



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 148 • NUMBER 192 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Monday, June 12, 2017

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 12, 2017

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill S-233, An Act to amend the Customs Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (presentation and reporting requirements), as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

The Speaker: When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Gordon Brown moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise once again to speak briefly about Bill S-233, why it is important, and why it is important that it be dealt with quickly by the House.

Bill S-233 would correct a long-standing problem on the waterways along our border with the United States, whereby pleasure boaters transiting these waters must check in at the Canada Border Services Agency's border crossings if they intend to stop or anchor in Canada. As I have outlined previously, this is an onerous restriction to pleasure craft operators, who may not know that they have drifted into Canadian waters while fishing or relaxing with their families, and it is a colossal waste of CBSA resources to try to track and charge offenders.

The current regulations were put in place during prohibition and have become an impediment to relations with our neighbours along the border, bringing Canada bad press and hard feelings, especially

when innocent U.S. citizens are stopped, forced to lie in the bottom of their boats, and fined on the spot for breaking a regulation that they did not know existed. When this Parliament began, I introduced a private member's bill to correct the situation. My colleague in the Senate, Senator Bob Runciman, introduced a similar bill in the Senate that eventually became the bill in front of us today, Bill S-233.

I was pleased when the Senate not only considered Bill S-233, but provided speedy passage of it. It was thoroughly debated, and committee heard from witnesses from both sides of the border. That committee made some reasonable and excellent changes to make the bill better following consultation with the CBSA. It was quickly given third reading, approved, and sent to the House, where I have been pleased to sponsor it. The bill was supported by all parties in the Senate and was passed quickly to the House, where it has also been receiving speedy processing and all-party support. Just last week, it also passed through the public safety committee unanimously. I want to thank the Senate and my colleagues in the House for recognizing the importance of the bill and getting it passed before the summer boating season gets into full swing.

The current law has been a black eye for Canada for many years, and even the agency in charge of enforcing the law realizes how onerous and restrictive it has been both to enforce and defend. That is why the agency had a hand in amending the bill, to ensure that it not only meets the enforcement requirements, but is compliant with being a good neighbour.

While we are entitled to enforce any laws we see fit to protect our borders, transiting pleasure boaters are not our enemies. This bill recognizes that fact. I should point out that while the bill permits pleasure boaters to transit our waters, it still gives the CBSA the freedom to stop any vessel that it wishes if it suspects that something is amiss. Any transiting boater who subsequently decides to stop in Canada, drop anchor in Canadian waters, or tie up to another vessel, must still report to the CBSA. The bill would also clear up regulations in a few other areas, and will, for example, now permit whale-watching passengers to exit Canadian waters and return without requiring a CBSA inspection upon their return, provided they do not leave the vessel.

I do not want to take up too much of the House's time with this bill today. There has been much debate on this bill, and I am encouraged that there has been strong support from all sides of the House. I know all members agreed on the need for this change and I appreciate their support.

Private Members' Business

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak in support of Senator Runciman's Bill S-233, conveyance presentation and reporting requirements modernization act.

This bill would relieve persons onboard conveyances, such as private boats, tour boats, cruise ships, and private aircraft, from having to report to the Canada Border Services Agency when they pass incidentally into or out of Canadian waters or airspace.

We are pleased that this bill has made such rapid progress through the Senate, where it passed unanimously, and the House. I would like to thank the standing committees of both Houses for their collaborative and expeditious deliberations.

Current Canadian law requires that all boaters report to the CBSA every time that they enter Canadian waters. This is in contrast to the United States, where boaters are only required to report their arrival to the United States Customs and Border Protection if they have docked at a foreign port or have had contact with another vessel in foreign waters.

• (1110)

[*Translation*]

Simple activities like fishing, water skiing, and touring do not trigger reporting requirements. The differences in American and Canadian reporting requirements have been a source of frustration for individuals who enjoy leisure activities and businesses that make a living on our shared waterways.

[*English*]

As the member opposite from Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes has rightly emphasized, international tourism is a key driver of Canada's economy. We must do everything we can to support and promote our tourist industry, and the small and medium-sized businesses that are its backbone.

Millions of Canadians rely on the tourism sector for employment, and that is why our government has made it a priority to promote Canada as a top destination in the global tourism sector. Making sure that more international tourists choose Canada would mean more jobs for Canadian youth and a boost for small businesses in every region of the country.

This bill would help us to market Canada as a destination of choice more effectively. It will do this by exempting private boaters or passengers on other water-borne craft from having to report to the CBSA when crossing into or out of Canadian waters for fishing, sightseeing, or other low-risk activities. Doing so would reduce the reporting burden on the boating community and align our marine reporting requirements with those of the United States.

This would bring great benefit to water-sports enthusiasts and businesses in communities on both sides of the border. People aboard boats, be they private craft, tour boats, cruise ships, or even whale-watching ships, would no longer be required to report to the CBSA in the following circumstances: when they do not land on Canadian soil, and when they do not let off existing passengers or take on board new passengers when in our waters. Cruise ships would clear passengers and crew at their first port of arrival in Canada and enable them to transit international or foreign waters

between Canadian ports of call without requiring further CBSA processing. This bill would also apply to aircraft, which may cross incidentally into Canadian airspace without landing.

In sum, these changes would streamline reporting requirements, reduce administrative burden for low-risk activities, and align Canada's approach with that of the United States. The bill would do so while respecting our commitment to ensuring the safety and integrity of Canada's borders.

During the course of the bill's development, parties on both sides of this House and the upper chamber agreed to strengthen reporting exceptions and to make certain that the CBSA and its law enforcement partners have everything they need to do their jobs effectively. As a result, amendments were made to apply the same set of newly proposed conditions under Bill S-233 to loop movements, which are cross-border movements in and out of Canadian, U.S., or international waters that return to the same place of origin; and direct transits, which are cross-border movements from one location outside of Canada to another location outside of Canada, or from one location within Canada to another location within Canada.

The amendments specify that people and goods not disembark the vessel or aircraft, and that the vessel or aircraft not anchor, moor, land, or make contact with another conveyance. This bill also makes explicitly clear that border services officers would retain similar powers that they have under both the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, and the Customs Act.

This means that CBSA officers can continue to require people to answer customs or immigration questions regardless of whether they are exempted from reporting. Officers may ask, for example, to verify a person's goods, work permits, or other immigration documents, or they may compel an examination if they deem it warranted.

Both the CBSA and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have confirmed that the bill respects their mandates and will allow officers to focus on higher priority reporting and monitoring activities.

• (1115)

[*Translation*]

Thanks to these important consultations and the collaboration of honourable senators and MPs, I am confident that this bill will reduce the burden on individuals and businesses without sacrificing public safety. It is not always easy to create a border that maintains the safety and security of Canadians while facilitating legitimate, low-risk activities and trade.

Business of Supply

[English]

Bill S-233 achieves both of these objectives. Canadians and Canadian businesses will benefit from the streamlined and simplified system that it proposes.

I encourage all member of the House to vote in its favour.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of the bill before us. It accomplishes a few things, one of which is that it makes it easier for businesses that are operating near waters on the Canada-U.S. border to run their businesses. They are able to have their clients pass over the border as long as they are not disembarking either from aircraft or from maritime vessels. Therefore, there is a trade component.

There is also a principle of reciprocity, because the United States has already taken measures to make the process for visitors on that side less cumbersome. This is a case of Canada being a good neighbour and giving the same rights and freedoms to American boaters that they are conferring on us as Canadians.

This changes a long-standing piece of legislation that I understand comes from the prohibition era, so it is also good housekeeping. The consensus on the bill is a good example of where we see a number of trade measures that can be implemented by Parliament that make sense.

People will know that the NDP never hesitates to speak up when we feel that trade measures contemplated by government are not in the best interests of Canadians. This is not one of those cases. It also serves to highlight that when concerns are raised about other trade issues, those come from a place of genuine critique and concern for the interests of Canadians. We are quite happy today to support this piece of legislation.

The Deputy Speaker: There being no further debate, the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes has up to five minutes for his right of reply.

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the members for Kanata—Carleton, and Elmwood—Transcona for their speeches today, and their support for the bill. As we heard, this is a common sense bill. We will see a lot of problems go away, from the New Brunswick—Maine border, across all of our boundary waters with the United States, all the way to British Columbia.

I know that boaters in my region of the Thousand Islands, including some individuals who are here in Ottawa today, Mike Hornby, Ray Kostuch, George Grout, and Hugh Grout, are anxiously awaiting this bill getting through Parliament.

I would like to thank members from all sides of the House and in the Senate for their support, and I look forward to its speedy passage in time for this boating season.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

[Translation]

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Deputy Speaker: It being 11:20, the House will suspend until noon.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:20 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12 p.m.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1200)

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CANADIAN ECONOMY

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC) moved:

That the House recognize that the government has mismanaged the economy in a way that is damaging Canadian industries and diminishing Canadians' economic stability by: (a) failing to negotiate a deal on softwood lumber and instead offering a compensation package rather than creating sustainable jobs for Canadian forestry workers; (b) attempting to phase out Canada's energy sector by implementing a job killing carbon tax, adding additional taxes to oil and gas companies, removing incentives for small firms to make new energy discoveries and neglecting the current Alberta jobs crisis; and (c) refusing to extend the current rail service agreements for farmers in Western Canada which will expire on August 1, 2017, which will result in transportation backlogs that will cost farmers billions of dollars in lost revenue.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour to be able to rise here today, on Monday at noon, to talk about how the Liberal government continues to mismanage our economy.

Before I start, I would like to indicate that I will be splitting my time with my friend and colleague, the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

I thought it imperative that we table this motion today, before we head out on summer break later this month, to talk about how the Liberals seem to be incompetent when it comes to managing the important files to support our economy. In particular, they continue to mismanage our oil and gas sector. Critical infrastructure, such as transportation and rail service, has been completely forgotten by the Liberal government, and the resource industries, such as softwood lumber, agriculture, or our mining sector, have also been forgotten.

This is incredibly damaging to the people who live in communities in rural Canada who depend upon these sectors, yet the Liberals only seem to care about their own political pet projects. They have forgotten about rural Canada. They have forgotten about the important industries across this country, particularly in western Canada. We have to make sure that we shine a light on the Liberals' mismanagement of these files. We have to make sure Canadians understand that the Liberals are either incompetent when it comes to these serious files or they are callous and just do not care. To me, that is very disturbing.

Business of Supply

The first part of the motion talks about the softwood lumber deal. I would like to remind everyone that, when we came to power under former prime minister Stephen Harper in 2006, we negotiated a softwood lumber agreement with the United States in three months. We then extended it in 2012 to take us right through until October 2016. That protected over 400,000 jobs across this country from coast to coast to coast, in every region, and it supported our businesses, jobs, and communities.

The Liberals have taken a laissez-faire attitude toward softwood. They allowed the agreement to expire in October 2016. They have failed to engage with the U.S. administration to protect Canadian jobs, protect access to the U.S. market, and also protect consumers in the United States who will ultimately pay higher prices. The jobs of Canadian forestry workers are in peril, and Canadian softwood lumber manufacturers and harvesters are seeing their businesses at risk, yet all we have seen from the Liberals is some EI reforms to help out those workers. That does not fix the problem.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is responsible for the softwood lumber agreement with the United States, tweeted this morning that Canada and the United States are miles apart on coming to some sort of an agreement. It is completely unacceptable that we are not getting any resolution from the Liberals on this file. We cannot sit on the sidelines and wait while these jobs, businesses, and communities are in peril.

We have to make sure that the government gets focused. Today is its opportunity to commit to solving the softwood lumber deal, and to take a page from the Conservatives' playbook on how to do it.

Members will hear today from a lot of Conservative members of Parliament who want to see the Liberals try to solve some of these problems rather than sit on their hands. I know that our critics in the official opposition, and members of Parliament from the Conservative Party, will strongly encourage the government to find solutions, while at the same time will be pointing out, without hesitation, the flaws in the Liberals' approach and their callous decision-making process, which are leaving rural and western Canada and the resource industries at risk.

The second part of the motion talks about how the Liberals continue to damage the economy by going ahead with their complete drive to kill the oil and gas and energy sectors in this country.

● (1205)

The Prime Minister is married to a flawed policy, a regressive policy, called the carbon tax, and he is forcing it on the provinces and the territories. This carbon tax is going to hurt the most vulnerable in our society. It will increase the cost of doing business. The cost to farmers in particular for what they are going to have to pay extra for fuel, fertilizer, and other energy costs is going to be huge. Farming is an energy-intensive industry.

My son-in-law is a grain farmer. I come from a farming background. My brothers and my father and mother were all involved in agriculture, as am I. We will be hit the hardest. What will that do? It will not only reduce our bottom line but will increase the price of food. Not only will it increase the price of producing that food, it will increase the cost of transporting that food. Canada is a vast nation, and everything has to be put onto trucks or rail. It is all

pulled by diesel. That will see some of the highest levels of carbon taxes of anything.

Low-income Canadians and those living on fixed incomes cannot afford a carbon tax. They have been completely ignored by the Liberal government. The Liberals like to claim that they have been able to bring the biggest tax cuts to the middle class, but that is a farce. It is a shell game, because with one hand they give, and with the other hand they taketh away.

For those Canadians making over \$45,000 a year, the Liberals decreased income taxes by 1.5%. They then increased taxation through payroll taxes and CPP premiums by 2%. Middle-class Canadians are short a half per cent right now, and that does not include paying more for a carbon tax, which will impact everything they do, such as their home heating bills and the cost to commute. Public transit will go up, because it will cost more to put fuel in those vehicles.

The Liberals eliminated the tax credit for public transit, Mr. Speaker, again targeting low-income Canadians, students, and seniors. Those who depend on public transit are being completely thrown to the curb.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Under the bus.

Mr. James Bezan: They are being thrown under the bus, Mr. Speaker, as my friend from Durham just said, by the Liberals. That is not acceptable. It is callous and inconsiderate. The Liberals are hurting those who need every penny kept in their own pockets, but the pickpockets on the Liberal side just love to pull more revenue from Canadians through additional taxes.

The Liberals are also going after the gas and oil companies by putting in place things like a methane tax, again increasing the cost of doing business and not doing anything to change the story on climate change.

