard to marijuana use, particularly among young people. I would agree with him that this seems to be a very important provision that should be within this piece of legislation going forward.

The interesting point is that the Liberals are allocating less than \$2 million per year for public education on marijuana, and that funding is not going to be implemented until right before the legislation comes into effect on July 1, 2018. It seems a little late in the game to start educating the public when it is in tandem with the legislation itself.

I wonder if the hon. member could comment on how this would provide robust education.

Mr. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, what we are doing here today is setting out the framework for regulating and legalizing marijuana. What is going to follow is the exact plan to ensure that public education is furthered.

We do not want to do what, unfortunately, was done by the previous government, which was to provide nearly no dollars for public education on health at all. I look at the rates of tobacco use and how that impacts young people. The national tobacco strategy was thrown in the garbage. The dollars that were put in every single year for public education to make sure that young people did not smoke tobacco were not expended at all.

It is time to turn the page on a dark time that occurred in public health awareness. We want to do that not only on cannabis but on tobacco and public health issues in general.

Government Orders

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member made mention in his speech of dropping the hammer down on anyone who operates outside the way Bill C-45 is written, and Bill C-45 certainly has some harsh punishments. Someone over the age of 18 who distributes to someone who is younger could face up to 14 years in prison for an indictable offence. If it is a summary conviction, it could be \$5,000 or a term of six months.

If we have a household where pot plants are allowed to be grown, and we have an inadvertent situation where someone over the age of 18 accidentally lets that marijuana get into the hands of someone younger, how are we making sure we are not dropping the hammer on a family unit and possibly sending a parent or guardian to jail for something that happened by accident? I just hope the government has taken that into consideration and maybe has a plan to deal with it.

• (1230)

Mr. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, going back to the number I stated during my speech, that roughly one-third of children under the age of 15 will try marijuana, that is an abhorrent statistic. Any parents or guardians who are going to have cannabis in their possession need to be incredibly careful about where that cannabis is and how they contain it. That is already a circumstance existing today. Unfortunately, it is easier for a young person today to get a joint than to get a cigarette or a bottle of beer. That is a circumstance we have to change.

I hope the bill sends the clearest possible message that we have absolutely no tolerance, none, zero, for anyone who seeks to sell this product, or drugs generally, to children. It is an abhorrent act, particularly when a young person has a developing mind. That is why we recognize in this legislation that we need to draw a thick black line to say that it is totally and utterly unacceptable. There is a major difference between an adult who makes the decision to use cannabis and a child who is at risk and exposed.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the things I found striking was the fact that when we compare Canada's rate of youth who have used cannabis to any other country in the developed world, I am told that we are the worst country. In other words, it has not worked over the last decade.

Is it not safe to say that for the first time, we have a government that is really dealing with the issue of protecting our young people and dealing with the issue in terms of criminality?

Mr. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is 100% right. This is about public health, first and foremost. It is about protecting our children, first and foremost, as well.

I look at the complete failure we have had, and I am glad I am with a government that has the courage to act, to stop pretending that this problem is magically going to go away, when year over year the numbers get higher and higher.

This bill takes action. The action is appropriate. I have great belief that just as we were successful with tobacco, we will be successful with cannabis.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too want to add my comments to the debate on Bill C-45, which is the cannabis act.

It is interesting that the Liberals, when they were the third party in the House, wanted to put out some things in the window to encourage voters, but I do not think they ever actually thought that they were going to have to follow through with this particular policy. They made a lot of promises in the election, including balanced budgets, electoral reform, and of course legalizing cannabis. To be quite frank, I would have much preferred that they kept their promise on a balanced budget than their promise of legalizing cannabis.

As is the policy of our party, most Canadians think that children, young teenagers, and young adults should not be adversely impacted and have criminal records for having a small amount of cannabis. Certainly that is something that would have been important to move forward, rather than an ill-thought-out plan that probably would create some significant damages down the way.

The Liberals' stated policy objective is going to be monitored and watched by all Canadians because the Liberal government is saying two things. The Liberals are saying, first, that they are going to protect our children, and second, that they are going to get organized crime out of this business, and that the rest of us have our heads in the sand like ostriches. The Liberals are going to be held to account, year after year as the data come in, as to whether they have actually achieved those two objectives. Certainly, there are a number of people out there who are very concerned that the design of the legislation would not achieve those outcomes.

I am going to read a couple of excerpts from a very good article that came out in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* a couple of days ago. It is important to note that the Minister of Health is also a physician and that this is her professional body. The CMA is advising with regard to the legislation, and it has some pretty important things to say. Perhaps the minister should reflect on what it is saying, because the association is an expert in this area.

The title of the article is "Cannabis legislation fails to protect Canada's youth". This is an article by Dr. Kelsall. I do not have time to read it all, but I certainly encourage anyone who is interested to read the details. It was in the May 29 *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. It says, "The purported purpose of the act is to protect public health and safety, yet some of the act's provisions appear starkly at odds with this objective, particularly for Canada's youth."

The author then goes into significant detail, which has been spoken about in the debate up to now, in terms of young age and the particularly long-term consequences and impact of cannabis use on the developing brain, and really saying that it is not until the age of 25, when the brain is more fully developed, that it is less impactful. What did the government do? The medical association says, at a minimum, to make the age 21 for legalization because up to that age it is a real issue, so the Liberals made the legal age 18. That is the first significant area of concern.

Next, the article talks about drawing on the work of the federal task force, which "recommended taking a public health approach", yet in the bill the age is set, even though 21 years is absolutely recommended.

Government Orders

The association's next area of concern is the "personal cultivation of up to four marijuana plants". About this, the article states, "allowing personal cultivation will increase the risk of diversion and access to cannabis that is not subject to any quality or potency controls." That is important. The Liberals talk about use, and I believe a lot of studies talk about the fact that the first time children smoke a cigarette at a young age is often when they have gone into their parents' package of cigarettes and taken from that supply. That is their first exposure to cigarettes. We now would have a situation where having cannabis, whether it is purchased legally or grown in the home, becomes normalized.

• (1235)

To be quite frank, I think children's access would be much easier than it currently is, especially in the case of the homegrown and particularly in the case of the potency issues.

The other issue with the home growing is that, not only do I think children are going to have more access, but why did the Liberals ever put this in there? They did not need to have homegrown in there at all. I think if they are going to do this, it should be absolutely all purchased and quality controlled.

They talk about only being able to have four marijuana plants and they can only be 100 centimetres high, so all is fine. Who is going to monitor that? Who is going to go around with a measuring tape, measuring the height of the marijuana plants and counting them? No one. This is an unenforceable piece of legislation. It is absolutely ridiculous to have that in there.

Then there is the insurance issue. I have dealt with a number of landlords who have come to me over the years, in terms of our medical marijuana regime. What is happening is that landlords have no rights. If someone has a licence to grow medical marijuana, and they rent a home from someone and decide they are going to grow their medical marijuana, they perhaps are growing it for another person with a licence, the landlord has no rights at all. What happens after that? The landlords lose their insurance.

There has been no work that I can see done with the insurance companies, real estate associations, or provinces in terms of what the impact would be in terms of the homegrown aspect.

The FCM is here. Many people have noted they are here. I met with a number of representatives from our local area. They said, "We have a mess right now. This is a mess. We don't know where it's going to end up, but we're very fearful that there's going to be a lot of downloading on us."

With respect to the organized crime aspect, again, perhaps this is going to work, in terms of taking it out of organized crime. There is no guarantee. I suspect that the prices are going to be high and between the diversion from the homegrown, because no one is monitoring four plants, there is going to continue to be a significant element of organized crime. To be frank, if this goes ahead, and I hope that I am wrong, I do not think that they have created the right circumstances to remove organized crime out of this particular business. Perhaps, in many ways, they will be getting into the legal component of it.

I am going to conclude by stating what my concerns are. Absolutely, age is number one. Second is the ability to grow in the

home, and the third is just a personal thing that I find to be particularly offensive. When the Liberals came out, with great pride, to announce the movement forward with their cannabis legislation, they said, "We're going to have it in place for July 1. It is going to be there for Canada Day 2018."

In 2018, when I am watching the fireworks on Canada Day, I hope that people do not say this is what is making it special, because the Liberals think that we cannot enjoy our celebrations of our country by watching the lights and the different displays without being stoned. I think it is incredibly offensive that they want to attach legalization to Canada Day, a day on which we should be filled with pride, and they just think it is important that perhaps people can enjoy being stoned during these festivities. It is really offensive.

In any event, I hope members listen to me on at least the issue of age and the issue of home growing.

• (1240)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, I guess where I disagree with the member across the way is that there is a time to act. We have seen, over the last decade, when we look around the world, that Canada has the highest per capita usage by young people than any other developed country in the world. We have a serious problem here. When we take a look at an action, this is something that more American states are moving toward. This is something that will ultimately deal with the issue of getting fewer kids using cannabis. I believe it will have a significant impact on criminal activities to the tune of the hundreds of millions of dollars that are funnelled into criminal activities. This is an action plan that at least three parties inside the House seem to be getting behind, but the Conservatives seem to be out of touch with what Canadians really believe: that there is a need for action.