When fuel prices go up and energy costs rise, Canadians still have to buy their gas, their diesel, their electricity, and their home heating fuel. Higher prices do not reduce consumption rates. All they do is generate more dollars for the coffers of the Government of Canada and the provinces, and that is not appropriate. Doing that kills jobs.

There is a jobs crisis in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia, provinces that depend on the oil and gas sector, and in western Manitoba and places in Ontario, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia, with the Hibernia oil fields and offshore drilling. Those jobs are being lost, yet those jobs support communities. When oil workers leave the field, who is going to be in those small businesses up and down Main Street, those pa and ma shops? If they have no one to come in to do business, how will they stay in business? If they are not able to sell their wares, sell their services, that is unacceptable.

Finally, the other issue I want to talk about today, and the House will hear in detail from my colleagues about this, is how the government's Bill C-49, what the Liberals call the modernized transportation act, is the opposite of that. The bill would put shippers and grain farmers across Canada at risk.

Business of Supply

For western grain farmers, August 1 is a new crop year. Those farmers will have more difficulty moving their grain when the current shippers service agreements expire August 1. It will be more difficult for them to get the new crop to market. The bill would put all the power back in the hands of the oligarchs at the railways.

I am looking forward to hearing all the arguments brought forward by my colleagues on today's important motion.

• (1210)

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague across the aisle. I know he is a man of great experience. He was really painting a very one-sided portrait, a partial portrait, of what is going on.

The hon. member says that nothing has been done by the government for rural Canada. In the last budget, where were they in terms of supporting \$2 billion in investments for rural Canada? Why are they not talking about that?

The hon. member keeps saying that the Liberals are trying to kill the oil and gas sector by putting a price on carbon pollution. All Canadians know that more than 80% of Canadians live in jurisdictions that have already put a price on carbon. The federal initiative is only to fill the gap where it has not been done.

I would love to hear from the hon. member why he would paint such a partial picture. I would like to have the hon. member please address that question.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal budgets up to now, the last two budgets tabled in this House, have done absolutely nothing for rural Canada and have done absolutely nothing to stimulate the economy. We see continued increasing taxation and that job creation right now is mainly in government jobs. It is not actually stimulating the economy or allowing the private sector to grow and prosper and put dollars in people's pockets.

We know that the moves the Liberals have made in the housing market have interfered with the prices of homes across this country, particularly in Toronto. It has hurt first-time homebuyers. That is the record of the Liberals. They have abandoned workers in the forestry sector. They have abandoned workers in the oil and gas patch, and now they are throwing grain farmers across this country under the bus, because they just want to put more money in their Liberal coffers.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talks about throwing grain farmers in western Canada under the bus. It is important to recall that the issues grain farmers are experiencing with respect to the transportation of grain came as a result of not having the leverage they had with the Canadian Wheat Board to negotiate with railways.

I wonder if the member will acknowledge that he is criticizing the Liberals for failing to come up with a solution to a problem created by his government.

• (1215)

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, it is not surprising that the member for Elmwood—Transcona, being from the NDP, continues to throw out the fable that the wheat board actually negotiated transportation access for grain farmers, which it never did. It was the

grain transportation administration that actually did it. The agency was responsible for doing it, not the wheat board.

I represent a rural riding, I am a farmer, and my son-in-law is a grain farmer. Since we got rid of the wheat board, I have not had people coming back to me saying they wish the wheat board was back. Nobody. Everyone wants the private solutions. They want to be able to cash-flow their sales, which they could not do with the wheat board.

What the Conservatives did as government actually made huge improvements in the way things worked for grain farmers across this country. The Liberals have taken away the opportunity for the cash deferral of receipts for grain sales. They are saying that it is going to be thrown by the wayside. One of the things farmers need is the ability to manage their taxes and their cash income. It cannot always come all in one year. Sometimes because of the way the grain industry works and transportation works, farmers cannot move their crops in the current crop year and have to move it down the road. They do not need to have two years of income coming into one.

The Liberals took away the ability of farmers to cash-flow and manage their operations properly.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for the last 18 months, the Prime Minister has talked about so-called sunny ways. Today is a sunny day, and we really appreciate the fact that summer is back in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Our comments today will focus primarily on the state of the Canadian economy and this government's performance over the past 18 months. What has it done to stimulate the economy and create jobs and wealth? In my speech today I will demonstrate that, unfortunately, this government has repeatedly stood in the way of those whom we Conservatives see as the backbone of the Canadian economy and economic growth, specifically, small and medium-sized businesses.

This government has made a number of poor decisions, but chief among them, of course, is the Liberal carbon tax. This is one of the worst things that could possibly be done to stimulate jobs and the economy. We all agree that we need to address the new challenge of climate change and that this presents wonderful opportunities for the Canadian economy to develop its green economy.

However, the worst thing this government could do is punish Canadian small business owners by imposing this \$50-a-tonne tax on them because they are producers and therefore are bad. On top of that, the price will go up as time goes on. That is not the way to help businesses and the economy or to foster Canadian wealth. On the contrary, that will penalize workers and producers.

Earlier, I was listening to my colleague from Hull—Aylmer, who is my MP when I am here in Ottawa.

Mr. Greg Fergus: A formidable MP.

Business of Supply

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, he said that he was a formidable MP, and I agree that he is definitely formidable in stature. Earlier, he said that it was fantastic that more than half of the provinces were now on board with the Liberals. It is easy for people to get on board when they know that, sooner or later, a law will require them to do so anyway. That is the Liberal approach. Instead of doing what should have been done in Vancouver and working hand in hand with the provinces, the Liberals presented the provinces with their game plan and told them that it would be imposed on them in three years, with or without their consent. When the Liberals say that they are pleased that the provinces are on board, I believe it, because if they do not get on board, the Liberals will force them to do so. It is a bad approach.

The Liberal carbon tax undermines our business owners and punishes workers, producers, and creators of wealth, rather than helping companies reduce their environmental footprint and its impact on Canada's economy. In short, the Liberal government's number one bad decision is the creation of a carbon tax.

On another note, business owners are not happy about the extra payroll expenses related to the Canada pension plan. Last year, this government passed a bill to hike payroll taxes for all Canadian workers and businesses. In the end, it will cost Canadian workers an extra \$1,000 a year. As for employers, it will cost them an extra \$1,000 a year per employee. That is an extra \$2,000 per worker, \$1,000 from the worker and \$1,000 from the employer. These extra costs make it challenging for our business owners. The government wants to create wealth, jobs, and vitality and then turns around and tells employers that they have to pay an extra \$2,000 a year for every employee, including the tax charged to the employees themselves. That is not the right thing to do.

Same goes for the tax cuts. This government was elected on a promise to run a small \$10-billion deficit, which has ballooned to a \$30-billion deficit. The Liberals have broken their promises. They said we would return to a balanced budget in 2019, but now we know from the Department of Finance that we will have to wait until 2055.

The Liberals broke yet another tax-related promise. When they introduced their campaign platform, they promised to reduce the small business tax rate—which was at 11% then and subsequently dropped to 10.5%—to 9% to give our business people a boost, but they have not delivered on that promise, and the rate has not budged.

Add to that several tax credits that are no more. Earlier, my colleague from Foothills talked about the oil and gas development tax credits that this government axed, not to mention the tax credits designed to help create jobs and wealth, such as the investment and job creation credits.

• (1220)

So much for our business people, but what about the family tax credits that are no more? For example, what about the now-gone tax credit we created to help families purchase school and art supplies and sports equipment?

The most bizarre thing the Liberal government did was abolish the public transit tax credit. My friend, the member for Hull—Aylmer, who uses public transit to get to Parliament, which I think is great,

must be disappointed that his own government got rid of a tax credit that he and thousands of other Canadians were entitled to.

Had anyone told me three months ago that the Liberal government was going to axe the public transit tax credit, I would have said there was no way. This government goes on and on about how green it is, how much it cares about the environment, how much it supports workers. Well, that tax helped Canadian workers who polluted less by taking public transit. The truth is that the Liberal government just could not stand the fact that it was a Conservative initiative, so it decided to do away with it. That was not the right thing to do.

When it comes to businesses, the Liberal government has a habit of putting up roadblocks rather than helping them. These include the Liberal carbon tax, changes to the Canada pension plan, the tax cuts that we are still waiting for, and the cancellation of important tax credits to business owners.

In concrete numbers, exports have not increased. We are very concerned about this because exports create wealth in this country, and our domestic market is only 35 million citizens. Exporting is absolutely crucial. Unfortunately, over the past 18 months of this Liberal government, we have seen no increase in exports or investments for our businesses. This is not surprising when you look at all the tax increases on businesses and the cuts to the federal support our government had introduced through tax credits.

What worries all Canadians, and not just people in Quebec and British Columbia, is the softwood lumber issue. Everyone knows that softwood lumber is a natural resource that is very important to the Canadian economy. It contributes to growth in many regions of Canada, not just Quebec and British Columbia. All the other businesses across the country that work with softwood lumber for secondary wood processing also stand to gain when everything is going well.

For the past 18 months, the government has been dragging its feet when it comes to reaching an agreement with the United States that is good for both Americans and Canadians. The price of Canadian lumber is so much lower and its quality is so much higher than that of American lumber that it is affecting housing prices in the United States. This is a test of leadership. When a prime minister, a head of state, cares about an issue, he will tackle it head-on and resolve it.

That is what prime minister Stephen Harper did in 2006 when he met his American counterpart, President Bush, for the first time. The first thing they talked about was not the weather. They talked about subjects that had a direct impact on the Canadian economy. As a result, three months after that meeting, a softwood lumber agreement was signed under the leadership of prime minister Harper and President Bush.

When a prime minister shows leadership, we get results. When a prime minister takes every opportunity to get his picture taken instead of making decisions, we end up with nothing, even 18 months later.

Business of Supply

I would like to remind members of the good old days of Brian Mulroney and President Reagan. Canadian history has seldom seen a time when the Canadian and American heads of state were so in tune with each other. The current Prime Minister and President Obama were very buddy-buddy, and that is great, but it did not produce any results. The Prime Minister should have taken advantage of that strong personal friendship with the American president. They had 12 months to do something about this problem, but the Prime Minister did nothing. He preferred to meet President Obama for a sandwich in a Montreal restaurant, which is all well and good, but it did not produce any results.

That is why, after 18 months under the Liberal government, the Canadian economy is unfortunately not as strong as it should be.

• (1225)

[*English*]

Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has been criticizing our economic record, and I would like to put these four points to him about what has happened with our economy since we have come into power.

The first is that Canada has the best fiscal position among the G7 countries. Second, in the first quarter of 2017, the Canadian economy has had a 3.7% growth. Third, the unemployment rate continues to drop. Currently it is around 6.6%. At the beginning of our mandate, it was 7.1%. Fourth, in the past six months, the Canadian economy has more than 250,000 new full-time jobs.

We were elected on a platform that we would invest in the economy because we wanted to grow it. Apparently that is exactly what has happened. Our plan is working.

Does the member not agree that this is good economic news?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, first, let us talk about the G7. Everybody will recognize that when we were in office, we faced the most dramatic financial crisis. Thank God we were in office. We were the first country to get our heads out of the water. We had the best ratio of debt to GDP.

[*Translation*]

When the Liberals took office, Canada had the best debt-to-GDP ratio, which allowed them to make some really bad decisions. Canada weathered the financial crisis better than any other G7 country.

[*English*]

Speaking of that, first, the Liberals are talking about the creation of new jobs. Yes, but 80% of their jobs are part-time jobs, which was not the case when we were in office.

Also, let me remind the House that those people said they would invest in the economy by borrowing money. Before the Liberals were elected, they said that they would have a small deficit of \$10 billion. It will be about three times that, with no plan for a zero deficit.

It is very easy to invest money we do not have. However, we will be sending the bill to our children and grandchildren to pay for the bad administration of the Liberal government?

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to focus on part (a) in the motion, “rather than creating sustainable jobs to Canadian forestry workers”. When I hear government members talk about job creation and the excitement about that, they should look at the forestry sector. If they came to the Alberni Valley, which has the highest unemployment rate in southwestern British Columbia, they would quickly find out that we have huge jobs losses in our community. In fact, raw log exports have gone up tenfold in 10 years on Vancouver Island.

The federal government has been invisible for the last decade in creating jobs in my community. I find it very bold not only seeing this motion come forward from the Conservatives, but also hearing government members. There was nothing for the forestry industry in this budget and the budget before. It is long overdue that the government inject money into the forestry sector.

Today we should be talking about solutions, not just pointing fingers at each other. I am really disappointed when we have boatloads leaving the Alberni Valley and mills closing because people cannot even access their own fibre.

• (1230)

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague talked about the softwood lumber crisis, and we do recognize that. When we were in office, we addressed this issue, first and foremost, as a top priority. Leadership is all about that.

When we have a real leader who takes care of these people, we see that. The former prime minister met with his counterpart, the former president of the United States, and said that they had to do something to fix this, that it was his top priority. The then president, looking at his aide, said that they would address it. Three months later, we had a deal for 10 years.

Unfortunately, in the last 18 months, the Liberal government has done absolutely nothing, even if it had a great friendship between the former president and the Prime Minister. However, with the lack of leadership of the Prime Minister, nothing has been done on this file. This is very bad for the Canadian economy.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona.

I am pleased to help outline some of the NDP's thoughts and objections to the motion before us, which has all the thematic unity of a recipe for leftovers soup.

As is the case with leftovers soup, even if people find the totality of it distasteful, it does not always mean they do not like particular ingredients that were thrown into it. There are some good ingredients to this motion, but when taken together, unfortunately we feel we need to oppose it.

The aspect of the motion dealing with softwood lumber is an ingredient we think is a good one. It is right to draw attention to the fact that the government has simply failed to come up with a reasonable solution to the crisis in softwood lumber.

Business of Supply

As one of my colleagues in the NDP has just pointed out, it is a little challenging in some ways to hear that criticism come from the Conservatives. They were in government when the agreement expired. They had 10 years. They could have come to another agreement on it, but they did not. They left it to the Liberals, who then made a big deal of their great relationship with the Obama administration and what this would mean for Canadian softwood lumber producers. The Liberals would be able to go ahead and get not just any deal but the best possible deal for producers. That agreement still has not materialized.

A compensation package has been announced, presumably which is a bad omen for Canadian producers who hoped to get a deal that would allow them, through their work, to provide for them and their families, and not have to do that through a government compensation package. I suppose if the Liberals are not going to get it together to get a deal, then that is the next best thing. We would hope, however, to have a government that fights to get that agreement so softwood lumber producers can get back on their feet.

Even the agreement that was in place before was not a great agreement. It was signed by the Harper government. Today Conservatives members want to draw the attention of people to that fact. The leverage the prime minister at the time had was that successive challenges by the United States to the Canadian softwood lumber regime at the WTO and NAFTA had failed. The WTO and NAFTA had supported the Canadian softwood lumber system. In fact, we were on the cusp of getting another decision by the WTO that experts thought would affirm the Canadian position.

Instead of getting to hear that ruling and the benefit that would accrue to Canadian producers by having that ruling on the books, the Harper government went off and cut a side deal. That deal left a billion dollars of the \$5.4 billion, which were taken out of the pockets of Canadian producers, in the hands of the U.S. It had taken that money, and not rightfully. That is not just the NDP position; that is the opinion of NAFTA and WTO tribunals.

These are under agreements that we, frankly, do not always like. They were coming to the conclusion that Canada had been wronged by the United States, yet the rug was pulled out from under the feet of Canadian producers who wanted to get the money, which had been taken from them in unfair duties, back. The Harper government did not allow for that. It left a billion dollars of that money on the table.

The Harper government did it with another element of that story, which no one else seems to talk about today. It did it with a Liberal turned Conservative trade minister, David Emerson. Perhaps other parties in the House also want to explore that theme today. No only are the Liberals and Conservatives so close together on this issue, in their common failure to provide a lasting solution to softwood, even under the rubric of the WTO and NAFTA of which they were great supporters, but they felt comfortable using the same guy to negotiate for them on this file in the lead-up to and following the 2006 election.

With respect to this ingredient, we do need a lasting solution for Canadian softwood lumber producers, and it is incumbent on the government to deliver that. It has given us a lot of words, but not a lot of action. However, to hear that criticism coming from the

Conservative Party, when it is pretty hard to distinguish the two on this file, is a little rich, too rich to soup me, that is for sure.

•(1235)

Grain is another aspect of this motion. It is quite different from softwood lumber, but nevertheless, here they are together. The issue there, as we started to discuss in questions and comments, is that the big crisis in grain transportation for western Canadian grain farmers occurred after the Canadian Wheat Board was abolished. Partly what we see here is Conservatives criticizing Liberals for failing to find a solution to a problem created by the Conservatives. They found a Band-Aid solution with legislation that is expiring soon, and the problem with the Liberal approach is that while they do suggest some solutions in Bill C-49, the House has yet to pronounce on the adequacy of those provisions. The problem is that it is unlikely those provisions are going to be passed before the expiration of the interim or Band-Aid solution offered by the Conservative Party.

I will remain neutral on whether or not what the Liberals are proposing would provide a lasting solution, but what is clear is that there is going to be a gap between the Liberals' proposed solution and the Conservatives' Band-Aid solution. That puts grain farmers, particularly western Canadian farmers, in a tight spot that they ought not to be in, because we could see this problem coming from a long way off. The Liberals had extended the Conservative Band-Aid solution once before, so they knew when the deadline was coming. The fact that they have not been able to put in place a more lasting solution in time for what is essentially their own deadline is sad. Canadian grain farmers deserve better.

The last bit of the soup has to do with carbon pricing, and this is the ingredient that the NDP finds most objectionable. It is not about criticizing the Liberals' approach to carbon pricing, but it tries to say that any form of carbon pricing, the very principle of carbon pricing, cannot work with a functional, growing economy. That is a claim that we simply reject.

I watched as all but one Conservative member voted last week in favour of a motion for this Parliament to support the Paris climate agreement. The idea that we could go on with our current policies, as the Conservatives advocate, in further development of the Alberta oil sands and pipelines and not put any price on carbon is just not feasible. This aspect of the motion stands in contradiction to the position that they took only last week with respect to the Paris accord. Something has to change in terms of Canada's environmental policy if we are going to make good on our commitments under the Paris climate agreement. That much is clear.

When we get into the details, it does not take long before a lot of controversy is sparked, and there is certainly a lot of fair criticism that one can level at the government for its lack of concrete action.

For instance, if we are going to meet our Paris accord commitments, clearly we would need targets to get us there, but we do not have targets. We have the inadequate targets of the previous Stephen Harper government that the Liberals ran against, but the Liberals have not provided newer, more ambitious targets, so there is a clear problem in how we are going to get there.

Business of Supply

In my view, part of the problem with the Liberals' carbon pricing plan is that they have given all the responsibility for implementation to the provinces, which means it may be implemented differently in different parts of the country. This situation raises the issue of equity between provinces, and Canadians living in some provinces may live under a different carbon pricing regime from Canadians living in other provinces. That is a real issue, and it is not one that the Liberals have managed to adequately address.

There is an equity issue as well in terms of people on low or fixed incomes being disproportionately affected by a carbon tax. Other governments, such as the NDP government in Alberta, have sought to address this issue by bringing in a rebate program for low-income people that operates along the same principles as our GST rebate. It is not an insurmountable problem and it is one we could address, except that the Liberal government's approach has been to divest itself of all responsibility for implementation and put it onto the provinces. Once again, whether people will be disproportionately affected by this tax will depend on whether they live under the NDP in Alberta or live under governments in other parts of the country.

There is a lot to talk about and there is a lot to criticize. It is very disappointing to read in international papers this weekend, for instance, about Angela Merkel looking for support within the G20, thinking she could count on our current Prime Minister to stand up to Donald Trump on climate, and finding that she cannot.

• (1240)

It flies in the face of the motion that the Liberals themselves presented in the House last week to affirm our commitment to the Paris accord, a motion that we all supported nearly unanimously. Now we see that the Liberals' actions do not meet their words. It is Kyoto all over again.

We need to do better, but I do not think this motion is about a good-faith attempt to solve that problem.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, listening to the NDP dissect trade deals is a little like listening to hockey fans in Toronto talking to people across the country about how to win a Stanley Cup. The one thing about a lumber deal that we can pretty much count on is that the NDP will support reaching one, and as soon as we get one, the New Democrats will be out protesting against cutting down trees and trying to stop the lumber industry.

A series of issues were raised. I am most interested in the issue of climate change and in the notion of how wrong it is to accept the regional diversity of this country, to understand that northerners and coastal communities consume and use carbon differently from people in central Canada, and that producers of the resource have a different footprint. The NDP wants to impose a one-size-fits-all umbrella agreement across the country, as opposed to setting a national standard and then giving local flexibility in achieving those dollars as a carbon tax and then redistributing them most specifically and most surgically into the communities most impacted by the different consumption patterns.

In light of the fact that we are trying to achieve a national goal but at the same time respect regional authorities and regional dynamics, for the member's home province, what would be the best approach to

make sure that low-income Canadians in Manitoba were compensated to make sure that carbon pricing did not impact northern communities and low-income people in urban centres? What would that member see as the best way to redistribute provincial carbon revenues to achieve social equity while we achieve low greenhouse gas emissions by pricing pollution?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I would say that the way not to do it is by trusting a Conservative government made up of people who deny climate change. The thrust of the Liberal approach is to download that responsibility to that provincial government. If for a moment the member trusts Premier Pallister in Manitoba to come up with an equitable carbon-pricing scheme for Manitoba, he is, frankly, out to lunch. That is the issue.

What we are hearing about in our province with the Conservative government is not about whether we are going to use that money to reinvest in green technology that could ultimately help with a just transition from the current carbon economy to another one but whether it is going to be revenue neutral, because the government is going to cut income tax in order to offset the additional tax from the carbon tax. That is part of the problem.

There is a dearth of federal leadership on this file. Instead of bringing people together and saying that it wants to address the issues in the communities and that it respects that it may be different from province to province but it is not just going to dump it on the provinces and allow them to raise a carbon tax without investing some of the revenue in a future greener economy, by just telling the provinces to go ahead and do whatever they want, the government is going to end up with some pretty unprogressive ways of implementing that tax that would do very little for the environment. It is just going to be a shift in how government raises revenue instead of an actual plan for getting us off of a carbon economy.

• (1245)

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the issues that came to my mind was the lack of softwood lumber agreements being achieved by both the former government and the government now. It has created a crisis of job losses in many communities.

When we had that in the oil industry, people had their EI benefits extended to help them through that little trend. Could the member comment on whether that should be happening now in the softwood lumber industry, since there is a lack of leadership in trying to get an agreement in place, and in the meantime this measure could help the people who suffer job losses in their communities?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, it is worth highlighting that there was a compensation package announced. That is definitely plan B at this point. We want an agreement that lays the foundation for a strong industry going forward. The compensation package did not have any direct assistance to workers, which is unlike what happened in the oil and gas sector.

Business of Supply

We need direct help for workers in the industry. They continue to have mortgage payments and continue to have to feed their families, but they do not have access to employment insurance. We know that six out of 10 Canadians who need access to employment insurance do not have it. Unfortunately, people in the softwood sector are among them, and we have not seen anything from the government to remedy that situation.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise to speak, as my colleagues mentioned, to the everything-but-the-kitchen-sink motion today. I intend to give very brief remarks to the last matter, which has to do with the farmers in western Canada, but I will speak mainly to the second matter about Canada's energy sector.

On the matter of interswitching, this is a problem that the previous Conservative government did nothing to resolve in the long term. It just kept having temporary continuances. However, it did extend the interswitching distance, I think it was to 120 kilometres.

I have talked with the grain farmers of Canada, and with some of the growers in Alberta I know well, including Humphrey Banack. They said they would be pleased, if eventually this law is in place, to extend it to 1,200 kilometres, but are deeply disappointed that yet again the government is letting the August 1 deadline pass without any change. That means that the interswitching reverts to 30 kilometres. This is going to put our shippers at an extreme disadvantage, particularly those who are in the process of negotiating the shipping of their crop this fall.

Indeed, we support the fact that this should be expedited. We need the Liberal government to take measures to ensure this interim arrangement extends until this law is passed and in force.

The second matter is on the allegations by the Conservatives that the government is attempting to phase out Canada's energy sector by implementing what they call a job-killing carbon tax, adding additional taxes to oil and gas companies, removing incentives for small firms to make new energy discoveries, and neglecting the current jobs crisis in Alberta. What they are neglecting is the reality of the energy sector, not only in Alberta, not only in Canada, but across the world in fact. That is that most of the investment is shifting to the renewable energy efficiency sector. The Conservative Party absolutely refuses to understand that the energy sector includes more than oil and gas.

Contrary to what they assert, it is not the recent move by the Liberals to address climate change that is the problem; it is the complete failure of the previous government to address this global challenge in any credible way, or to take any measures to support the diversification of the economy. That includes in my province of Alberta, and including toward supporting the development, expansion, and deployment of renewable energy and job creation in the energy efficiency sector.

The Conservatives committed to reducing greenhouse gases, and then set targets. They then repeatedly promised to establish a regime to address the single largest and growing source of carbon emissions, the oil and gas sector. They proposed a cap-and-trade regime. They even issued a discussion paper on offsets. However, none of it ever materialized. They did, to give them credit, propose a shutdown of coal-fired power by 2050 unless the greenhouse gases were reduced,

investing millions of taxpayer dollars in carbon capture and sequestration.

The Alberta companies completely backed away because of the high costs and questionable efficacy of the technology. However, that target did not address the growing health impacts of the coal-fired power sector, which are well documented by the Canadian Medical Association. To its credit, the NDP Government of Alberta has moved forward the date of decommissioning of coal-fired power. That was in response to these concerns over the health impacts associated with the toxic emissions from coal-fired power. The federal government eventually followed suit and has also moved forward the date.

Alberta has also announced regulations to reduce methane emissions, which this government again mirrored but has delayed. Conservatives did nothing about methane, despite the fact that methane emissions are far more powerful in causing climate change than carbon.

The Conservatives' tirades about the carbon tax are growing tiresome. Many of the provinces have already initiated programs to reduce greenhouse gases in their jurisdictions, including a carbon levy imposed years ago by the then Progressive Conservative Government of Alberta, and a carbon tax imposed by the Government of British Columbia. Contrary to the allegations by the Conservatives that addressing carbon kills a fossil fuel sector, we need only look to the booming sector in B.C. and Alberta. Instead, the Conservatives should be supporting calls by many for additional measures to the carbon tax by the federal government to actually address climate change.

● (1250)

Environment Canada is projecting that based on the policies it has in place, the country is on pace to miss its reduction target for greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, pumping out at least 30% more than promised. That is based on the meagre Harper targets that it has continued to stick by.

In fact, there is a problem with the carbon tax. As many credible sources have pointed out, it is not sufficient on its own to deliver on the national reduction targets, let alone the commitments made in Paris.

Business of Supply

While a number of nations have managed to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, Canada's continue to increase. The government should start by expediting action on its promise to the G20 to phase out and rationalize inefficient fossil fuel subsidies. That has been recommended by Canada's Auditor General, who, in his 2017 spring report, criticized both the Department of Environment and Climate Change and Finance for failing to even complete a review of the perverse subsidies in place, let alone prescribing a plan and timeline to phase them out. This could go a long way to ensuring a more level playing field for investments in the renewable energy sector, and energy efficiencies.

Second, while the budget lists a myriad of measures to support deployment of renewables and increased energy efficiency, for the majority of those measures, any spending is defrayed over the next several elections. There has been almost zero allocated for it this year. The release of federal money supporting provincial and territorial initiatives under the bilateral agreements on green infrastructure and the low carbon economy fund are similarly postponed.

Why not restore the ecoENERGY retrofit program, as my colleague mentioned, to match provincial and municipal programs that would help reduce energy costs for small to medium-sized businesses, and help reduce the concern with the coming carbon tax?

It is also time to follow the United Kingdom model and infuse accountability into the climate program. As our party has been recommending since I was elected eight years ago, it is important to enact binding reduction targets and establish an independent commission to advise, monitor, and report.

The problem is that there is a list of initiatives that various ministers wander out to the public and industry to talk about, but there is no certainty of what they are moving forward on. The first glimpse that they might go forward with programs is that we saw this listing in the budget documents. However, when one turns to look at the budget document, one sees that in fact zero dollars are allocated this year. That includes programs to help isolated and northern communities get off diesel. That would be beneficial both to the health of the community and to reducing greenhouse gases. That is one small measure that is regrettably again delayed.