Why is the Conservative Party opposing the need for action to protect our young people and deal with criminal activities?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat what I said during my speech. I hope that they are right about this decreasing use. However, I am strongly concerned that it is actually going to go in the opposite direction and that we will see an escalating use. That was the experience in Colorado. They went from a baseline to increased use.

We just talked about how something is normalized. When parents have a package of joints sitting on the counter, it becomes normalized and accessible. I worry, and I hope I am wrong, that this will actually increase use in our young adults, as opposed to what the Liberal public health objectives are.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know that many members in the House have raised concerns about the age limit. I know the government did struggle with setting the age limit at 18. This legislation does allow provinces to harmonize it.

Government Orders

The thing we have to remember is that at age 18, we trust Canadian citizens to cast ballots for everyone in this chamber. At age 18, we trust that Canadians have the maturity to join our Canadian Armed Forces and go to fight abroad for us. It is a great deal of responsibility. I know there are concerns about brain development under the age of 25.

I would like to hear the member's reflection on the fact that at age 18 we already give people so much responsibility. Could the member comment a bit further on that and how the government had to find the right balance?

• (1245)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, this is not a situation of trust. This is a situation of science and the neurological development of the brain.

Members only have to have been in an emergency department where a 20-year-old who has smoked somewhat excessively has come in with their first psychotic break, knowing that it could have been prevented and knowing that they are now into a lifelong psychiatric illness, to know that it is not about trust. This is about people and how young adult brains can respond to the use of cannabis, especially between those ages of 18 and 21. Obviously, 25 is the recommended age in terms of when it is not going to impact to that degree.

This is not about trust. It is about lifelong impacts, psychiatric illness, schizophrenia, and all those other sorts of issues.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member's speech about homegrown has really hit home with residents in my city.

Last week I stopped at a feed and garden store in Saskatoon. They have already been put on alert. They are the ones that are going to police who buys enough material for four plants in a household. We already know municipalities in this country have no resources to police these plants. Now stores in my city have been told they will be the ones that will record who is buying the materials for these plants.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the idea of four plants is absolutely ridiculous.

I have not heard from insurance companies, but I know the insurance industry is very concerned. I know the real estate industry is very concerned. Why did the Liberals have to go there? It just does not make sense that they are going there. If the Liberals want to make it accessible, they should have the quality and the toxicity created in a controlled environment with health and safety behind it.

To me, the four plants in a home is absolutely a giant mistake in the legislation.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before we go back to debate, I just want to mention to hon. members that sometimes it seems like the chair does not see members or does not quite put them in the rotation. I notice some, and one member in particular, getting dramatic and making a little bit of a scene. I do not want to mention the member's name. I remember being in those chairs, and sometimes thinking that the Speaker really did not like me.

Believe me, I like all of you equally. It is just that I am making a list in the back of mind. Please be persistent.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It is pretty bad when the Speaker gets heckled. Come on, guys.

What I am saying is, please be persistent in getting up and trying to be recognized. The list will be filled. There is nothing more frustrating for a Speaker than coming to the mental list and the person is not getting up or is not trying to ask a question. This is just a little reminder of how things work around here. There is a rotation through the parties.

[*Translation*]

Resuming debate.

The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today we are speaking about Bill C-45, a Liberal government plan that caused a stir even well before the election. When the Prime Minister was the leader of the Liberal Party and aspiring to his current position, he spoke about his own marijuana use and later said he was going to launch this major project.

First, we must point out that there is a problem we must now deal with. In fact, we have been asking for a long time for the details and the plan for this bill, information that has been lacking for far too long. When someone who is aspiring to be Prime Minister, and an MP before that, stands for election and talks in very vague terms about legalization, it creates a lot of uncertainty. We have seen that the judicial system and police forces are also dealing with a great deal of uncertainty.

When the Liberals came to power almost eighteen months ago, I asked the RCMP commissioner some questions when he appeared before the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. I wanted to know how he thought the existing law should be applied in light of the Prime Minister's long-term vision, which was not materializing.

With respect to public safety and security, there are other consequences stemming from the lack of a plan, a vision, or an explanation from the government about this bill. One of those consequences is still present today, and it may very well remain after the bill is enacted: the consequences for Canadians crossing the border to the United States.

Growing numbers of American states are legalizing marijuana. In spite of that, we see that Canadian citizens crossing the border, whether to visit family or to go on vacation or to work, are being asked outright whether they have ever smoked marijuana. They are being judged for that and banned from entering the United States.

Government Orders

While we acknowledge the Americans' responsibility, and their right, to make that determination for themselves, we can readily conclude that it is extremely problematic that a product legalized in Canada will have such major consequences for Canadians.

In spite of the current scrambling resulting from the behaviour of President Trump, our relationship with the United States is nonetheless very important, and smooth flow at the border remains crucial for many Canadians, for the reasons I outlined earlier.

As we saw when my colleague from Cowichan—Malahat—Langford asked a question today during question period, we have no information about Canada's various international obligations. We have still not been given the details about how we are going to go about this.

What we are seeing is the consequences associated with a process that was significantly lacking in transparency up until the bill was introduced, in spite of the report of the task force, whom we do thank for that.

I am going to talk about what the bill does and does not contain. Before getting into the substance of this legislation, I want to say that we will be supporting Bill C-45 at second reading. It is high time we moved forward with this debate.

However, even though we support the bill, we have important questions and concerns. Some will be resolved in committee, but others will be more difficult to resolve and will remain unanswered.

The question that comes immediately to mind relates to the responsibilities of the provinces and territories. I raised the question of uncertainty earlier. The greatest uncertainty relates to shared responsibilities with the provinces. For example, important questions arise in relation to taxation, that is, the revenue that will be derived from this. That is often one of the arguments when we discuss legalizing marijuana. People often tell us that one of the positive consequences of legalizing marijuana is that this revenue will no longer be in the hands of organized crime, and will instead be in the government's hands.

However, we know that given the way our country is structured, all the issues relating to sale and taxation are to a large extent under provincial jurisdiction.

• (1250)

I have heard some Conservatives raise the question of the rights of landlords whose tenants might like to grow plants. Tenants can set rules of their own. That said, in Quebec, for example, it could be the Régie du logement that ends up having to come up with a set of rules. All these questions obviously call for a robust, transparent and very thorough conversation with the provinces.

It does not seem to me that this has happened so far. This is one of the bill's major problems. We will get answers to some of these questions when we have a clearer picture of the role the provinces are being called on to play.

Governing in Canada can be very complicated. There are different issues in the different regions of the country. This is a vast country, as we know. We hope that the provinces will get their say. We are certainly not convinced that they have had a chance to

explain their concerns and say how they would like things to be structured.

Naturally, the government could ask that we have these discussions after the bill has passed. As a parliamentarian from Quebec, I see that I need a lot more information about what will be required of the provinces to do and what the provinces may require, in turn, before we can give the government a blank cheque.

In spite of all this, as I said, we support the government's approach, up to a point. In recent years, there has been much talk about what we know as the war on drugs. That is what the media calls it. It was popularized, in a sense, by Ronald Reagan when he was president in the 1980s.

We agree with the government that the present approach is a failure. Obviously, putting our heads in the sand and contenting ourselves with punishing people is not an approach that promotes education and prevention or benefits young people or cultural communities. Unfortunately, specific segments of the population are too often victims of profiling or discrimination by the judicial system, and, without meaning to generalize, by some aspects of policing.

We can look at the American example and see how marijuana is classified in the United States. In the hierarchy of dangerous and serious drugs, marijuana is classified ahead of other drugs like heroin or cocaine. We see that there is nonetheless discussion happening. The reason I mention the American example despite the fact that it goes outside our borders is that there are a lot of fears circulating. We must take the opportunity to set the record straight.

With respect to discrimination, in our humble opinion, it is too often the same people, the same members of our society, who are punished unfairly or too harshly in connection with their recreational use of marijuana, among other things. That is why we have called for decriminalization for a long time.

When it comes to the Prime Minister, we find it unacceptable that a member of his family is able to get off because of the privileges he enjoys in our society as a result of his status, while young people, or, as I said, other members of society who are too often victims of discrimination will still have a criminal record and the negative repercussions of that record for something that will soon be legal. In the meantime, we are calling for amnesty and decriminalization.

With respect to the question of revenue, which will also have to be negotiated with the provinces, we believe that this money can and should be used for education and prevention. This is a golden opportunity to change the direction of the war on drugs and truly focus on a progressive approach. It must benefit primarily the people for whom it is intended, namely young people. We must not see cronyism or an approach that takes a direction different from the one promised by the Prime Minister.

• (1255)

I may be able to expand on that when I answer questions.