It is very important that we get off this rant about the carbon tax and instead come together to put pressure on the Liberal government for an extensive, encompassing program to meet not only its meagre targets, but targets it should be meeting for a fair contribution to the world reduction in greenhouse gases and its Paris targets.

It is not enough to send the Minister of Environment and Climate Change around the world. She spends a lot of time meeting with members from the European Union and so forth. It is time for her to come home and start implementing some of these measures that will benefit Canadians, reduce their costs for energy, and move us toward a cleaner energy economy.

•(1255)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's intervention today and making her position well known as it pertains to a price on carbon.

I am wondering if the hon. member can comment a little on Canada's position globally as it relates to the price on carbon. My understanding is that Canada is actually well priced, in terms of not being among the highest and also not being among the lowest. Globally, that puts us in a very good position as it relates to our ability to be competitive.

I am wondering if the hon. member can comment on that.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to serve on the environment committee with the hon. member.

I do not think the issue is the price on carbon. What is more important is to compare Canada to other nations in the actions it is taking to reduce greenhouse gases.

There has recently been a report comparing Canada with the United Kingdom. It shows the trajectory of Canadian emissions rising continuously, and the United Kingdom emissions falling. Why is that? It is because it has put binding targets in law, and it has an independent commission that holds the government's feet to the fire and allows the public to know what is going on.

In all honesty, my concern is that as the price on carbon rises, there will be greater push-back by the public or small business on being able to pay the tax. That is why it is all the more important for the government to bring forward additional parallel measures that are going to support our homes, families, and communities in reducing their energy use, and thereby reduce emissions.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Edmonton Strathcona for focusing so clearly on the difference between meeting the Paris agreement, which is to hold the global average temperature at no more than 1.5°C above what it was before the Industrial Revolution, and our current target of 30% below 2005 levels by 2030, which is inadequate, as the hon. member said. That was the target left in place by the previous Harper government, and it is inconsistent with achieving the Paris agreement.

As she also mentioned, a carbon price is simply the foundation for action. Where are the eco-energy retrofit programs? Where are those measures that will help Canada's economy transition away from dependency on fossil fuels?

The excuse I have heard from the government is that it has delayed things like eco-energy retrofit programs to make sure they could be rolled out in partnership with the provinces. I wonder if the hon. member has any comments on that.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for working tirelessly on this issue.

What is of even greater concern to me is the issue that the member raises. In fact, eco-energy retrofits are not even on the list of measures that the government is proposing to bring forward.

Business of Supply

I have spoken with other jurisdictions, and Alberta specifically would be delighted if the government started transferring the dollars that are supposed to be happening under the pan-Canadian agreement. It has finally initiated energy efficiency programs after four decades of the Conservative government refusing to have one. I know that it would welcome an infusion of federal dollars. The sooner we do can that and reduce energy use, the sooner we can get rid of coal-fired power and other major polluting sources of energy. Therefore, I would tell the government to bring it on. Let us start delivering those federal dollars to help build our burgeoning energy efficiency and renewable energy sectors, and provide jobs and opportunities in Canada.

● (1300)

Mr. Arnold Chan (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am so honoured to have so many hon. colleagues join us in the House today.

I have not taken the floor in some time and I am going to ask you, Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues on all sides of the aisle, for some indulgence today. I have every intention of speaking to the substantive motion before us, but before I do that, I have some matters of a personal nature that I have felt in my heart for some time and need to get out, and I am going to simply say them if the House would grant me that dispensation.

Let me first take the opportunity to introduce some of the most important people in my life, whom I have the pleasure of having in Ottawa today. They are my parents, Sandra and Anthony Chan; my brother, Dr. Kevin Chan; and of course my beloved wife, Jean Yip. Unfortunately, our three children Nathaniel, Ethan, and Theodore could not join us. The older two are currently in examinations, although Jean and I will be very pleased to welcome our youngest child Theo on Wednesday when he comes to Ottawa for his graduating field trip. We are very much looking forward to that.

First and foremost, it is a tremendous honour to serve as the member for Scarborough—Agincourt. All of us treasure the privilege that we have serving in this particular place. I am so grateful to my constituents of Scarborough—Agincourt for having given me a mandate twice to serve in this wonderful place.

While it is a very proud thing to serve as a member of Parliament, there is only one thing that makes me more proud, and that is to simply let my parents know my greater pride is reserved for being first and foremost their son, and being Kevin's brother, and most importantly, the spouse of my beloved wife, who has been there every step of the way. I simply could not ask for a better partner in life.

As I mentioned, one of the difficult things that often confronts us, and it is not unique to Canadians but obviously it is a challenge for those of us who serve in public office, is the sacrifices that are made by our families. If I have any failings to my children, such as having missed some of their important milestones, like recently missing Ethan's jazz concert at his school in order to perform my function here in the House of Commons, I ask them to forgive me, but I will explain the important reasons for why we do what we do.

The most important people in my life have taught me three important lessons, and they are the concepts of dedication, duty, and devotion.

On dedication, my parents, very much at an early age, instilled in both my younger brother and me the concept of doing our best. I have to say, and I would acknowledge, that I am one who has perhaps not achieved the same standard that my younger brother has achieved in terms of dedication. Dad has often reminded me that I often relied far too much on my talent and not enough on hard and diligent work, but I would like to think that was an important lesson that was imbued in both of us.

On the second point, of duty, the point I want to make here is that it was not necessarily done by way of word. It was done by way of practice, through the daily way in which my parents lived their lives.

● (1305)

Duty of course was paramount for them. I hope that Kevin and I have discharged our duty. I have the privilege of serving as a public office holder. My brother does it in a different way as a pediatrician, as a physician, who has travelled the planet to serve the least fortunate children in the world. I am very proud of the accomplishments he has made so far and the accomplishments he will achieve in the future on behalf of the most vulnerable children around the world.

Finally, my parents also taught us devotion. I also had another very important teacher in that, and that is my wife Jean. As many members know, I have been going through this challenge with my health for the last number of years. I simply could not have asked for a more devoted partner in life as I have walked through this journey. I will steal a line from a former prime minister of ours, the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien, in referencing his partner Aline: "Without you, nothing."

I wanted to get back to a more fundamental issue, one that has been raised a substantial number of times in the House, and that is how we comport ourselves.

I am not sure how many more times I will have the strength to get up and do a 20-minute speech in this place, but the point I want to impart to all of us is that I know we are all hon. members, I know members revere this place, and I would beg us to not only act as hon. members but to treat this institution honourably.

To that extent I want to make a shout-out to our colleague, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. This parliamentarian, who despite the fact we are not in the same party and despite the fact that we may disagree on some substantive issues quite vehemently, I consider to be a giant, not simply because she exhorts us to follow Standing Order 18, but more importantly, I have observed in her practice that she reveres this place. She is dedicated to her constituents. She practises, both here and in committee, the highest standard of practice that any parliamentarian could ask for. Despite strongly disagreeing, perhaps, with the position of the government of the day, she does so in a respectful tone. I would ask all of us to elevate our debate, to elevate our practice to that standard.

Business of Supply

It is only through that practice, which I believe she so eloquently demonstrates, that Canadians will have confidence in this democratic institution that we all hold so dear. It is important that we do that.

The other thing that I wanted to speak broadly to is the practice of ditching what I call the “canned talking points”. I am not perfect. I know that sometimes it takes some practice. There are instances when it is necessary for us to have the guidance and assistance of our staff, the ministries, and of our opposition research. However, I do not think it gives Canadians confidence in our debates in this place when we formulaically repeat those debates. It is more important that we bring the experience of our constituents here and impose it upon the question of the day, and ask ourselves how we get better legislation and how we make better laws.

We can disagree strongly, and in fact we should. That is what democracy is about. However, we should not just use the formulaic talking points. It does not elevate this place. It does not give Canadians confidence in what democracy truly means.

The other thing I would simply ask all of our colleagues to consider is that while we debate and engage, what we are doing right now, when we listen, that we listen to one another, despite our strong differences. That is when democracy really happens. That is the challenge that is going on around the world right now. No one is listening. Everyone is just talking at once. We have to listen to each other. In so doing, we will make this place a stronger place.

I have some comments that I want to speak broadly to Canadians on before I get to the substantive issue that was introduced in the main motion by our friend from Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman. I know that sometimes, for example, when we are about to enter question period, and I have to be honest, I am one who is beginning to find it challenging to watch. Maybe because I am on the government side. I have certainly participated with some glee at times on the opposition side, but I recognize that, and maybe my perspective has changed now that I have had a change of position in this place in the House, although I do not face the daily barrage, unlike members of the government.

• (1310)

I believe strongly that despite what we see in this place, what gives us strength is the fact that we can actually do it. We can actually engage in this process without fundamental rancour, without fundamental disagreement, and without violence. That is the difference, and that is why I so love this place. I would ask Canadians to give heart to their democracy, to treasure it and revere it. Of course, I would ask them to do the most basic thing, which is to cast their ballots. However, for me it is much more than that. I ask them for their civic engagement, regardless of what it actually may mean, whether it is coaching a soccer team or helping someone at a food bank. For me it can be even simpler than that.

It is the basic common civility we share with each other that is fundamental. It is thanking our Tim Hortons server. It is giving way to someone on the road. It is saying thanks. It is the small things we collectively do, from my perspective, that make a great society, and to me, that is ultimately what it means to be a Canadian. We are so privileged to live in this country, because we have these small acts of common decency and civility that make us what we are. I would ask

members to carry on that tradition, because that is the foundation of what makes Canada great.

If I may quote the Constitution, it imbues peace, order, and good government. I would go to my friend from Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, who would appreciate that particular point. We have much to be proud of, and I would simply ask us to celebrate this incredible institution. By doing those small acts, we will continue to uphold our Canadian democracy and the values that bind us together.

I think it would be inappropriate if I did not speak to the substantive motion of the day, so with the remaining five minutes I have been afforded, I will briefly address the motion our friend from Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman has put before us, because I may not have actually addressed it at all.

Let me simply say that I understand where the motion the member has brought forward comes from, but I profoundly disagree, and I disagree with it, respectfully, from the perspective of three quick criticisms.

First, I recognize that it attempts to provide a certain narrative that a particular party is good at managing the economy and a particular party is not so good at managing the economy, and it then tries to put piecemeal reasons why that is the case. I would first argue that it is difficult to evaluate the economic performance of a particular government after 18 months in any truly meaningful way, given the measures that have been taken.

• (1315)

I accept very much that we can attack certain measures the government has put in place. Whether one agrees or disagrees is obviously a point of reasonable debate, but I would argue that suggesting that what we have done would lead to some kind of profound economic catastrophe or failure at the present time is simply premature. I would argue that it would take some time yet to evaluate whether the policies of this government would lead to long-term, sustainable economic growth.

My second criticism is that there are a lot more complicated variables that go into issues of economic performance that this particular motion, in my respectful view, does not address. I would argue that there are broad parameters related to innovation and where the economy ought to go that are perhaps not captured in this motion.

The final point I would raise is to simply suggest that in some ways, this motion is somewhat nostalgic in terms of its viewpoint. It tends to look at our economy as a whole in terms of what it was or what it used to be as opposed to what it ought to be or where it ought to go. From my perspective, it does not address what I consider to be some of the much broader forces of global technological change this government is attempting to fundamentally address. We need to ask the critical questions in terms of where we need to ultimately go in positioning our national economy in moving things forward.

Business of Supply

I would offer those points as quick criticisms of the substantive motion before the House today, but I thank the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman for bringing it forward. It raises an important question about the direction of our economy. I would ask the hon. member to consider it from the perspective of our country as a whole as opposed to piecemeal. This motion, in some respects, has a propensity toward regionalizing, which I feel is an inappropriate approach when a government is attempting to address issues in the national economy.

• (1320)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is days like this when all members are very proud to sit in the House of Commons. Since this is questions and comments, I will choose the comment option for a change, because the eloquent address by the hon. member for Scarborough—Agincourt is a reminder to all parliamentarians of how we can strive to do better. I am very fortunate to call the hon. member a friend. We are both lawyers, we are both by-election winners, and we both fell in love with politics through Queen's Park. It was from my father, in my case, and for the hon. member, from working for Premier McGuinty. The House is better when our friend is here sharing his thoughts, as he has today.

I want the hon. member, Jean, Nathaniel, Ethan, and Theodore to know that we refer to each other in the House, by custom, as honourable. The member, by the way he has comported himself and added to our debate, truly deserves that title. The way he has treated his colleagues and approached debate and procedure in the House has been nothing short of honourable. I am glad he mentioned the small things, because his friendship and the small things have meant a lot to me throughout his time in this place.

I will end with one reflection. When I was travelling for months across this great country on a leadership bid that did not go quite the way I had hoped, it was tiring, but what was reassuring, and what Canadians should know, is that I got nice notes even from Liberal and NDP members wishing me well. I will never forget the day I was in Vulcan, Alberta, and tweeted that with the Liberal government, we were no longer going to live long and prosper. One of the funniest tweets in rejoinder was from my friend, the hon. member for Scarborough—Agincourt, who said that he thought my comment was highly illogical but that he wished me well. His notes and reassurance have really fuelled my passion to serve the public.

I will end my remarks, on behalf of all members of the chamber, much the way I ended that Twitter exchange. We have been, and shall always be, his friend.

• (1325)

Mr. Arnold Chan: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Durham, a friend indeed, and also, unfortunately, a fellow trekkie or trekker, depending on one's characterization. I unfortunately have not had the pleasure of visiting Vulcan, although I wish I could be teleported to that place someday. Others might argue that the blood that runs in my veins probably is a different colour than red, but I would argue otherwise. Let me simply say that I am deeply grateful for my colleague's friendship. More important, from my perspective, and this is in no way to disrespect the leader of the official opposition, I personally am glad that he is not currently the leader of the official opposition.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by simply associating myself with the eloquent remarks of the member for Durham and to say how much the NDP and its entire House of Commons family respects the hon. member for Scarborough—Agincourt. I was talking with my colleague from Courtenay—Alberni, who reminded me how eloquent the member was when we had an orientation for new members and how meaningful it was when he came forward.

I was so taken by his remarks today, not only about the work-life balance health issue he addressed but also about the need to thank people at the Tim Hortons, as he pointed out, or to be a little more civil on the roads. The member exemplifies that tradition of civility that we hope we can sometime get back in a more meaningful way in this place.

I had the honour and privilege to attend an event in the hon. member's riding of Scarborough—Agincourt during the time of the controversial debate involving medical assistance in dying. I got a chance to see the member in action with his constituents, and I can report to the House, without a shadow of a doubt, just how much he was respected and indeed loved by the members who were there.

I want to say to Jean and his family, I know how important it is for all of us to have family to hold us up. I know how much they have held up this member as well. On behalf of the New Democratic Party, I simply want to say how much we appreciate this member.

Mr. Arnold Chan: Mr. Speaker, let me thank my friend from Victoria and the third-party House leader for his very generous comments.

From my perspective, it cuts both ways. It was in fact his generosity, as the New Democratic Party justice critic who was willing to come to speak in a government member's riding on a highly controversial bill, Bill C-14, that demonstrated the strength of this House. If members actually look at our voting records, we voted at almost opposite ends on all the amendments and the main motion throughout, yet we could engage in a civil debate in my constituency and engage with constituents who had a diverse array of views on that particular subject matter.

That is exactly the point I was trying to make earlier. Parliament is a place of disagreement in terms of the debate, but we do not have to be disagreeable. My friend from Victoria is a shining example of exactly that, and I thank him for his friendship.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely speechless at the words of praise from my hon. friend from Scarborough—Agincourt, because he also holds up the mirror to someone who is a shining example of parliamentary excellence. I had the great good fortune that when he was first elected in a by-election, he was seated right there, so we were neighbours. I often tell my constituents that the Liberals used to be so irrelevant that they had to sit with me. I am a long way from a lot of my old friends on that side of the House, but we never were far away.

Business of Supply

I want to thank the member for Scarborough—Agincourt again—I thanked him privately—for a message he sent me when I was trying to decide if I should stay on as leader of my own party. Against all expectations the public might have of partisanship, his message to me meant the world to me, and it is one of the reasons I stand here not just as the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands but as the leader of the Green Party of Canada.

From the depths of my soul, I thank him, I thank Jean, and I thank his family for all the contributions he has made and will continue to make in this place and everywhere across Canada. His words should be etched in marble so we remember that what makes us Canadian is that we are willing to decide it is important to be kind.

• (1330)

Mr. Arnold Chan: Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. The member simply knows the esteem in which I hold her. The words she has just said simply speak for themselves, and I will let them stand.

Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Scarborough—Agincourt for one of, if not the most powerful, meaningful, and wise addresses I have heard in this place. He credits the member across the way from Saanich—Gulf Islands as, in his terms, carrying out the highest level of practice. I would agree with him in that statement, but I also put him in the same category of carrying out the highest level of practice.

Over the last few months, I have had the privilege of serving on the PROC committee with the member for Scarborough—Agincourt. His example has been nothing short of inspirational.

I have a question for the member. What advice can he give to us as to how to reach that magical place, that place where we take compassion and kindness, then build into there wisdom, insight, intelligence, then build into there a respect for our constituents with everything we do; respect for our families, who we love dearly; and at the end of the day, serving our constituents in the best possible way we can? How do we get to that place? What words can he leave us?

Mr. Arnold Chan: Mr. Speaker, let me first thank the member for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas for her generosity in the most personable ways. Only she knows what this means.

My advice is simple. We should use our heads, but follow our hearts. It is as simple as that.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for once, I am without words in this place. We should probably rise after that eloquent advice and address from the member for Scarborough—Agincourt, but I know he would want our parliamentary democracy and the wheels to continue. I would remind him, in a friendly way, that I was very much correct when I was in Vulcan.

I should add that I am splitting my time with the hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

With the current plan of the Liberal government, high taxes, high deficit, high debt, a war on resource-based jobs that are considered second-class, it would look like we are not en route to live long and prosper, as I joked with my friend from Scarborough—Agincourt that day in Vulcan.

That underpins why we are debating this today. It is a very cogent motion from my good friend, the MP for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, with a list of issues that show how in a year and a half our economy has been set back. In many ways the phrase “Canada is back” now means back into deficit, back into debt, back into higher Liberal taxes, back into cutting the military although suggesting at some magical point in the future the Liberals will put more money into it.

The member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman has put in a number of items that we should be mindful of as we debate the economy.

The first is the deficit. We know when a government runs a deficit, that means one of two things. Either it will have to cut spending at some point in the future, cut programs, or it will have to raise taxes. Many economists look at deficits as deferred taxes.

When the Prime Minister was the leader of the third party, he said Canada was in a recession and they needed infrastructure jobs. Therefore, he promised he would run a modest deficit, never to exceed \$10 billion. He broke that promise within three months of becoming prime minister. In fact, the Liberal government could only dream of deficits in the \$10 billion range. The Liberals' last budget tabled a \$28.5 billion deficit, while at the same time raising taxes.

Not only is the deficit a sign that there are more tax increases to come, the Liberal government set on an unparalleled course of raising taxes on families, on seniors by reducing the TFSA eligibility, on employers through the CPP payroll tax, through rolling back the planned reduction to small business. Now with the nationalized carbon tax, it has literally taxed every group and mode of economic activity.

As we joked recently about the Liberals' Saturday night budget tax, they are taxing beer, wine, and an Uber ride home. Therefore, on the so-called sharing economy, they are even taxing sharing. That I guess is sunny ways: broken promises on the deficit and taxes as far as the eye can see of all flavours and stripes.

I would remind the Minister of Public Safety, who has been here for many years, what he said when he criticized the last government. He said:

Does the minister take satisfaction in that debt number? Why, in arriving at that sorry position, did his government put our country into deficit again, before the recession occurred? It was not because of the recession. It was before the recession. That is when they blew the fiscal framework.

Business of Supply

Despite the third party leader's claims during the 2015 election, there was no recession. There was no need to run an even modest \$10 billion deficit. However, with their reckless spending, the Liberals are running \$28.5 billion in deficit, with no discernible impact on jobs from infrastructure and with capital in the resource economy and in manufacturing. Just a few weeks ago, we saw Procter & Gamble Brockville fleeing our country because of the high tax, high regulatory regime.

• (1335)

It is an astounding record. That is why my friend from Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman brought this to the floor of the House of Commons. The most important issue facing a family is whether there is a job for mom and dad if they want to work. Do they have that opportunity? They do not with the Liberal government, which has set out to have classes of jobs. IT and technology jobs seem to be acceptable to the government, yet resource-based jobs, softwood lumber jobs, or jobs in the fishing economy in Atlantic Canada somehow appear secondary to these cluster-based concepts it is going after.

Nothing shows this more than the most recent addition to our cabinet, the member for Burlington. Before getting into politics, she suggested we should close the oil sands, a comment that even the Prime Minister has let slip out from time to time. The government feels that the single largest contributor to our GDP, to the economy, to health care, to the programs we have, should be closed, like a turnkey solution, and maybe those people can get jobs in the so-called infrastructure bank, or the office towers of bureaucrats that the government is hiring. Maybe they can look at the 147 government programs on innovation to find a job that is acceptable to the government. Clearly getting one's hands dirty bringing product out of the ground and getting royalties for Canadians seems somehow secondary to the government.

I sat in the House when President Obama addressed us. The Prime Minister embarrassed us that day when he said that we were here to see a bromance in action. Frankly, I was embarrassed that our Prime Minister said that in the chamber while introducing the then President of the United States.

What did that bromance get us? President Obama cancelled Keystone XL. He would not finalize the softwood lumber agreement with his bromance dudeplomacy pal. He would not give us a good border deal. Bill C-23 gives the Americans a lot of benefit on Canadian soil and gives us nothing. It will not even remove the marijuana question from the preclearance screening to enter the United States at a time when the government is legalizing marijuana. It was a one-way deal. The Americans got everything and the Liberal government got a state dinner with seats for family and friends. That is not a win. That is not negotiating in our interests.

As my colleague from Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman reminded the House, it was the Conservative government that negotiated a deal on softwood, that gave certainty to 1,100 workers, who are now likely going to lose their job in the next few months, and gave \$300-plus million in economic activity, which is now lost. The Liberals have gone nowhere, even when they had this bromance with President Obama. When the Prime Minister had dinner with Mr. Obama in Montreal last week, I hope Mr. Obama picked up the cheque.

We literally have seen nothing from the government when it comes to the American relationship, which is an important one. Now the government, with its motions on the fly, and making up foreign and defence policies on the fly, seems to think its job is to be the global opposition leader to President Trump. Its job is to help Canada. Its job is to create jobs for families in western Canada, in southern Ontario, in Atlantic Canada, and in our north.

The Prime Minister has been all around the world, yet he has not been to Yukon. That is an embarrassment. It seems the government views resource jobs in our north and western Canada as second class. I was so proud that my first real job as a young person was working for TransCanada, inspecting the pipeline that runs through the Belleville to Ottawa area, which is the safest way to transit our resources to market. However, the government will poll an issue before it will determine what is in our country's best interest. It will ask foreign leaders what it should do. It will give our money to other countries' green programs, while our resource economy is hurting.

When I was in Calgary months ago, I was in line at McDonald's for a coffee and a mother behind us said to her sons, "You'll have to change your order because mommy lost her job and we're going to have to make some changes." There have been thousands of stories like that in Alberta, and people have heard nothing from the Liberal government.

• (1340)

In fact, with its antithetical approach to our U.S. ally, we are going to increasingly be talking about multilateralism but are going to be closed off from economic, trade, security, and defence opportunities. This motion is reminding Canadians that the failures of the Liberal government on the economy are profound, and we need to turn it around.

• (1345)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the hon. member for Durham.

What are the hon. member's thoughts on the job numbers that came out on Friday, which showed that Canada created 77,000 new full-time jobs from coast to coast and that the economy has grown at above a 2% rate, something that I do not think in the past 10 years was even reached by the prior government in power?

I would like to get his comments on the job growth we have seen for the last six months across Canada, the unemployment rate that has gone down, the general optimistic nature Canadians have on the economy going forward and the future for their kids, and the key strategic investments that we are undertaking as a government.

Business of Supply

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge for his statistical rundown. There have been jobs and I am happy about that. The full impact of the Liberal government's actions is not being felt. In fact, the carbon scheme across the country is really just being felt. We are seeing estimates well above 10¢ in additional price for fuel. It will take larger contracts and some period of time before industry accepts this new regime. We are also seeing the CPP payroll tax and other things taking time to take effect.

I remind the member that the auto parts industry across southern Ontario, including in Vaughan, where there are great jobs, is worried because we have an integrated North American economy. It is either going to be moving its location from Vaughan or losing contracts in the North American integrated economy because there is no input cost for carbon in the U.S. and there is here.

Again, this was another thing Mr. Obama praised the government for, yet we did not see Mr. Obama imposing a carbon tax. We are allowing our economy to become uncompetitive one month at a time. We may see a little pop up now, but when the full impact of this high-tax regime is in place, we will have no manufacturing business left in Vaughan or across southern Ontario.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pick up on that last question about the latest job numbers. I was struck by the fact that Statistics Canada's website was down almost that whole day. That was not an isolated incident. The former chief statistician, Wayne Smith, resigned in protest of the lack of IT support Statistics Canada was getting from Shared Services.

Does the member for Durham have any comments on the state of Statistics Canada and whether the Liberal government is providing enough support to this agency so that we, as parliamentarians and Canadians, have the data to properly evaluate what is happening in our country's economy?

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, the resignation of Mr. Smith from Statistics Canada highlights something that the Liberal government does very well. It talks the sunny ways game, but secretly it is the most partisan. Its House leader has been setting records in the use of closure. Had there been a resignation of this level from Statistics Canada under the Conservative government, the howls of outrage would be across this nation.

Nothing highlights it better than votes on a nationalized organ donor registry or a national program for autism, paltry amounts of money in the grand scheme of this reckless spending, yet the Liberals whipped votes on these issues because it did not come from that side of the House. That is not leadership. It is not sunny ways. When more and more families have less work for mom or dad, soon Canada will not be very sunny. It will be a cloudy future.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to the opposition day motion brought in by my colleague, the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, which indicates that the government has been very ineffective with respect to the care and due diligence of this nation.

In particular, I want to say that damaging Canadian industries and diminishing Canadian economic stability, as he has pointed out in his motion, are certainly things that we care about every day in the House. We hear it from our constituents when we get back to our

constituencies on weekends and during constituency weeks. It is certainly a situation that I have heard about quite regularly from my constituents.

My colleague, the member for Durham, has just pointed out that there is a huge deficit in place in Canada although the Liberals talked about small deficits during the election campaign. They have outgrown that by \$30 billion, which is about 30 times what the Liberals said they would have. That is terrible mismanagement. Our future generations are going to have to pay for that every day of their lives as they move forward, not to mention the fact that all of us in this chamber today will share in that burden as well.

There are three major areas of concern that the member has pointed out: the softwood lumber deal, the carbon tax, and in particular, the current rail service agreement with respect to rail transportation in the Prairies.

The member has talked at great length about the softwood lumber deal, so I do not need to say much more. Suffice it to say that thousands of jobs are dependent upon an agreement between Canada and the United States. With the tariff that has been put in place by the United States today, we clearly see that the government did not have an answer when it came up with about \$870 million as payment to cover some of the costs that will be borne by our industry. We need to find long-term leadership with respect to this matter. These stopgap measures are not good enough. That is what we are seeing in the other areas too.

The carbon tax that the government has implemented or is forcing upon provinces is certainly something that is going to continue to put people out of jobs. There were 200,000 jobs lost in Alberta alone. There are jobs lost in my constituency. We have a very small oil industry in western Manitoba, most of which is in my constituency. People have been put out of work there as well. We are only seeing some stability back in that area because of the stability in the price of oil right now, as well as an upgrade in the American economy. There has been a bit of a boost there. That is giving us some stability right now in Canada. However, it is very nebulous as to how long that may continue and if it will be on a long-term basis.

The area that I want to speak about today is mainly the current rail service agreements that ensure that our farmers can get their products to market.

In the spring of 2014, through the winter of 2013, our government brought forward Bill C-30, the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act, with our transportation minister, at the time, and our agriculture minister. They did an exceptional job of putting a program in place that would allow farmers some protection with respect to the movement of grain. There were extenuating circumstances, for sure, that winter. At that period of time, we had some of the coldest weather we have ever had. However, we are used to that in Canada, particularly in western Canada, so that is not an excuse with respect to being able to get grain to port on time.