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[English]

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on his remarks. I thought they were very thorough, well thought out, and very fair. I am pleased to hear that his party will be supporting Bill C-45 going to committee and I hope there is a robust debate there.

I have a couple of questions.

Having been in a previous government that proposed the decriminalization of cannabis back in about 2002, I do see the approach and I understand where the party and the member are coming from in that regard, because it does not make sense to have all these people with records who face the cost of a pardon and the loss of economic opportunity for having been charged for small amounts of marijuana. The problem with the decriminalization approach—and I agree on the member's point on going forward with a progressive approach—is that decriminalization, in and of itself, does not take the criminal element out of the sale of the product on the market. Does the member not see that as a problem in responding only with decriminalization?

Second, on the point of revenue, I think there are a lot of people who think this is going to mean gobs of money for governments. I do not believe that will be the case, because we have to keep the revenue very stable or at fairly low prices or we are going to encourage the black market to provide illegal product. I wonder what the member has to say on that as well.

• (1300)

[Translation]

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments and questions.

On the first point, decriminalization, there is something we find disappointing. During the election campaign, the Prime Minister was asked that question. He said that decriminalization and even a retroactive amnesty should, in fact, be part of the discussion about the legislation. He therefore clearly implied that this was part of the plan. However, the Minister of Public Security has flatly closed the door on that possibility.

We recognize that decriminalization imposes a burden on the judicial system and the member gave an example of that. In the House, there has been much discussion of the Jordan decision in connection with other cases. Given those circumstances, it is obviously very difficult to deal with all the cases of recreational use. However, on the second part of what the member said, I would like specifically to make the connection between recreational use and minor offences.

From the outset, and even before the last election campaign, the NDP has not suggested decriminalizing organized crime, or sales, or any of those things. I do not want to generalize or indulge in stereotyping, but, for example, we are talking about a university student who smokes marijuana in his room and then goes out on campus with a small quantity in his pockets for recreational use. That is what we are talking about. We are not saying that a big criminal organization that grows hundreds of plants should not be punished. That distinction needs to be made.

On a final point, the question of revenue, I wonder about the same things in terms of prices and what the money will be used for. The provinces have a role to play in that regard, but I note that they have not yet been adequately represented at the table. I hope the government is going to do a better job of this.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to speak to Bill C-45 on cannabis legalization.

As my colleague said, a lot of people are talking about this. Most of the people in my riding are against the bill. I have a hard time understanding why the Liberal government wants to legalize marijuana. How is this going to benefit society?

The government says it wants to protect young people and fight organized crime. What planet is it living on? Does it really believe that its bill is going to protect young people? Does it really think it will do away with organized crime? It is dreaming. There is no way.

Luc Plamondon is a noted songwriter from my region and the brother of my colleague, the member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel. He was born in Saint-Raymond de Portneuf, which is in the riding of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier. He wrote a great song that I will use to set the stage for the rest of my speech. Here is part of it:

My head's going to explode
I'm about to crash
Lie down on the road
And breathe my last

I believe in our youth, and I do not want to let our young people die. Why is marijuana not already legal in other G7 countries? That is a good question. This government wants to legalize marijuana and is so proud of itself for being the first G7 country to legalize cannabis. What lofty aspirations Canada has. Why have other countries not legalized marijuana?

The Liberal government wants to use our young people as guinea pigs. He wants to sacrifice a generation by improvising the legalization of marijuana in order to fulfill an election promise. When they made this promise, the Liberals ranked third in the polls. Now, they are trapped. Nevertheless, since they backpedalled on election reform, they could also backpedal on this bill. They have a habit of backpedalling. However, in this case, they are being stubborn. Is the Prime Minister enjoying this?

Let us talk about Bill C-45, which states that its purpose is to:

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

However, there will be greater supply on the market. The bill is going to:

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

This prohibited use is being trivialized. As a father, I would tell my children that it is not a good thing to smoke marijuana. However, the Government of Canada and the Prime Minister are saying that it is all right. What rhetoric. It continues:

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

People will be able to grow marijuana anywhere they want. Where is the control? Next, it says:

- (d) deter illicit activities in relation to cannabis through appropriate sanctions and enforcement measures;
- (e) reduce the burden on the criminal justice system in relation to cannabis;

If the Liberals want to meet that objective, all they have to do is decriminalize marijuana. That will fix the problem. Lastly:

- (f) provide access to a quality-controlled supply of cannabis; and
- (g) enhance public awareness of the health risks associated with cannabis use.

Also, this law will give the minister the power to set the price for various products and services provided for under the legislation. That means that the minister will become the leader of the new Liberal biker gang. His crest will be a nice marijuana leaf with the Liberal Party logo, and his motto will be “just one little joint”. It is always good to dream big.

Why is this government prioritizing the legalization of pot over other much more important issues for the country, such as the environment, job creation, economic development, aggressive efforts to support our regions, and a balanced budget, among others?

• (1305)

I fail to understand how Canadian society will benefit from the legalization of marijuana. I know that the government's stated objectives are to protect youth and reduce the involvement of organized crime. That certainly sounds good during an election campaign, but it is unrealistic.

Does this government know anything about human psychology? Fifteen percent of people will always defy the law, which means that 85% respect authority. Legalizing marijuana is like inviting people to an open bar; we are saying it can be used safely, and so, marijuana's potential market will go from 15% to 100%. We want to poison our youth by saying, “Smoke your joint; go on, enjoy yourself!” We are now in the business of helping to develop this market.

This law will expose new consumers to greater harm. Not only will law-abiding citizens start using, there will also be an increase in the number of road accidents caused by marijuana use. I am not the one saying this. This data comes from the various states, regions and municipalities that have legalized marijuana.

Moreover, organized crime will push its customers, especially young people, to buy at a discount. This will not put an end to organized crime because its members are more clever and intelligent than this government. Organized crime will develop other markets and drugs, and it will lower its prices. They are in the business of marketing. How much will all this cost society? How many young people's lives will be destroyed?

Schools are worried, as is the Association des policières et policiers provinciaux du Québec and the Association des pédiatres du Québec. Numerous studies on brain development in young people have shown that people under the age of 25 are at a high risk of harm.

My fellow citizens in the beautiful riding of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier have many concerns. What will be the cost of implementing this law given all the accompanying structures that will have to be put in place? Monitoring systems, training and awareness-raising campaigns will have to be funded. How much money will be spent in the near future and for how many years if we go ahead with

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legalization? Awareness-raising campaigns against cannabis will need to be organized to educate the public and protect our children.

As well, how much of a burden will we be putting on our health care system? How will this impact our society? How will it affect health and safety in the workplace? Are we about to see a new generation of young, budding horticulturists? Why jeopardize Canada's fine, young people and put them at risk of irreparable harm? Why this eagerness to legalize cannabis? How do Liberals plan to measure and control the rate of hallucinogenic compounds? Regarding the limit of four plants per household, how can the government seriously think that they can control all of this?

The Liberal government wants to legalize marijuana, but give responsibility for distribution to the provinces. What happens when a young person who is not of legal age to consume marijuana crosses the Quebec-Ontario border? How will we apply this law?

All of these questions remain unanswered. I invite the Liberal government to reflect on this bill and withdraw it on behalf of our youth, who deserve a better future. We are in 2017. I am in favour of the decriminalization of marijuana and I support awareness-raising campaigns that encourage young people to participate in sports and the arts and to say no to drugs. With such measures, the Liberals would achieve their goals without having to legalize marijuana.

• (1310)

[*English*]

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to say how much I enjoy working with the member across the way on our environment committee. He is a very reasonable member of the committee. We find common ground on many different issues, so I wonder why his reasonable nature does not extend to this issue as well.

As we saw with the alcohol prohibition of the 1920s, that prohibition did not work. Criminals were allowed to make vast amounts of illicit profits. People were dying because of the composition of alcohol. They did not know what they were drinking.

Fast-forward to today, and we find ourselves in the same environment with respect to cannabis. We do not know what people are smoking. Criminals are making vast wealth from this drug, and we need to eliminate prohibition so that we can once again have a more responsible consumption of cannabis, just as we do with alcohol—and tobacco, for that matter.

Prohibition did not work for alcohol, so I would like to pose this question for the member. Does he feel that we should now go back and make alcohol, and for that matter tobacco, illegal as well, given the stand that he has on cannabis?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my esteemed colleague for his question.

Indeed, it is always a pleasure to have discussions with him on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. It is always very pleasant, and I can sense his respect, despite the language difference. I greatly appreciate his attitude, as I do with all the other committee members.

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To answer his question, I am very reasonable. I appreciate that he has mentioned this in the House, and he is absolutely right. He has a good read on me. I am a reasonable guy.

We cannot compare alcohol to drugs, because they do not compare. Alcohol is one element called “alcohol”. Drugs are a huge range of products that are toxic and harmful to people's health. With respect to marijuana, it has been shown that there is a risk of permanent damage to mental health, and I do mean permanent. To my knowledge, there are no studies that talk about permanent damage with regard to alcohol, whereas for drugs, and for people under 25, there are a number of studies that show there may be some.