Statements by Members

There were three or four areas that were very important in that whole venue with that act. One of them was allowing interswitching to move up from a 30-kilometre basis to 160 kilometres, which made it quite effective to have a bit of competition in the industry, which we do not have most times when we have two railroads with, basically, a duopoly with respect to being able to move grain in the Prairies.

Trucks can only move so much grain effectively and we do not have the processing plants to process all of the grain in the Prairies. In fact, at that particular time, about 50% of the grain in Canada was going for export. That is why we desperately need to have that kind of openness and a bit of protection against the movement of other products. We cannot just leave grain, because of the massive volumes of it alone, and because it is basically in a captive area. It has to be grown every year. It has to be moved and marketed, perhaps not all in one year, but it does have to be moved, and it is a perishable product in the long run.

● (1350)

That is why it is so important that we move forward for Canadian families and businesses on the Prairies and in Canada as a whole, because wheat contributes greatly to the gross domestic product of our nation. Millions of jobs in Canada depend on the shipment of grain in the agricultural industry.

The minister has brought forward Bill C-49 but there is great concern as to whether it will have any teeth and whether it will get passed before we rise in the House for the summer. I commend the minister for bringing it forward, but I would encourage him to talk to his colleagues and move forward with it. If the bill does not move forward there is going to be a huge gap in this whole area. Bill C-30 will take over again, and it dies on July 31. That would leave the huge gap I referred to earlier and farmers will go into the coming harvest without any type of rule or regulation in place that will allow for the convenience of knowing the conditions under which grain can be shipped for the coming year.

I referred to interswitching rights earlier. Long-haul interswitching could be utilized. It certainly allowed for competition within that 160-kilometre radius. Interswitching is a tool that we brought in with Bill C-30. It is a much better rule than using competitive line rates, which have been in since the change in the Crow benefit in 1995. Competitive line rates, while sounding good, really were an ineffective way of providing the certainty that farmers and grain companies would have some competition. That is why the grain companies and the farm groups have joined together to lobby the government to put a stronger rate in place, a much stronger and more useable mechanism to use in that area.

A number of groups in Saskatchewan, and a growing chorus of western Canadian groups, have called for an extension of the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act that we had in Bill C-30. I am calling on the government today to extend that again. It was extended once by the government but it needs to do it again. That will provide fairness and equity and predictability in regard to the movement of product into the fall.

The government is talking about proroguing the House. If the House is prorogued this summer or early in the fall, the legislation would die on the Order Paper and the government would have to

start all over again. This would provide unpredictability in the industry for some extended time down the road. It would be the spring of 2018 at the earliest or the fall of 2018 before we would have any kind of predictable rules to carry on with the movement of grain products in western Canada and to get grain to port in the just-in-time fashion that is required today to meet the markets that we built up so extensively through the 40-some free trade agreements that the Harper government signed with our trading nations. Keeping markets open is one of the best things that a government can do in relation to our agricultural industry.

The government needs to also look at the coordination of the grain grading system between Canada and the United States because there is much grain movement back and forth. A lot of livestock goes back and forth. Having sat on the western standards committee of the Canadian Grain Commission for a number of years as a farm representative, I know how important access to the U.S. is.

There are other things that I would ask the Minister of Transport to do. One of them is to get the Minister of Agriculture on side to move forward with some of these areas as well. He is looking at removing deferred grain tickets, cash tickets, and that would not be helpful to farmers either. The Minister of Agriculture needs to move more quickly in regard to the PED virus in hogs and cleaning trucks in Manitoba.

● (1355)

There were nine cases last month, and there has still been no action on that to make sure we maintain a strong hog industry.

All of that fits into the transportation of product. We are talking about the transportation of grain, but the movement of livestock is part and parcel of the use of grain on the Prairies.

I look forward to any questions.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Brandon—Souris will have five minutes for questions and comments on his remarks when the House next resumes debate on the motion before the House.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[*English*]

PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks Philippine Independence Day, a day when the Filipino community celebrates its 119th anniversary of independence from colonial rule. This morning I had the privilege of standing with the Philippine consul general, Mayor Tory, and Filipino community leaders, proudly raising the Philippine flag at Toronto city hall.

*Statements by Members***TRANSCONA MUSEUM**

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Elmwood—Transcona and a former member of its board of directors, I am pleased to rise and congratulate the Transcona Museum on its 50th anniversary.

The museum got its start in 1967 when then City of Transcona alderman Paul Martin moved a motion for its establishment. During its life, the museum has occupied some important spaces in Transcona history, including Roland Michener Arena and its current location in the former Transcona municipal office.

As the main hub of Transcona's social history, the museum preserves and displays a wide variety of artifacts and documents. Most recently, it acquired ownership of CNR locomotive 2747 from the Winnipeg Railway Museum. In April, 1926, the 2747 became the first steam engine built in western Canada, one of 38 built at the Canadian National Railway shops in Transcona. It served over 30 years before being retired to rest in Rotary Heritage Park.

Time has taken its toll on this important piece of Transcona history. I thank the museum staff and volunteers for their work to preserve our history, including the 2747.

* * *

JAPANESE COMMUNITY IN STEVESTON

Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last month, through the efforts of Richmond's sister city of Wakayama, Japan, and people like Steveston's own Jim Kojima, one of the world's largest tall ships, the majestic *Kaiwo Maru*, arrived in Steveston Harbour.

Many of Steveston's early Japanese settlers came from Wakayama in the late 1880s. They formed the Japanese Fishermen's Benevolent Society, and together they built a hospital, school, and martial arts centre. Today the Japanese community is a strong and tangible presence in Steveston, proud of their Japanese heritage, yet fiercely Canadian.

I wish to thank the Japanese community for their many contributions to Steveston and salute Jim Kojima for his dedication and commitment to preserving Steveston's Japanese history and culture.

* * *

● (1405)

LOCAL OFFICIALS IN SHERWOOD PARK—FORT SASKATCHEWAN

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Alberta will have municipal elections this fall, so now seems a fitting time to pay tribute to the current municipal officials, some of whom are not seeking re-election.

Local mayors and councillors have been great allies and partners as we worked together to advance the priorities of Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan. When it comes to supporting the energy sector in particular, local officials have been outspoken advocates for pipelines and for a response to the unemployment crisis facing the province.

Canada is home to one of the fastest-growing Filipino communities in the world. In my riding of York Centre and across Canada, Filipino Canadians make rich contributions to their communities and help to build a better Canada for us all. I am incredibly proud that York Centre is home to Toronto's Little Manila, as well as hosting annual events, like the Salu Salo picnic and the Taste of Manila Festival. I invite all members of the House to come and visit Little Manila to experience the vibrant food, music, and culture of the Philippines.

On this poignant anniversary, I want to acknowledge the importance of the Filipino community to Canada and wish them a happy independence day.

Maligayang araw ng kalayaan! Mabuhay!

* * *

PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, *Mabuhay*. Canada is home to a vibrant Filipino community, and today Filipinos around the world will celebrate the 119th anniversary of the declaration of independence of the Philippines.

Canada has a special relationship with the Philippines. Not only are we trading and economic partners, but we have strong people-to-people ties as well. The Philippines continues to be the top country of origin for immigrants to Canada. The over 700,000 Filipino Canadians residing in Canada are an immense asset to Canadian society.

On behalf of the Conservative Party of Canada, I wish all those celebrating this occasion a happy independence day.

Maligayang araw ng kalayaan! Mabuhay!

* * *

[Translation]

DORVAL

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, I am proud to mark the 125th anniversary of the city of Dorval. This small community on the banks of the St. Lawrence was incorporated as a town on June 24, 1892 and, as its motto *Ego Porta Mundi* states, has become a gateway to the world with its Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport.

[English]

As with Confederation a quarter century prior, it was the building of railways that forged this community. The arrival of the Grand Trunk and Canadian Pacific railways linked the village to the rest of our country and brought an economic boom to Montreal.

Those wanting to escape the downtown hustle could take the train to spend their summers in a quiet green place in the parish of Saints-Anges de Lachine, a place called Dorval. However, it will not be quiet this Saturday, June 24, as we will be celebrating its quasiquincentennial all day and all night at the Parc du Millénaire, and everyone is welcome to join us.

Statements by Members

I recently welcomed the local leaders to Ottawa. They were here lobbying on behalf of the Alberta Industrial Heartland Association. This association is an initiative of local municipalities advocating for the downstream part of the energy sector. Municipal officials work on issues big and small. I once called my local councillor at 11 p.m. to get his advice on dealing with an animal that had gotten into my house and, much to my surprise, he answered the phone. That was before I was elected.

Whether it is dealing with political animals here in Ottawa or animals in my basement, I know that I can always count on the important partnership between my office and local municipal officials. I thank them for their service.

* * *

LGBTQ2 COMMUNITY

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one year ago, the world was shocked by a deadly and hateful attack on the Pulse nightclub, a gay bar in Orlando, Florida. Canadians sought solace at vigils across the country. At the Alberta legislature on the closing day of the 2016 Pride Festival, I stood with hundreds of Edmontonians from all backgrounds, creeds, sexual orientations, and gender identities to mourn the 49 innocent lives lost.

Two days ago, almost one year to the day of the Orlando massacre, I stood with my fellow Edmontonians to celebrate the beginning of this year's Edmonton Pride.

[Translation]

With rainbow flags on every street corner, we celebrated another year of promoting inclusion and equality.

[English]

Over the past year, I have met and befriended three Orlando survivors. They and their loved ones would want us to remember our brothers, sisters, and friends in Orlando and to redouble our efforts and commitment to fight for the dignity and inclusion of LGBTQ2 people around the world.

As Canadians, we mourn together, we celebrate together, and we stand proudly for equality and inclusion as one country, one community.

* * *

[Translation]

SUMMER IN RIVIÈRE-DES-MILLE-ÎLES

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the temperature rises and things get a little heated in Ottawa, we can start turning our thoughts to summer, which is just around the corner.

Indeed, 2017 is a year of celebration from coast to coast to coast and that will very much be the case in Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, where there will be no shortage of activities.

Throughout the summer, the Vieux-Saint-Eustache public market will showcase local products from the lower Laurentians. The young and not-so-young will be able to find something to their liking there.

I invite everyone to come celebrate our national holiday on June 23 in Boisbriand, or in Saint-Eustache on June 23 and 24. These events are not to be missed.

Finally, let us not forget the biggest party of all on July 1st, the day we will be celebrating Canada's 150th anniversary in Deux-Montagnes and Rosemère.

I will be attending all the celebrations. I invite everyone to join me and have fun with family and friends. Have a good summer, Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

* * *

[English]

FACING THE MUSIC

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has been like a broken record since it began. It started off singing a “we're for the middle class” song, but its hit parade since then has been more like this: on electoral reform, *Promises, Promises*; on the infrastructure file, *A Little Less Talk And A Lot More Action*; on the Bombardier file, *Money For Nothing*; on its partisan appointments, *Dirty Deeds*—and they were not dirt cheap, because some of them paid \$30,000; on its legislative agenda, *Wasted Days and Wasted Nights*; and on the public safety file, *I Want A New Drug*.

However, Canadians are singing a different tune. Canadians are now singing *Your Smiling Face*, *True Blue*, *Time for a Cool Change*, and *Get It Right This Time*.

While the Prime Minister wastes taxpayer money on summer vacations and sells Canada to foreign interests, Canadians have sheer excitement for 2019.

* * *

COME FROM AWAY

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure and, indeed, an honour to congratulate the Canadian musical *Come From Away*. Last night, *Come From Away*'s Christopher Ashley took home the Tony Award for best direction.

On September 11, 2001, the world was horrified to witness the evil destruction of the World Trade Centre. However, there was a tremendous act of kindness and compassion shown on that day, when almost 6,600 passengers were stranded in central Newfoundland for days. As true Newfoundlanders, we fed, housed, entertained, and consoled folks we called “the plane people”. *Come From Away* celebrates this genuine act of kindness, and now Newfoundlanders and their member of Parliament say thanks to the cast, the crew, and the creators of this wonderful musical for honouring us.

Congratulations on their well-deserved nominations and awards this season. We thank them.

Statements by Members

●(1410)

17TH GYALWANG KARMAPA

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today, along with my colleague from Parkdale—High Park, to welcome His Holiness the 17th Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, on his first visit to Canada. I would like to commend His Holiness for his commitment to helping youth, for his dedication to social and environmental responsibility, and for bringing Buddhist teachings to life in the modern world.

His Holiness touches many lives, and many he knows, but many he does not. By making Buddhism and meditation accessible to people through technology and digital resources, he is helping thousands of people who suffer from mental health challenges to find peace. The impact of His Holiness is far reaching and is helping to change the lives of people who might otherwise suffer alone.

It is a privilege to have the Tibetan Canadian Cultural Centre in my riding of Etobicoke—Lakeshore. It is a vibrant community, rich in culture and tradition. The goals of the centre and Tibetan Buddhism in general reflect a beautiful respect for life and harmony that transcends all cultures.

I welcome His Holiness to Canada. May his trip be very meaningful.

* * *

17TH GYALWANG KARMAPA

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we welcome His Holiness the 17th Karmapa on his first visit to Canada. The Karmapa's life should remind us of the dire human rights situation in the so-called autonomous region of Tibet. At 14 years old, the Karmapa fled his home amid the tyrannous efforts of the Government of China to persecute the people of Tibet through forced assimilation and restricting religion, to the point of destroying religious buildings. Sixteen years have passed since then, yet observers report that conditions have become worse, not better.

As we welcome the Karmapa, we ought to recall the words of former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, when he said:

I am a Canadian....
 free to speak without fear,
 free to worship in my own way,
 free to stand for what I think right,
 free to oppose what I believe wrong,
 or free to choose those
 who will govern my country.
 This heritage of freedom
 I pledge to uphold
 for myself and all mankind.

Accordingly, the current Liberal government needs to stand up to the People's Republic of China and advocate for a truly autonomous region for Tibetans, so they may enjoy the freedoms that we do.

* * *

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF CONFEDERATION

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a beautiful spring in Newfoundland is not something that our province is known for, but this year Canada 150 initiatives are starting to bring some

colour to my riding of Avalon. Canada 150 anniversary gardens in the communities of Conception Harbour and Conception Bay South have been bringing our people together to celebrate our strong, proud, and free country. This past fall, I joined these communities as we announced that they would be two of 150 towns to have anniversary gardens in celebration of 150 years of Confederation.

I would like to recognize Trudy Strowbridge and Mayor Craig Williams of Conception Harbour, and Stuart Crosbie, Michael Mooney, and staff of the Manuels River Hibernia Interpretation Centre, for all their hard work and dedication as they patiently wait and care for these gardens as they come into bloom.

[Translation]

I would like to take this opportunity to wish my constituents in Avalon and all Canadians a happy Canada 150.

* * *

[English]

INTERNATIONAL PARAMEDIC COMPETITION

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to rise in the House to congratulate members of the Windsor-Essex emergency medical services team. Four outstanding paramedics from my riding of Essex recently competed as Team Ontario at the prestigious International Paramedic Competition in the Czech Republic, where they won first place. This win is incredible, as it is the team's second straight win. They have made our region proud by bringing back-to-back gold medals home to Windsor-Essex.

Captain Chris Kirwan, Lance Huver, Mike Filiault, and Shawn May competed over a 24-hour gruelling period. They showed resilience, physical endurance, and perseverance through a variety of scenarios dealing with simulated traumas and challenges that they may encounter in the field. The recognition that these four men received not only shows the calibre of the services they provide daily to our community, but also the dedication and talent of all our emergency services personnel. I want to thank Chris, Lance, Mike, and Shawn for their devotion and for honouring Windsor-Essex on the world stage.

* * *

●(1415)

WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a report released today by World Vision Canada reveals there are at least 1,200 Canadian companies importing \$34 billion worth of products every year with links to child and forced labour. This is up from \$26 billion in 2012.

Oral Questions

For example, coffee beans, a product used by many of us every morning, are harvested by children like Melvin in Honduras. Melvin works 12 hours a day, and started when he was only seven years old.

Two years ago, the U.K. adopted the Modern Slavery Act, which requires companies to produce an annual report outlining the steps they are taking to address child and forced labour in their supply chains. Today is World Day Against Child Labour. Canadians are calling on the government to work with stakeholders to develop similar supply chain transparency legislation. It is time for Canada to act and take steps to prevent the exploitation of children, and people of all ages, trapped in forced labour. Let us work together to end modern slavery.

* * *

WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks the World Day Against Child Labour.

Of the estimated 168 million children engaged in child labour, most live in areas affected by conflict and disaster, forced to leave their homes, pushed into poverty and starvation, trapped in situations where their basic human rights are violated. Conflicts and disasters have a devastating impact on people's lives.

As schools are destroyed and basic services are disrupted, children are often the first to suffer. Many are internally displaced and become refugees in other countries, and are vulnerable to trafficking and child labour. Ultimately, millions of children are pushed into child labour by conflicts and disasters.

As we try to achieve the elimination of child labour by 2025, let us be committed to working together here in this House, as parliamentarians, to end child labour in areas affected by conflict and disaster.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recently I met with a manufacturer who has had to cut back shifts at his plant in Markham because of Kathleen Wynne's disastrous energy policies. If the Prime Minister insists on imposing his national carbon tax, this small business owner will have no choice but to move his operations to the United States along with the jobs it creates.

Conservatives will always be opposed to the carbon tax because we know that when small business owners are forced to flee, not only do the economic opportunity and prosperity go with them but global emissions are not reduced. What part of that does the Prime Minister not understand?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to recognize that almost all of the Conservative Party recognizes the need for the Paris agreement and moving forward in the fight against climate change. We have put forward a strong pan-Canadian framework that demonstrates we

know how to do that, with carbon pricing, with working with the provinces, with investing in renewables. We very much look forward to the Leader of the Opposition's proposal on how he plans to reach those carbon targets as well.

* * *

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Prime Minister that those targets can be reached under a Conservative government without raising taxes.

[Translation]

The Prime Minister's recent decision to kowtow to the Chinese government raises serious national security concerns. He ignored the advice of national security experts and approved the sale of Canadian satellite technology company Norsat to a Chinese owner without subjecting it to a full security review.

When will the Prime Minister stop making decisions that jeopardize our national security solely to please—

The Speaker: Order. The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we take our national security responsibility very seriously. That is why all investments go through a rigorous process to protect national security.

In fact, in this case, we spent twice as many days as usual reviewing this case. We can assure all Canadians that all of the procedures were followed in accordance with the law.

● (1420)

[English]

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Norsat itself has said that the Liberals waived a national security review. Canada's defence policy cannot include selling national security secrets to appease Communist dictatorships, even if they happen to have secured the admiration of our Prime Minister.

Experts such as the former ambassador to China and former CSIS director believe that this deal requires a formal national security review. Was waiving the review part of the cost for the Prime Minister's cash-for-access events with his Chinese billionaire friends?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we followed the advice given to us by our national security agencies. The member opposite knows full well that we followed the process, did our due diligence, and did our homework. I would like to remind the member opposite that all transactions are subject to a national security review. We never have and we never will compromise national security, and the partisan jibes that the members opposition are taking are unworthy of this House.

* * *

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can imagine the conversation that took place in the Prime Minister's Office between Katie and Gerry, who must be thinking that they have plenty of cushy commissioner positions to hand out, including official languages commissioner, lobbying commissioner, and the conflict of interest and ethics commissioner.

Who will get them? I think they had a little chat and decided that it would take some good Liberals to fill them.

It is absolutely crucial that those positions be filled by people who are beyond reproach, because their role is to protect Canadians from bad decisions.

Will the Prime Minister commit to ensuring that the process will be entirely non-partisan?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are the ones who put in place an open, transparent, merit-based process. Our aim is to identify highly qualified candidates from across the country who truly represent Canada's diversity of perspectives and backgrounds to fill those positions.

We can confirm that over 60% of the people we appointed are women, 12% are from visible minority communities, and over 10% are from indigenous communities. We reformed Canada's appointment process after 10 years under the Harper government.

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Ms. Meilleur demonstrated that she has better judgment by acknowledging that she was no longer credible.

[English]

We did not pick Mr. Fraser because he was on the list of the donors of our party. We did it because he was able to do that, and he proved to everybody in the country that he had the ability to do it.

Can the Prime Minister show some leadership, and assure Canadians today that the appointment process for the future government commissioners, who will be the watchdogs of the Canadian population, will be non-partisan, transparent, and not just a way to reward Liberal donors?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of petty politics by the previous government, we put in place an open, transparent, merit-based process, to which we encourage all Canadians to apply. Indeed, all members in the House should reach out to community leaders, the people they know would be great candidates, and urge them to apply through the merit-based process.

We have been able to appoint over 60% women in the appointments we have made since coming into office, over 12% visible minorities, over 10% indigenous. We are putting in place appointments that look like Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, according to *Der Spiegel* the Prime Minister encouraged members of the G20 to remove all references to the Paris agreement from the joint statement. Can the Prime Minister confirm or deny that report?

[English]

The question is about the joint statement, nothing else.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the past 18 months, Canada has been a leader in the cause of climate changes, in fighting climate change, and putting forward the Paris agreement. Indeed, our Minister of Environment and Climate Change was part of making sure the Paris agreement was a success.

This was an opportunity for us to lead, and we continue to see opportunities to lead. We will not let climate policy or indeed international policy dictated by any country. We will push forward on understanding that building for a cleaner environment and growing the economy happens side by side together for the better of us all.

● (1425)

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a Prime Minister who will not even meet the Harper targets that he used to ridicule is not a leader on climate change.

What would be wrong with simply striking all mentions of the Paris agreement from the planned G20 statement on climate, the Prime Minister asked Merkel.

Did he make that ask, yes or no? Any more equivocation is simply confirmation.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear. Leadership on climate change matters, not just for the future of our planet, for future generations; it matters for our economy right now. That is why we are moving forward in a responsible way. The answer to the specific question by the hon. member is no, I did not say that.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister also promised a nation-to-nation relationship. He promised to stop taking first nations children to court. He vowed to end boiled water advisories. He swore that he would conduct some consultations. So far he has failed on all fronts.

Oral Questions

Could the Prime Minister explain why his government, not the Conservative government of Mr. Harper, has spent almost \$1 million fighting first nations children in court. I ask him to please spare us the talking points. These kids deserve better.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was proud this morning to sit down with the Assembly of First Nations national chief, Perry Bellegarde, and sign a memorandum of understanding on how we would move forward, tangibly and concretely, on delivering what a nation-to-nation relationship looks like, delivering for communities, delivering for children right across the country in indigenous communities.

The fact is that we are moving forward on this extraordinarily important relationship, and we are going to continue doing that.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of his solemn promises was that there would be an institutional change. The Liberals promised to fully implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Will the Prime Minister stand up and confirm his support for the NDP's bill to fully enshrine the UN Declaration in federal law or not?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, if our nation-to-nation relationships are to be built on respect, it is essential for us to work with the first nations and indigenous peoples. It is not up to a government to decide what is going to be done. It is about working with the first nations and indigenous communities to get them what they need in a tangible and concrete manner. That is the type of partnership we started a year and a half ago, and that is how we are going to continue to work. We are not going to impose solutions as the NDP would have us do.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-44 features some foolish legislation, including one that is particularly underhanded. I am speaking of the so-called tax escalator. We know that the government decided to raise taxes on alcohol, but oddly enough, this tax will continue to automatically increase year after year. This is known as a tax escalator.

Why is this government so greedy when it comes to Canadian taxpayers' wallets?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thanks to Bill C-44, we will continue to move forward with our plan to improve the lives of Canadians.

It is true that Bill C-44 includes a way to collect a tax that keeps pace with the rate of inflation. That is our goal, and it is very important. We know that it is crucial to make important decisions for the future of our country and our economy.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's candour. However, the major problem is that parliamentarians will never have the opportunity to vote on this yearly tax hike. That means that, year after year, this tax will escalate and no one will be accountable. That is completely unacceptable, and it is not even in keeping with democratic principles.

I will ask my question again. Why is this government so greedy when it comes to taxpayers' wallets?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, inflation is a fact of life.

Our goal is to increase the rate of economic growth. That is our goal, and that is exactly what we are doing. The rate of economic growth was 3.7% in the last quarter. That is the best rate Canada has seen in recent years.

Our plan to improve the economy is working, and we will continue to move forward with it.

* * *

● (1430)

[*English*]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are intent on ensuring that foreign investors have priority access to Canadian assets. The Liberals sold off a chain of Canadian retirement homes to Chinese investors. The Liberals disregarded national security concerns to sell off a high-tech satellite imaging company to China. The Liberals commissioned an internal report to sell off Canadian airports and ports.

Is it the minister's intention to have foreign governments own Canada's electricity grids, public transit, and bridges through the infrastructure bank, yes or no?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, due to the lack of investment and inconsistent approach by the previous government, our municipalities are facing greater gridlock, which is stifling the growth of our economy. The lack of investment in affordable housing is robbing children and families of opportunities.

We have committed to invest a historic amount of infrastructure to grow our economy, create jobs, as well as fill the deficit that has been left behind by the previous government. We will continue to do that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everyone from experts and analysts to opposition MPs and now senators wants the government to take the infrastructure bank out of the budget. Everyone is concerned about the ethical issues, the governance model, and the risks that Canadian taxpayers will take on in terms of the \$35 billion that the Liberals are planning to invest.

Is the Minister of Finance refusing to do this because he has already made deals with Liberal donors or foreign investors?

[English]

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we put forward a very ambitious agenda to support our provinces and municipalities to build the necessary infrastructure that they need, the infrastructure that should have been built a decade ago. The role of the bank will be to mobilize institutional investors and pension funds to build the infrastructure that otherwise may not get built.

Our focus is to grow our economy, create jobs for the middle class, and provide opportunities for Canadians for success, and we will continue to do that.

* * *

TAXATION

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals love saying one thing and doing another. The Information Commissioner agrees. The Liberals claim to be transparent, but will not reveal the true cost of their carbon tax scheme.

The *Regina Leader-Post* got internal briefings of future revenue, from a \$50-a-tonne carbon tax in 2022, but all facts are blacked out. The very nature of the Liberals' carbon tax is not transparent: more hidden costs, more hidden details.

Will the Liberals be honest and finally reveal how much their carbon tax will actually cost struggling Canadians?

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all of this information is already in the public domain. Ninety-seven per cent of Canadians already live in jurisdictions that have either implemented a price on carbon pollution or are in the process of doing so.

Pricing of carbon pollution is a market-based mechanism that allows us to reduce emissions at the lowest possible cost, while stimulating innovation and job creation going forward.

Last week, I was very pleased to see that most members on that side of the House voted in favour of the Paris agreement. Given that most of those members now acknowledge the importance of addressing climate change, I would ask them to outline their plans for achieving the Paris targets if—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during the last election, the then-Liberal leader ran an ad of himself walking up a downward escalator, as he made promises to the middle class on taxes. After the election, we found out what this tax escalator actually meant. It meant that beer prices were going to go up, year after year, to fill government coffers. That is in addition to the tax escalator on home heating fuel, groceries, and everything else.

When will the government finally reverse the escalating cost of taxes on middle-class Canadians?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we absolutely want to be clear on taxes. We lowered taxes on middle-class Canadians. We raised them on the top 1%. All I can say for sure is the people opposite did not vote for that. When we lowered tax on middle-class Canadians, we meant it.

Oral Questions

What we are doing with this is making sure that the taxes on these particular issues stay even with inflation over time. That is appropriate. We promised we would seek to make sure our tax system was fair, and that is exactly what we have done for Canadians.

* * *

● (1435)

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago, the President of the United States officially put on notice the renegotiation of NAFTA, meaning we are currently within the 90-day window of the process.

On July 17, the U.S. will reveal its final priorities, yet Canadians still do not know what the Liberal government will prioritize. Canadians workers are tired of being left out of the conversation when their livelihoods are at stake. They deserve to have their jobs clearly defended by the government, and the clock is ticking.

Will the Liberals stand up for good jobs and protect our labour standards that Canadians have fought to achieve?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, simply put, yes, we will.

Trade agreements need to grow and mature, as the economy grows and matures. NAFTA has been tweaked, modified, and amended 11 times since its inception. We have invited Canadians to share their ideas and priorities on the modernization of NAFTA by going on to the applicable websites.

We will always stand up for our national economic interests, Canadian values, and Canadian jobs.