This government should take a different approach to organized crime, because it is a social problem. The hon. member is absolutely right. We have to take the bull by the horns and find other solutions. Let us invest in awareness-raising campaigns, persuade our youth to participate in sports, arts, and cultural activities, and get our young people involved elsewhere, rather than let them hang out in the streets. Let us educate them. We would have a solution and we would not need to legalize marijuana.

• (1315)

[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I certainly enjoyed serving on the HMCS *Vancouver*. My colleague and I were both shipmates for a short time in the Royal Canadian Navy.

I enjoyed hearing my colleague's support for decriminalization. However, the one thing I wanted to concentrate on was the issue of pardons. In a previous interview, the Prime Minister admitted that his father was able to use his legal connections in the community to get his late younger brother off with respect to some charges. We still have a lot of young people who are affected by charges and criminal records for previous possession charges. The costs of pardons are quite high. Would he be in support of pressuring the government to institute a pardon, or some sort of amnesty, for people who had been previously convicted for small amounts of possession of cannabis?

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my esteemed colleague for his question. I must say that we were very close in the Royal Canadian Navy, and it is a privilege for me as well to work with him and get to know him a little better.

In terms of his remarks regarding decriminalization, I am somewhat in agreement with him. I find it hard to imagine that a person accused of having consumed or possessing marijuana on June 30, 2018 would be a criminal, while on July 1, Canada Day, the 151st birthday of our beautiful country, another person would have no problem.

I have to say that I strongly agree with my colleague's views regarding decriminalization.

[English]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wrote an entire speech, but listening to everybody debate this, listening to some of the questions that have been asked by some of our Liberal members, I feel it is really important that we have the conversation and not just look at some of the talking points or things

of that sort. As with everything I do, I come here as who am I, and that is a mom of five.

I will talk about the way I parent. I wish I knew exactly the riding of the member over there with whom I ride the bus. Every time I have a question about cannabis, I just ask that former chief of police everything I need to know. I do thank him for always having those respectful conversations with me and answering every question I have ever needed to ask. I would like to put that on the record.

We talk about cannabis and what we have to look at for our kids. Whether we are calling it weed, doobies, blunts, reefers, or all of those other words we have heard, we really have to look at how we are approaching this. It does really concern me because I believe that the legislation—is it right or wrong to do this legislation? It is not the choice I have, but what are the parts in this legislation I cannot agree with?

I will be honest and put all my cards on the table, because I think that is what Canadians are expecting from us. I believe in decriminalizing cannabis. That is something we should look at. I think that is because I have those sit-down family discussions with my kids, with my nieces and nephews, with my parents, because I think the biggest thing we need to recognize is that it is out there, and what can we do that is better to serve?

I will not say that decriminalizing makes it right, because I do not believe it is the right thing, especially when it comes to our youth. Therefore I want to talk about parts of the legislation that really do need to be tweaked, because we are harming children if we think this legislation is right.

There are two parts of this legislation I looked at. One has to do with the age of ability to purchase. As I have indicated, with five children, my youngest is 14 and my oldest is 23 years old this year. My 23-year-old, my 21-year-old, my 20-year-old, and my 19-year-old will all be eligible, as of July 1, 2018, to purchase marijuana.

I will not tell my children's stories, but I have seen first-hand what happens after marijuana use. Whether they see grades drop by 30% or attendance go from perfect to nothing, parents are having to deal with these challenges each and every day. When we talk about it, I want to make sure the government is listening.

We have talked about what happens to children who have smoked marijuana. The Canadian Mental Health Association has talked about the formation of the brain, and I am really concerned. As the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo mentioned, children's brains are not developed until age 25, and what is said is fair, but we had a task force saying it should be 21 years old and now we have legislation to make the legal age 18.

I will put it on the record, because I believe the only reason it is at age 18 is that is the age at which a person can vote. I think this is a vote-seeking motion, and I am really angry about that. Other members may not be, but I have the right to say this, because as a parent of five, I am very concerned that the government is not taking into consideration what will happen to our children. I ask parents to sit down with their kids and start talking, because that is not what we are doing here.

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I decided to take this conversation to my family, so I sat down at Easter. When we were all supposed to be celebrating Jesus, we talked about marijuana, because I needed to hear from the people who knew best, my nephews and nieces, my sister who is a high school teacher, another sister who is a principal in elementary school, my brothers-in-law who have careers, and my sister-in-law who has worked so hard when it comes to understanding, and she actually goes out to counsel families.

I had to bring this down to what it really meant. The moment I said that my son Christian, who is 14 years of age, would be able to possess marijuana with no charges, the conversation took a totally different turn, because we all want to protect Christian because he is 14 years of age.

However, we have to understand that this legislation would not really do that. We have children who will be in grade 9 and will be in high school with people who will be 18 years of age, able to buy this, and then the next thing we know, here we go, have a good weekend. Did we not think this would happen? That is what really frustrates me. Let us get it right. Let us sit down and talk to our 14-year-old children and ask ourselves if we want our children to be able to possess marijuana without being charged. Do we want them to know that this is right or wrong?

● (1320)

I am also very concerned that we are looking at the medicinal use of marijuana as well, when it comes to when people use it. I am a huge supporter of medicinal marijuana because I have seen people and I have lived with someone who has been on OxyContin. I can say that it has negative effects. Therefore, for years, I have advocated for medicinal marijuana. I am very scared that when we legalize marijuana for all Canadians and open it up and say they can get it at 18, we know our 12-year-olds are going to get it, for sure, as well. Let us be honest.

Are we going to stop funding important research that needs to be done so that the people who are using medicinal marijuana are getting the proper strains they need? I am very concerned that we are not going to do that. We will say we have legalized it, and we are going to use the science for all of this other kind of stuff, but are we going to make sure that the people who need it the most, who have been using medicinal marijuana for the last number of years, are going to get the proper care they need? Therefore, I want to ask the government if it is going to continue to invest in the research on medicinal marijuana.

I was very happy when I was here listening to the debate yesterday and the day before on Bill C-46, which truly intertwines with this bill. I heard one of the members from the other side comment on the zero tolerance, so I am going to mix in this part as well.

We have to understand that, if people are using marijuana for the first time, the reaction they have is going to be extremely different from that of people who have been daily smokers for the past 20 years. However, we are saying this is how we are going to take it, and if they have so many grams we will take them in and process it and check the THC levels. Let us be honest here. If people have had marijuana for the first time and get behind that wheel, it is a hazard. It is unsafe. They are going to kill themselves or another person. We

have to be sure we are putting the safety and security of Canadians first.

I do not believe that Bill C-46 goes far enough, but I am happy that we are going to go back to debating it.

I am going to go back to my family, and we are going to talk a little more about kids. We have heard time and time again from the Canadian Psychiatric Association, the Canadian Paediatric Society, the Canadian Medical Association, or counsellors who have dealt with cannabis for a number of years, and we know that we are opening up a Pandora's box.

I am very concerned with this because I do not think that we actually have all of the tools we need in place. I was really happy to see budget 2017 come out with \$5 million for education. However, as many of my colleagues have said, we are educating them when the horse is already out of the barn. We are putting the cart before the horse. This is very simple. People are going to be educated about cannabis after they have started smoking it. Let us be honest here. Should we not get it started by having the education for our teachers, our parents, and our children, to make sure they know what they are getting into? It is a safety warning, but we are going to put the safety warning on after they have inhaled.

It was really interesting listening to some of the members also talk about tobacco and how we have stopped doing things. My former boss is part of the tobacco transition fund. My community, and the five communities in southwestern Ontario, were huge in the tobacco industry. We know there were some really good campaigns out there. Of course we did see a number of adults who continued to smoke, but older people were beginning to quit. Those were some things we saw as well. We know that campaigns work. Therefore, I am asking the government why it is putting a campaign about combustible cannabis out after the fact.

I do not understand that. If we are trying to teach people about the problems with marijuana, why would we not be teaching them right from the start? We know that putting combustible things in our lungs is bad for us, just like tobacco. When are we going to do the education?

I am so fearful that the government is so pressing on this, wanting to get it through by July 1, 2018, that it is going to forget about Christian, Garrett, Hannah, Marissa, and Dakota, my five children. It is going to forget about everybody else's children, because it is more concerned about getting this legislation through, because Liberals want to keep a promise they made during the 2015 election.

I know there are some very good MPs over there. I am pointing at him. I hope and I plead with him, as a former police officer, to know that as a parent, I need to make sure that the government is going to protect us. This is something that goes through regardless of whether we like it or not. There is majority government. I beg the government to know my children are relying on it. The safety of our communities is relying on it. Do it right. Do not do it fast.

Private Members' Business

● (1325)

Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to rise because I was deeply offended by the comments from opposite. I have three children. Most people in the House have children. You have children, Mr. Speaker, and you care about their well-being. I care about their well-being. The reality is that each of us tries to bring to this place the best policies to protect our children and protect public health. The idea that this was moved for political reasons is abhorrent.

The current situation is that one-third of children tried marijuana before the age of 15. We have the highest prevalence rate in the world. Why does she think the existing system is working?

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Speaker, I will not read the quote I have, but many doctors in this country have said that it is bad. If we are being told by the Canadian Medical Association that 25 is a good age and we are saying 21 is a good age, that is fine. A gentleman works for me whose name is Scott. Because it is illegal, he will not try it. I have a staffer whose name is Kaylie, and because it is illegal, she will not try it. I, Karen Vecchio, for years did not do it because it was illegal, and that is sometimes the way we do things. Stop putting your heads under. Come on; let us be real. We all want the safety of our children.

● (1330)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London will have approximately three and a half minutes remaining when we return to this item.

BILL C-45—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

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 advise that agreements could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the second reading stage of Bill C-45, an act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code, and other acts.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage of the aforementioned bill.

* * *

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2017, NO. 1

BILL C-44—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

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 advise that agreements could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the report stage and third reading stage of Bill C-44, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017, and other measures.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stages of the aforementioned bill.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the House that Thursday, June 8, shall be an allotted day.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

FIREARMS ACT

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC) moved that Bill C-346, An Act to amend the Firearms Act (licences), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is my honour today to speak to my private member's bill, Bill C-346, an act to amend the Firearms Act on licences. I am going to go over some of the basics of it, and then I will talk about it more at length.

The aim of the bill is to ensure that no law-abiding firearms owner is criminalized for an administrative issue. The proposed changes reflect the success of the RCMP continuous eligibility system, which verifies the validity and conditions of licence requirements every day. The bill also proposes to create an avenue for individuals to voluntarily relinquish their licences.

I will speak to some key points about what this legislation would do, and also speak to some myths out there with people who are not sure what the bill would or would not do.

The bill would amend the Firearms Act to eliminate the expiry of firearms licences, with a mandatory provision that the licence holder update his or her relevant information every 10 years.

I have been talking with other parties in the House, and I am open to amendments, as long as they would not extremely affect my bill. I have been in conversations already about that, and I will discuss them more as they come to me.

An individual whose licence has not been updated will not be able to purchase a firearm or ammunition. If an individual fails to update his or her information, the licence will be suspended. The suspension is subsequently cancelled as soon as the holder provides the necessary basic information. No licence may be revoked simply because it is suspended.

The last provision of the bill, the relinquishment section, would allow an individual who no longer desires to possess a firearms licence to voluntarily relinquish the licence to a chief firearms officer with no negative consequences.

Private Members' Business

I have done some videos on Facebook and Twitter, and I use the character of Grandpa Joe. The desire is that Grandpa Joe not become a criminal simply because his licence expires. Many firearms owners in Canada have gone through the process of getting their licence. They have done their due diligence. They have gone through the process. They are safe, law-abiding firearms owners, yet simply because their licence expires, they can be charged with illegal possession of a firearm.

It could happen today. I have heard some interesting stories about people whose licence has expired, and literally have their door bashed down seven days after the expiry date because they are considered in illegal possession of their firearms. This is a dramatic event that can happen just because a licence expires. I am trying to get to the bottom of this. Poor Grandpa Joe who forgets to renew his licence becomes a criminal. That is the way our system looks at Grandpa Joe.

I often use the analogy of a vehicle owner. Most members in the House own a vehicle. I own a few—

• (1335)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I would like to interrupt for a moment. I am really interested in what the hon. member has to say, but there are voices rumbling in the background, which is making it very difficult. I am sure everybody is looking forward to the weekend and talking to each other, which is nice, but I would ask them to either whisper or do their talking in the lobby.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Speaker, I guess it is a good sign that we have an audience on this Friday afternoon. It is not all bad. Members are across the way too, so that is good.

The comparison I am using is with a vehicle owner. Let us say someone's driver's licence expires. They may own a vehicle, but they certainly would not be allowed to operate it, and that vehicle is sitting in the driveway. Then, just because the person's licence has expired, the police do not come and take them away and treat them like criminals because they did not renew their licence.

We think the same latitude should be given to firearms owners here in Canada. They are the most law-abiding group that I have seen in Canada. They are very thorough in the way they store their firearms and they are very diligent about how they do things. Again, we do not want to see Grandpa Joe penalized for a small mistake that could be quickly rectified.

I would like to quote some people in the firearms industry. There are massive numbers of members in associations, and they support this bill.

Tony Bernardo, from the Canadian Shooting Sports Association, said that my bill reflects the reality that every firearms licence in Canada is reviewed every day by the police. The RCMP's continuous eligibility process should equate to continuous entitlement to possess firearms.

He went on to say that no law-abiding firearms owner should be criminalized for an expired firearms licence.

That is really the crux of this whole thing. It is just a little fixing of an administrative issue. Turning that administrative issue into something that is criminal is not what was intended by the law.

There are other ways to get it done without turning Grandpa Joe into an outlaw.

One of the questions I have heard is whether my bill will make obtaining firearms easier.

It seems that whenever we want a positive piece of firearms legislation, it is always taken to a further degree and perceived as now enabling people to buy firearms at every corner store. That is not the case. It would not make it any easier at all. To legally purchase a firearm or ammunition in Canada, as most firearms owners know, people need to have a firearms licence. That would not change with my bill.

To obtain the firearms licence, people need to go through a process of training, learning about firearms and how to safely store them and so on. My son just took his course. He is 19. He did his RPAL about a month ago. He is getting his the right way and is just waiting for it to come in.

There is also a process of background checks that regularly update the status of an individual. If there is ever an issue with a person, if there are family issues or mental issues, that is collected, and that person would not be able to purchase or possess a firearm. That is a good feature of our firearms licensing program in Canada. It is among the most stringent in the world.

Another question is about what "suspend" means in the bill.

"Suspend" refers to the status of a licence when the information has not been updated within the allotted 10-year period. Using the example of Grandpa Joe, if my bill passes—and I sure hope it does—and Grandpa Joe's licence expires, it goes into suspended mode. That does not mean he becomes a criminal just by possessing that particular firearm in his home; what it means is that he would be suspended from purchasing firearms or ammunition. He could not buy new firearms or ammunition. That is what it suspends.

The suspension is temporary. When Grandpa Joe goes back in and says that he needs to update his address or whatever, the suspension would then be cancelled when the information is provided. A key point for all the firearms owners out there—and this is a big issue with my bill, because I know there is a cautionary thought around the word "suspend" and what that means—is that a suspended licence could not be revoked simply because it was suspended. That is a key point. Once someone has gone through the licensing process and done the work and done the training, they certainly do not forget all they have learned just because the licence has expired. They still know how to safely use and store that firearm. A suspended licence could not be revoked simply because it was suspended.

Private Members' Business

For too long, firearms owners have been treated as shady outlaws over an administrative issue, as I said in my video, and there is a good graphic of the outlaw in the cowboy hat. I want to make sure that no law-abiding firearms owner can be criminalized just for having an expired firearms licence. It goes back to needing to have a good conversation about firearms.

• (1340)

What many people do not know about firearms owners in Canada is that there is a huge demographic that is growing of people who want to own, possess, and use firearms at a range or to go hunting. It is the under 30 demographic. Some of that generation have seen firearms for different uses. They maybe have seen their fathers, grandfathers, mothers, and grandmothers go hunting and they want to experience that themselves.

We are seeing growth in urban areas too. We are seeing dramatic growth in legitimate firearms use in Canada. In Canada we need to rest assured that these people are law-abiding owners. They are licensed and trained, and we should not be worried about that growth. It is a legitimate group that obeys the law and does it the right way. Bill C-346 honours that and makes our firearms laws in Canada that much stronger.

I would like to recognize a few individuals in our party across the country, members of caucus who have seconded my bill from Ontario, all the way across to Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, who support this kind of legislation. It is positive for our firearms owners and it really supports them well.

I would challenge the Liberals and the NDP to consider this demographic seriously. There are Liberals who own firearms. I am co-chair of the parliamentary outdoor caucus. We represent all parties in our group and we want to make sure that there are good laws that recognize our outdoor heritage in Canada. That is sports shooting, hunting, fishing, guiding, and outfitting. It is a group that we all represent, and I would hope and trust that the government across the way would support solid legislation like this to ensure that firearms owners are not going to be needlessly criminalized because of some administrative issue.

I am a firearms owner. I do not hunt as much as I would like to. I fish, but my children have all operated firearms safely. We have an event next week where members of Parliament from all parties get to experience what a firearm feels like and safely operate that firearm. One of my staff had never fired a firearm before, and she was concerned when we first went to the range, but by the end of the day there was a big smile on her face. She understood that this could be done safely. It is a lot of fun, and we have a great regime in Canada that sees that our firearms owners operate them safely and effectively.

Our party does not want to see the laws become regressive. We have seen some moves lately with UN markings and stuff. I am glad to see the minister from Saskatchewan pull back on some of what has been talked about in terms of UN markings and understanding this issue. This was due to the firearms groups in Canada that let us know that the laws need to be hospitable to firearms owners in Canada, not needlessly restrictive. We have a good regime already. We do not need to make it more restrictive. It is already very safe.

My desire in putting forward Bill C-346, which would remove firearms licences from expiring and also has a provision to relinquish one's licence, is meant to do just that and to make our firearms laws in Canada stronger and not regressive.

I want to say a special thanks to all firearms groups across Canada. We support them and support their good work in training. There are a lot of organizations that, while we are having fun on a weekend and mowing the lawn, they are out there training people how to safely operate firearms. They do this every weekend, 52 weeks a year, to make sure that firearms can be safely operated in this country. I thank those groups and say keep up the good work to all who are doing good work for the firearms community in Canada.

I look forward to hearing members' comments.

• (1345)

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's bringing forward this timely piece of legislation. I just renewed my PAL. It was going to be up again in August, so I did it ahead of time to make sure it was not out of scope and I would have it when I needed it. It was a fairly innocuous process. It worked out fairly well, one phone call to New Brunswick and I had things sorted out.

One thing I have had questions from my friends about is going to a 10-year status. They like the idea, but so much data is collected when they apply the first time around, whether that is five years or 10 years, that if their status changes as in a marriage dissolving, getting divorced, they have to report that. If their address changes they have to report that. None of that would change going from five years to 10 years.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatchewan is also very much a firearms advocate and absolutely he is correct. Anytime that people's information changes they have to update it anyway. This would not change that. What this is meant to do is to have a provision that, regardless of whether there are changes, it might be the same information but they would just make sure that it is the same information.

The continuous eligibility system that we have that the RCMP operates already assures that on a daily basis that information is being updated and correlated with other information in Canada. This is just another way to make sure that the information is as up to date as possible.

Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise on this bill. I want to commend the member for bringing the idea forward in the form of this bill, Bill C-346, an act to amend the Firearms Act (licences).

As my colleagues know, our government is committed to implementing reasonable, effective measures, with respect to firearms, that promote public safety while respecting law-abiding firearm owners. Responsible firearm owners, including hunters, farmers, and sports shooters, rightly expect to be treated fairly and reasonably. My grandfather was a hunter. He greatly enjoyed the sport, and he was a responsible owner himself.

Private Members' Business

At the same time, they, like all Canadians, understand the importance of doing everything we can to combat gun crime and keep Canadians safe. This includes keeping firearms out of the hands of people who could be dangerous.

The private member's bill before us would make it easier for people who pose a danger to the public to acquire and possess guns. As such, it would clearly contradict our commitment to protect the safety of Canadians, and our government, therefore, cannot support it.

I would like to take a moment to look at the provisions in this bill to explain this concept further.

First, Bill C-346 proposes to eliminate the expiry of firearms licences. Under the bill, a firearms licence would never expire. It would essentially be valid for the life of anyone over the age of 18.

Licences for most sorts of things do not work this way, and for a very good reason. Most of us understand that circumstances change and that a person who may meet the criteria for obtaining a licence today might not necessarily meet them forever. Would any of us, for example, want to be on the road with someone who got a driver's licence 60 years ago and never had to renew it?

The idea behind the licensing provisions of the Firearms Act is to protect public safety by ensuring that applicants are appropriately screened and that firearms owners continue to meet the eligibility criteria. That cannot be done if licences are valid for life.

This brings me to the second provision. Currently, firearms owners update the information relevant to their licence eligibility every five years through the licence renewal process. This includes information about any new mental health conditions as well as the attestation of current or former conjugal partners that the person does not pose a threat.

These are important provisions. It is one of the reasons they are done every five years.

Under this bill, firearms owners would only update this information every 10 years. Again, a lot of things can change in a decade. There may well be people who could be trusted to safely own a firearm today but for whom that might not be the case in seven, eight, or nine years.

This bill does not even take its own 10-year timeline seriously. Under Bill C-346, firearms owners who do not update their information once a decade could have their licences suspended. However, the bill does not explain what suspension of a licence would even mean. Under existing law, a firearms licence is either valid or revoked. The concept of a suspended licence does not exist in the Firearms Act, nor is it defined in the Criminal Code.

Would people who have suspended licences be allowed to continue possessing firearms? Would they be allowed to purchase ammunition? Would they be allowed to buy, sell, or trade firearms? The bill does not say. There is no definition whatsoever.

The bill also does not specify whether a suspended licence could be confiscated. It seems, therefore, that it would be up to the individual whose licence is suspended to voluntarily relinquish it. If the individual did not, the physical licence, the plastic card, would

continue to appear valid and could quite possibly continue to be used indefinitely, because it would, as per the first part of the bill, never expire.

I do not know what the nature of this ambiguity is. It is unfortunate that it is not clear, but it is an unacceptable oversight. In any event, it is public safety that would be at risk.

The information collected every five years under the current regime is critical in protecting the public. It is an invaluable tool for the chief firearms officers, or CFOs, who review that information. With it, CFOs can determine whether there are safety risks associated with allowing an individual continued lawful access to firearms. Any CFO would insist that such information be kept current, and I am sure the vast majority of Canadians, including firearms owners, perhaps especially firearms owners, would agree.

We are committed to taking reasonable measures to keep Canadians safe from gun violence while ensuring the fair treatment of law-abiding firearms owners.

● (1350)

Already we have stopped the previous government's practice of contradicting law enforcement experts on weapons classification. We reversed the ministerial directive that could have allowed gun manufacturers to determine the classification of their own products. We fulfilled our promise to establish a more representative Canadian firearms advisory committee, which includes police, farmers, sports shooters, public health advocates, representatives from conservation organizations, representation from weapons groups, and members of the legal committee.

Having had an opportunity to sit in on those meetings and work with those individuals, I think they do our country a great service. Indeed, we can be enormously proud of the contributions they are making in such a balanced way.

We are taking concrete action to keep Canadians safe, and we are doing so while respecting firearms owners. Unfortunately, the legislation runs contrary to the balanced and sensible approach this government has taken to public safety.

To recap, Bill C-346 proposes that people with a firearms licence should only have to update their eligibility information every 10 years. If they do not comply with that even dangerously lax requirement, their licence would be deemed suspended. I use that term in whatever definition it means, because the bill does not say what it would mean, and a person with a suspended licence could, in all likelihood, given the lack of definition in the bill, continue possessing a firearms licence regardless, and would be able to do so indefinitely, because under the provisions of the bill the licence would never expire.

Unfortunately, none of this makes any sense. It is bad from a public policy and safety perspective, and it would leave firearms owners and law enforcement attempting to operate in an unclear system, with no one quite sure how to enforce the rules or abide by them.

Private Members' Business

On that basis, although I know the hon. member's intent is good, the bill unfortunately is not, and I would therefore encourage members of the House to oppose it.

• (1355)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the debate on Bill C-346.

First of all, I want to thank the bill's sponsor for his well intentioned work. I also want to thank the parliamentary secretary for his speech to explain the government's position.

Before I get into the substance of the bill, I would like to outline a few important principles, the first being the unfortunate reality in which we live. For a very long time, the governing party, the Conservative Party, wanted to politicize the debate surrounding the use and regulation of firearms in Canada. It even sent fundraising emails.

I find that disappointing, because it created an atmosphere that pitted Canadians against one another, depending on their perspective. Ours is a vast country, and the reality is very different from one region to the next, and from an urban area to a rural area. When the government should have been encouraging people to work together and have a healthy debate on this issue in order to develop effective and appropriate public policies, instead it tried to use the situation to its political advantage. We again find ourselves in an unfortunate situation. However, it is important to understand the context and proceed with a rigorous review of a bill such as this one.

I also want to talk about the importance of the work that police officers do, not politicians and their decisions about what is good for public safety. This is, after all, a public safety issue. The bill sponsor was absolutely right when he said that the vast majority of firearm owners are law-abiding citizens.

That being said, when we draft a bill, we have to consider those who are not law-abiding. These unfortunate exceptions can endanger public safety and the safety of all Canadians. That is where I am coming from on this bill, and that is the perspective that will inform my comments to the House and my recommendation to my caucus as the NDP public safety critic.

The first problem is, of course, lack of clarity. I think the parliamentary secretary did a good job of explaining which rights are lost and which are not when a licence is suspended.

Under the current system, the loss of the firearms may seem like a nuisance to a firearms owner. However, under the system being proposed by my colleague in his bill, a gun owner could have his firearms licence suspended for legitimate reasons, for example if he is no longer fit to carry firearms.

After all, as the parliamentary secretary said, many things can change in 10 years. Meanwhile, the individual continues to have firearms in his possession. In these circumstances, the changes may result in a threat to public safety. These are unfortunate exceptions that must be considered when developing public policies and before accepting or rejecting a bill.

The second point is as follows. The licences do not expire, and since a licence can easily be reinstated, we unfortunately cannot

support failure to provide a consequence. In fact, the renewal process is extremely important and we believe that it is very reasonable.

Contrary to what seemed to be claimed in the opening address of this debate, legislative changes were made recently, which has simplified the process tremendously. There is even a six-month grace period after the expiry of a licence.

This grace period allows people to renew their licence, even if they run into problems with the mail, they are facing personal challenges, or they are late in renewing it for all sorts of administrative reasons. As we know, life moves fast. We need to ensure that law-abiding gun owners who are aware of the importance of obeying the law and who use their weapons responsibly for legitimate purposes are not punished. That is exactly why there is a grace period. It is important to point that out.

• (1400)

We are also very aware of the cost that may be associated with the various obligations. It costs \$60 for a five-year licence for a non-restricted firearm. That seems like a reasonable amount to me because the licence is good for five years. If I remember correctly, and forgive me if I am wrong, people can also pay for their licences online. Given how the various levels of government are changing the way they use technology and the Internet, these systems will only improve in the coming years. The various government services will be changing and improving these systems, while ensuring that they work properly, or at least that is what we hope.

We are also talking about what happens when a licence has to be renewed after five years.

[*English*]

Obviously some of the important administrative pieces of information would change. We talk about addresses and marital status and things of that nature that are obviously, in some cases, more innocuous than others. However, we also have to recognize, as the sponsor of the bill also recognized, that when people initially get their licence, they go through the process of mental health evaluations, and the criminal record and background are checked.

While all those different checks happen initially, it is important to have the licence renewal process. For example, the information goes through CPIC and other authorities, who can decide whether it is appropriate for that individual to continue to own and properly use a licensed firearm.

In that context, it is obviously very important. We look at, for example, the issue of marital status, and when it leads to requiring a statement from the person's ex-spouse, that kind of link can be very important. When we think of domestic violence, we obviously would not want someone who had committed that kind of crime to continue to own and operate a firearm. It is important to emphasize that those cases are the exception, certainly a tragic exception, but an exception nonetheless. I do not want to repeat myself, but when we elaborate on these public policies and evaluate bills like the one proposed by my hon. colleague, we need to take those realities into consideration.

Private Members' Business

Once again, it is important and bears repeating: Given these criteria and the fact that it has been somewhat alleviated in the last few years, there are reasonable grace periods put in place. We feel that the current system is very respectful of all the pieces that my colleague mentioned. Certainly I believe in many of our ridings, and surprisingly even in suburban and urban ridings in some cases, there are many Canadians who own firearms and enjoy their different activities, whether hunting or other outdoor activities like sport shooting and such.

We obviously are mindful of that, but I believe that the current system is appropriate for ensuring public safety. It is reasonable. Unfortunately, I believe that what my colleague is proposing would go counter to that. It would create a more unreasonable situation when it comes to ensuring public safety. As far as we are concerned, it would create too large a vacuum when it comes to certain obligations that we ask of these gun owners.

With that, I thank my colleague once again for bringing this debate forward. Certainly we are always open to working on progressive ideas when it comes to respecting Canadians and the participation they might want when it comes to hunting and the other outdoor joys we have in Canada. However, unfortunately we believe that this bill does not go in a direction that is appropriate and that would ensure public safety.

[*Translation*]

In closing, I want to thank the parliamentary secretary for his very informative and relevant speech about striking a balance between public safety and respect for Canadian gun owners.

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise in the House to debate Bill C-346, an act to amend the Firearms Act, and to perhaps straighten out some of the misconceptions that have been put on record today by the third party and the parliamentary secretary.

The legislation was introduced by my Conservative colleague, the member of Parliament for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies and at this time I would like to thank my friend, now my seatmate, for his work in supporting Canada's firearms owners and for bringing common sense forward as a solution that I know many have long called for.

Far too often gun legislation and responsible firearms owners have been treated unfairly. I am not here today to relive Bill C-68 and it is not my intention to rehash old battles. I know there are many new members in the House who were not around to deal with the common-sense firearms act that was passed in the last Parliament. For the benefit of those following the debate, it was the Conservative government's legislation that enacted simple and safe firearms policies and streamlined the licensing system.

The legislation amended the Firearms Act and the Criminal Code to create a six-month grace period at the end of a five-year licence to stop people from immediately becoming criminalized for a paperwork delay. The legislation also streamlined the licensing system by eliminating the possession-only licence and converting all of the existing licences to possession and acquisition licences. The other important elements of the legislation were to make classroom

participation in firearm safety training mandatory for first-time licence applicants and to strengthen provisions relating to orders prohibiting the possession of firearms where a person is convicted for an offence involving domestic violence. While the Liberals and the NDP voted against these common-sense measures, I can assure members of the House that constituents of theirs who are firearms owners openly celebrated the passage of the bill.

As a member of Parliament who represents countless firearms owners, I can say that I unequivocally support their right to own and use firearms. However, with this right comes great responsibility. I support their right to hunt wild game for either sustenance or as a traditional way of life. I support their right to take part in sport shooting. I recognize that firearms are a tool for farmers and those who live in rural Canada, and last of all, many Canadians are devout collectors of firearms and are passionate about their hobby.

It was the previous Conservative government that eliminated the ineffective and costly long gun registry, even with the help of a few NDP members.

Furthermore, former colleague Rick Norlock passed his private member's bill to designate a National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day and it was the Conservative government that created the national hunting and angling advisory panel. For far too long, Canadian firearms owners who abide by the law and cross their *t*'s and dot their *i*'s have tried their best to follow the rules and regulations, even when it was abundantly clear they were not always designed in the most coherent fashion.

Bill C-346 builds on the Conservative caucus's long and proud history of defending the rights of Canadian firearms owners. The bill builds on the progress made to ensure common-sense legislation that allows Canadians to become licensed firearms owners in a structured, yet simple mannered process, without compromising the security of Canadians. While much has been done to correct many of the wrongs that the previous Chrétien government implemented, it is good to see that Bill C-346 is being debated today.

The goal of the bill is quite simple. It is aimed at preventing honest, law-abiding firearms owners from being unjustly charged and becoming criminals. Bill C-346 aims to ensure that no law-abiding firearms owner is criminalized for an administrative issue. As the law currently states, should firearms owners fail to have their paperwork finalized when renewing their licences, they can be criminalized. We do, however, take issue when law-abiding individuals can be unfairly criminalized through no fault of their own. Let me explain.

The Firearms Act, as it currently stands, fails to address the issue that paperwork delays do not always occur due to the fault of the firearms owner but also due to the fault of the government. Indeed, the Phoenix pay system has made it quite clear that the government does not always run as smoothly as possible.

Private Members' Business

●(1405)

If departmental staff delay the processing of a licence application or a renewal, there are no safeguards built into the existing legislation that protect the gun owner from being criminalized. This is wrong. That is why I am pleased to support the legislation, as it will address this problem. If passed, C-346 will amend the Firearms Act to eliminate the expiry date of firearms licences, but includes the mandatory provision that the licence holder must update the relevant information every 10 years.

This is a positive step for licence holders, as they no longer have to worry every five years about the expiry of their licences. For those who think this would be too long of a period, let me just remind the House that our passports now have a 10-year life cycle. I think we can all agree that this change has been very widely celebrated as it has reduced the inconvenience of getting a new passport photo and filling out the paperwork every five years, let alone every year.

As well, Bill C-346 would not revoke the licences of gun owners who have not updated their information. Should a gun owner fail to update their information, the licence is subsequently suspended. Such a suspension can be cancelled as soon as the necessary required information has been provided to the proper authorities. It further states that no licence may be revoked simply because it is suspended due to the required information not being provided.

This is a crucial part of the legislation. It makes the process far easier to navigate for law-abiding firearms owners, as they would no longer have to go through the process for applying for a brand new licence, should they fail to get the required information in on time. Their licence would simply be suspended until said information is provided. We see no reason to continue to make the process unnecessarily onerous and criminalize individuals who have done nothing wrong.

This new legislation also includes a relinquishment section. Many firearms owners who no longer wish to have their licences, simply do not send in their information so that their licence is cancelled. If Bill C-346 is passed, this would not happen, as the licence would be classified as suspended.

Obviously the Liberals, at least the member for Ajax, never read the motion. The relinquishment section of the legislation allows an individual who no longer wishes to keep their firearms licence, to voluntarily surrender their licence to a chief firearms officer with no negative consequences. This ensures that any individual wishing to let go of their firearms licence would be able to do so in a simple manner.

Another reason this proposed change should come into force is that the RCMP continuous eligibility system, which verifies the validity and conditions of licence requirements every single day, has proven itself effective over the years. This system ensures that any offence that would immediately suspend or revoke a licence is provided to the appropriate law enforcement, and as the law enforcement will have the most up-to-date address for the individual who committed the offence, it would easily allow for the licence to be suspended or permanently revoked.

However, the safeguards built into the system say that if an individual does not update their information, they would not be

allowed to purchase a firearm or ammunition from any supplier. This is a reasonable condition to place upon any firearms owner.

In closing, I believe that law-abiding duck hunters, deer hunters, sports shooters, among others, are responsible members of their communities, and when safety measures are followed, provide no threat to others. For far too long, firearms owners have not been treated with respect.

The member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, from Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, the former minister of public safety and the current member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, and our current chair of the Conservative hunting and angling caucus, my friend from Red Deer—Lacombe, among others, have played an integral role in defending and promoting the rights of firearms owners, and I commend their efforts.

Also, I feel the efforts of our law enforcement officials should be invested in tackling the illegal gun market and those who commit heinous and violent acts of crime. Let us work together to ensure that the firearms regime is targeting those we need to target, those who have demonstrated they pose a threat to society. In particular, these efforts could be aimed at the safety of women and children in their homes.

I encourage all members to vote in favour of the legislation and to open a dialogue with their constituents who own firearms to hear how these measures are a step in the right direction.

●(1410)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House this afternoon to speak to the private member's bill introduced by my colleague from Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies. I know that introducing a private member's bill is no easy feat. One needs to consult constituents, do research, and work with the folks who draft the legal text of the bill. I therefore congratulate my colleague on his hard work.

This debate brings back good memories in a way. A few years ago, when I was on the other side of the House, I was our party's public safety critic, so I sat on the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. My fellow committee members and I looked at many issues related to gun control.

●(1415)

[*English*]

One thing I learned from dealing with this issue as public safety critic a few years ago was that the gun licensing system, the regulations surrounding gun ownership, and the administration of gun ownership are indeed complex areas. No doubt, from time to time, there is a need to improve the procedures and the rules and regulations surrounding gun licensing and gun ownership.

Private Members' Business

I will be voting against the bill. It is not because I do not believe that the hon. member approached this in a spirit of good will. No doubt his motives are honourable and serve the interests, views, and desires of his constituents. However, as a parliamentarian, I do not feel that there are any compelling reasons for me or the House to support the legislation.

I understand, when we talk about these matters, and all matters in the House, that there are different perspectives motivated by different circumstances and reasons. I am not a gun owner, so obviously, I do not see the issue from the same perspective as some of the members across the way. I do not know many gun owners. I must admit that I represent a suburban riding on the island of Montreal. There are many gun owners, but probably not as many as in my colleague's riding. The gun owners I do know are exemplary citizens. They are the community volunteers. They always provide a helping hand and would give someone the shirt off their back. Perhaps that says a lot about gun owners. It says that at their core, they have a very responsible civic attitude. However, that is not the point here for me.

From my perspective, the current system, as it exists, is not a heavy burden for gun owners. I understand that I might feel differently if I were a gun owner. However, I do own a car, and I understand that it can be annoying from time to time to have to go to the licence bureau, sit there, and wait for my number to be called to renew my licence. Whenever I get the notice in the mail, I have to re-jig my schedule. We are all pretty busy here and understand that it is sometimes hard to find that hour or hour and a half to go to the licence bureau to renew a licence. However, I do it, because I understand that it is part of being a responsible car owner, and quite frankly, I am glad that everyone else is doing it. I understand that circumstances change, people's health might decline, or whatever, and I am very pleased that there is an automatic system in place that checks to make sure that everyone who is driving a car is fit to be driving a car.

I feel the same way about this. As a non-gun-owner, I feel safer knowing that there are rules in place that require individuals to take the very minimal step of renewing their licences and providing additional information every five years.

If I were a gun owner, I would say that I am a great guy, responsible, I do not need to do this every five years. I get that. However, it provides the rest of us with a sense of security to know that there is a system in place and that it is fairly rigorous.

The other problem, as was mentioned by the parliamentary secretary, is that there are some aspects of the legislation that are not clear. That is especially with regard to the article on suspension, which would happen if one did not renew his or her licence every 10 years, according to this bill. That would be a new concept under the Firearms Act.

I heard the parliamentary secretary mention it, and it is perhaps not a concept that is well enough developed. In theory, a suspended licence would prevent someone from purchasing ammunition, for example, and it would prohibit the transfer of ammunition to someone with a suspended licence. However, given that the licence would not say it is suspended, as far as I can tell, there would be no way for a retailer to know whether a licence is valid or not. Having

vendors call to verify that a licence is not suspended every time ammunition is sold would be tremendously burdensome for vendors, and therefore might not occur. That is one problem that I have with the legislation.

The system we have now has achieved a certain balance. Again, I do not feel compelled to upset that balance for the time being. When our government came into power almost two years ago, we did make some small changes to the system that was in place. We did not do what many people feared or believed we might do.

Let me just go over some of the very minor amendments we made to the firearms regulation in Canada. They were not only minor amendments, but also wise. For example, we stopped the previous government's practice of contradicting law enforcement experts on weapons classification. We also reversed the ministerial directive that allowed gun manufacturers to determine the classification of their own products. That seemed to make sense. I think it makes sense to most Canadians. We also upgraded Canadian laws dealing with the transportation of restricted and prohibited weapons. We are dealing more effectively with background checks, and the inventories kept by vendors.

We created a more representative Canadian Firearms Advisory Committee. It is important that this committee not be more heavily weighted toward one particular group in this debate than another. Therefore, we named retired Supreme Court Justice John Major as the chair, and both Lynda Kiejko, an Olympian sport shooter from Calgary, and Nathalie Provost, a survivor of the Polytechnique shooting, as vice-chairs.

I think we have taken a very moderate approach to improving administrative procedures. As a Liberal, I believe that procedures and laws and institutions can always be made better. I think that is what my hon. colleague from Peace River thinks and why he has presented this private member's bill.

However, I must say in conclusion that at the end of the day, I do not feel compelled to support these changes. That is why I will not be voting for the legislation. Nonetheless, I look forward to listening to the rest of the debate.

• (1420)

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add my voice to this debate today and express my severe disappointment that the Liberals are not supporting the legislation.

The legislation is just common sense, especially from the perspective of a firearms owner. Extending a licence for 10 years just makes sense. It would reduce costs and bureaucracy and things like that.

Firearms owners in Canada, when they are broken out as a distinct segment of Canadian society, are the most law-abiding citizens in this country, and that makes sense. Why? When they go to the store to buy a firearm, they are told they cannot purchase it without a licence, so they ask, "What does it take to get a licence?" They then go through the hassle of getting their licence. It involves a three-day course.

Private Members' Business

I took a three-day course to get my licence. It involved three Saturdays. The first day was a classroom course. The next day was learning how to handle a firearm. The last day I actually went to the range to practise using some firearms. Taking that course taught me how to safely use a firearm. After that I paid \$70, mailed in the application, and I waited patiently for six weeks for my firearms licence to come in the mail. It takes six weeks, if things go smoothly. Before this process, I had to get a passport picture taken, have it cut the right way and all that stuff, and three months later I could finally buy my firearm.

It takes three months to buy a firearm. Canadian firearms owners are law-abiding citizens because they play by the rules. They understand that in Canada we have the rule of law. If these people are willing to go through all of that effort to get a firearm, then they probably obey the majority of our other Canadian laws as well. I am making the point that Canadian firearms owners are the most law-abiding citizens in this country.

We heard today from other members about cars. They said they register their car and they are grateful for that because then they know that people who should not be on the road are not on the road. It is great that we make sure that people who should not be on the road are not on the road. However, if a driver's licence expires, the car is not taken away and people do not get criminal records. That is what we are getting at here.

I know of an elderly gentleman who has had several firearms. He is in an old-age home at this point and his licence has expired. Officials showed up at the home to ask him where his firearms are. This was very traumatic for this gentleman and his family. This is why we are saying that if people have a 10-year licence, that is great, and if they fail to renew that licence, it would become a suspended licence, but no one would show up at the door to confiscate their firearms and give them a criminal record.

We are busy people here in Canada. We are out there trying to make a living and things like that. We are not necessarily always using our firearms or thinking about our firearms licence.

I just renewed my firearms licence, but I do not remember if I was sent something in the mail. However, I do know that I am not sent anything in the mail for my car registration. I recently received a ticket because I did not renew my car registration. I did not do it because letters are not sent out anymore. People are just expected to remember.

Things get busy and people forget to renew their firearms licences. Why, for the lack of a piece of paper, should people get a criminal record? In Canada, most people get a criminal record for doing something, not for not doing something. That is really what the entire bill is trying to get at. Looking at the other things we get licence for, a car licence is completely different from a firearms licence.

I am going to go right back to what I started with, which is that Canadian firearms owners know the process and obey that process. That proves they are the most law-abiding citizens in this country.

● (1425)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The time provided for consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper. The hon. member will have about five minutes when the bill comes back to the House.

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

(The House adjourned at 2:30 p.m.)

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