[Translation]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the President of the United States has set NAFTA renegotiation in motion, but Canadians are in the dark about the Liberals' plan.

The Liberals broke their promise to protect our supply management system, so producers and Canadians no longer trust them. There is no meaningful compensation in CETA, the comprehensive economic and trade agreement between Canada and the European Union, for diafiltered milk, \$131 million in goods will be imported duty-free, and the list goes on.

During negotiations, will the government finally take a stand and protect Canadian jobs in supply-managed sectors?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, quite simply, yes.

Oral Questions

As we have told Canadians many times, we are prepared to enter into negotiations at any time. Trade agreements must evolve in step with the economy. As everyone knows, NAFTA has been amended 11 times since its first iteration.

The Prime Minister has already spoken to the President of the United States about 10 times on this important issue. We will always stand up for our national interests and Canadian values.

* * *

[*English*]

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, from the health care sector to the tax sector, the Liberal government seems quite content to place Chinese interests ahead of the safety of Canadians, particularly when those Chinese companies have a bad track record.

Recently we learned that the Liberals approved the sale of Norsat, a high-tech firm, to Hytera Communications from China and that Hytera had been accused of large-scale international property theft.

Why are the Liberals content with selling out our Canadian businesses to companies that have so many skeletons in their closets?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this question has been raised several times in the House and we have been very clear that every single transaction is subject to a national security review. We did our homework. We did our due diligence. We have followed the advice given to us by our national security agencies. We never have and we never will compromise on national security.

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nobody would buy a car based on what it looks like from the outside. They would look under the hood or even get in and take it out for a test drive. However, when selling out to the Chinese, the Liberals are approving the Hytera deal without any due diligence. The minister may have done a preliminary security review of the acquisition, but when it comes to the safety and security of Canadians, an in-depth review is necessary.

Why will the minister not commit to another review of this deal to make sure that Canadians remain safe?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will always stand up for our national interests. We will always make sure we advance the interests of all Canadians. The bottom line is that this is a multi-step national security review process, which is very rigorous. The question is this. Did Canada's national security agencies examine this deal? Yes, they did. Did the government follow the security agencies' recommendation? Yes, we did. We have done our due diligence. We have done our homework. We never have and we never will compromise on national security.

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister quite frankly is conflating an analysis memo with a full national security review. The two are very different. The hon. member knows that. When he says that in this House, he is seeking to deceive members of the House about what is actually going on.

Therefore, I will ask the hon. member again. Is this just an analysis memo? If it is not, when is he going to do a full national security review?

• (1440)

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been very, very clear that we have listened to and followed the advice of our national security experts. We listened to the advice of the national intelligence agency and security experts who actually reviewed the case and know the facts of this particular transaction. It was on their advice and recommendation that we moved forward with the transaction. We are not going to politicize the issues under the Investment Canada Act. We are going to make sure we follow the law, do our homework, and always protect Canada's interests.

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Speaking of doing homework, Mr. Speaker, funnily enough the U.K. authorities had a similar case involving the same investor. It did a full national security review. It added three pages of conditions to the approval of the investment. That is what our closest ally has done.

When will the hon. member listen to what our allies are doing and protect Canadian national interests?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have full faith and confidence in our national security agencies. That is why we followed their advice. That is why we made sure we did our due diligence. Every transaction under the Investment Canada Act is subject to a national security review.

The bottom line is that we are also investing in the economy. We are saying we are open to investments, open to people, and open to trade. That is why over the past six months there has been a quarter of a million good-quality, full-time jobs created in the Canadian economy. That is our number one priority.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FINANCE

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the buffet is open for Canada's big banks.

Since taking office, the Minister of Finance has met with lobbyists working on behalf of Canada's big banks twice as much as his Conservative predecessor. I am sorry, but I doubt that those meetings were really about discussing the middle class and those working hard to join it.

Who is actually running the Department of Finance? Is it Bay Street, the Liberals' friends who are part of the wealthiest 1%, or the minister, who happens to be from Bay Street and among that 1%?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has a banking system that works, one that is very important to our overall system and its balance, which is why we need to keep examining it to make sure that it works, both now and going forward. That is why I am always happy to meet with the banking community to make sure that it continues to work for our economy.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister needs to meet with Canadians so he knows who it should work for. It is not the banks; it is Canadians. It is clear the banks are forcing their employees to sell products Canadians do not need and sign on to loans they cannot afford. Essentially, they are setting them up to fail.

Guess what. The government has been lobbied by these banks hundreds of times. The government needs to force the banks to be honest with their clients. They need a moral compass. Canadians expect the finance minister to stand up for all Canadians and not just those at the top.

Will the government force the banks to stop fleecing and scamming Canadians instead of caving to its lobbyist friends?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the member is absolutely right in saying that we need to be very clear that we are focused on bank regulations so that we can protect consumers. That is critically important.

We will continue to focus on Canadians as we think about the banking system. We will continue to focus on ensuring we understand the risks. That is our absolute continuing goal. We are looking into banking practices. We have a process in place at the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada in order to make sure these banking practices are appropriate and do not treat Canadians inappropriately in any way.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Statistics Canada May jobs report highlighted that three times as many full-time jobs were added to the Canadian economy than was predicted. That is 77,000 new full-time jobs. That is over a quarter of a million full-time jobs added to Canada's economy in the past six months. This shows that our plan of investing in the middle class is working, a plan that the leader of the opposition opposes.

Can the parliamentary secretary please tell the House how our plan to invest in Canadians is delivering results for the middle class and those working hard to join it?

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians elected this government to grow the economy and create good, solid, middle-class jobs. In the last six months, over a quarter of a million full-time jobs have been created. That is the best growth rate we have had in 15 years.

We have been working with businesses and innovators, and we have been giving the skills to young Canadians to make sure they are ready for the jobs of today as well as the economy of tomorrow.

* * *

● (1445)

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the defence minister's plan to sole-source Super Hornets is

spiralling out of control and taking a nosedive. The former chief of the defence staff, Tom Lawson, is stating that there is no one except the government that believes 18 Super Hornets will be useful for Canada. The defence minister says that Boeing is no longer a trusted partner and that he is looking at many different options.

What options is the defence minister talking about? The Liberals will not buy Super Hornets from Boeing, and their website still says that they will not buy F-35s either.

Are the Liberals going to sole-source our fighter jets from their Communist friends in Beijing?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as stated in our defence policy, we need 88 fighter jets in order to properly equip our soldiers so they can carry out their missions.

We currently have 76 aircraft. There is a capability gap, and we will do what it takes to have an interim fleet, which will allow us to carry out our missions.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is pretty obvious that the government has no idea how it is going to replace the CF-18s.

At first the Liberals said they were ruling out the F-35s. Now they are squabbling with Boeing, and on the weekend General Lawson said he did not need the Super Hornets.

Can the government get its act together and immediately launch an open and transparent process and stop doing useless political acrobatics that amount to nothing more than an exercise in partisanship?

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the important thing in this policy is the men and women of the armed forces. They are our primary concern. We have to train and equip them and take care of their health and well-being.

We will also take care of the economy. We will stand up for the civilian aerospace industry. We will negotiate to ensure that the economic interests and the interests of all Canadians are well protected at home and abroad.

Oral Questions

[English]

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a Hamas terrorist tunnel has been discovered between two Gaza schools run by the UN Relief and Works Agency, UNRWA. The agency, which teaches hate and glorifies Palestinian terrorist attacks against Israel, has responded disingenuously with shock. The reality is that UNRWA is desperate not to reform its ways but to preserve funding from increasingly skeptical democratic donor countries.

When will the Liberals accept that Canada's \$25 million in Palestinian aid could be delivered by better means?

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada continues to be a steadfast ally of Israel and to foster peace and stability in the region. The construction and presence of tunnels under United Nations' premises is unacceptable. We take very seriously any accounts of schools being used, or misused, as they remain a safe place for children to learn.

After discovering an old tunnel, UNRWA reported it and confirmed that there was no access to the property. Canadian officials are in communication with UNRWA and await a thorough investigation.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is time for Canada to cut ties with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. UNRWA schools condition Palestinian children to believe that Israel must be destroyed. The Liberals claim they will convince UNRWA to change its ways, but the Palestinian Authority and Hamas say they will allow no change in the hateful anti-Israel curriculum.

Why will the Liberals not focus on its so-called priorities, like advancing gender equality, and quit funding this organization intent on the destruction of Israel?

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, I will repeat that Canada continues to be a steadfast ally of Israel and to foster peace and stability within the region.

We prefer that Palestinian children are in schools and not in the streets. We have heard this report. We will make sure that we are following and monitoring it very closely. We take these allegations very seriously. Schools are to be a safe place for children to learn, and Canada will stay on top of this and monitor the situation closely.

* * *

● (1450)

INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the former parliamentary budget officer, Kevin Page, said that the business case for the Liberals' infrastructure bank depends upon Canadians' willingness to pay additional tolls and fees. Where do those additional tolls and fees go? They go to line the pockets of wealthy investors.

The infrastructure bank is like a reverse Robin Hood tax. It takes from average, everyday working people and gives to the rich corporations. Everywhere they look, Canadians are being hit by

additional fees and increased costs. How much more do the Liberals think Canadians can afford?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian institutional investors and pension funds invest in other countries to create opportunities in those countries and to create jobs in those countries. What is wrong with mobilizing our own very reputable pension funds, as well as international investors, to invest in Canadian communities to reduce congestion, to free up resources so we can build more affordable housing, and to create opportunities for Canadians?

We see the opportunities here by engaging private capital and institutional investors to build—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is National Public Service Week, and public servants have been dealing with the frustration caused by the Phoenix pay system for over a year now.

The Public Service Alliance of Canada is encouraging its members to boycott any activities planned to celebrate the week, and the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada is calling on the government to stop outsourcing essential services, including pay.

It has been over a year now, and this government has still not fixed the problems with Phoenix. When will these problems be fixed?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed National Public Service Week. I had the pleasure of meeting with employees from Public Services and Procurement Canada and Shared Services Canada this morning.

They know that we are deploying the necessary human and financial resources to overcome the challenge left for us by the previous government when it dismissed 700 public servants, cut \$70 million from the Canadian public service's budget, and showed utter contempt for the public service. That is something we will never do. Our public servants do not deserve—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

* * *

[English]

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, access to information is one of the most important tools that Canadians have to hold any government to account. That is why it is so troubling to learn that a senior public servant at Shared Services Canada, who also happens to be the president of a Liberal riding association, was found to have deleted 398 pages of relevant email records.

Oral Questions

The law is clear. Any person who destroys email records could be charged with a criminal offence. How was this Liberal hack able to delete this many emails without the minister's knowledge?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the public servants I met this morning and the public servants who work very hard for the Government of Canada understand that we expect them to meet the highest level of ethical behaviour and decision-making, as they do in their day-to-day jobs and as set out by the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector.

Shared Services Canada took this situation very seriously, immediately launched an investigation, and notified the Information Commissioner. The matter has been, as is customary, referred to the Attorney General of Canada.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we have seen in Ontario, it looks like illegally deleting emails is part of the Liberal DNA. I wonder who brought that practice with him from Queen's Park.

The minister seems to be condoning the actions of the Liberal hack, since he is still employed by the government.

When will the minister do the right thing, recuse herself from this situation, refer this matter to the director of public prosecutions, and apologize to the House for allowing this transgression to occur on her watch?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is very interesting about that question, again, is that during National Public Service Week, the opposition has chosen today of all days to tar the entire Public Service of Canada with the same brush.

We will of course deal with this according to regulations. We will of course deal with this according to the rule of law. We will of course deal with this with all of the rules that apply in the Public Service of Canada, as one would do when one respects the Public Service of Canada.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1455)

The Speaker: Order. Most members in all parties are able to sit through a question period, and often hear things they do not like without reacting.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix must govern herself in the House.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, an investigation by the Information Commissioner of Canada revealed that a Shared Services Canada employee deleted 398 pages of emails after receiving an access to information request. Access to information is one of our fundamental rights in this country. It is disturbing to learn that a request concerning the Liberal Party was handled this way.

When will the Liberal Minister of Justice recuse herself, and when will the file be referred to the director of public prosecutions?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker,

let me say once more that I am confident the entire public service respects the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector. We are proud of our public servants. This is National Public Service Week.

Shared Services Canada took this matter very seriously. The department immediately launched an investigation and notified the Information Commissioner of Canada. As always, the matter was referred to the Attorney General of Canada.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in a matter of days, Canada will be celebrating its 150th anniversary. Despite the significant progress made over the past 150 years, women, girls, and people who are gender non-conforming still do not have their rightful place in society. A lot remains to be done to make gender equality a reality in Canada.

[*English*]

Could the Minister of Status of Women inform the House of our government's actions to advance gender equality and how we will leave a lasting legacy for future generations of Canadians?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning, along with advocates for gender equality and the member for Ottawa—Vanier, I was pleased to announce our government's investment of \$18 million in a strong and vibrant women's movement. This funding will allow us to celebrate great Canadian women, invest in their projects, and also ensure they are able to exchange their experiences and best practices.

Furthermore, celebrating and highlighting these women and sharing their stories will inspire the next generation of advocates to continue the work for gender equality for the next 150 years and beyond.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we learned on Friday that the Minister of Public Safety intends to hand over the long-gun registry to Quebec. The only problem is that it is not supposed to exist. The long-gun registry was ordered destroyed by the former minister of public safety and affirmed by our Supreme Court. RCMP Deputy Commissioner Peter Henschel confirmed to finance committee that the registry data, except Quebec's, was destroyed in October 2012, and the remaining Quebec data was destroyed in April 2015.

How can the minister possibly offer a long-gun registry database to Quebec that either does not exist or exists illegally?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman will know that this has been the subject of tremendous litigation, including a constitutional challenge launched by the Information Commissioner against what she considered to be the illegal action of the previous government. That is the case that is before the courts.

Oral Questions

The legislation that was presented to the House as of the end of last week will sort out that constitutional mess bequeathed to us by the previous administration.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister first declared that Canada will continue to welcome refugees, people in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia ramped up their efforts to sponsor refugee families fleeing violence and persecution, people like Shauna and Barb, who are committing huge amounts of time and resources to this effort. However, the government's recent decision to cap private sponsorship has blocked my constituents from helping refugee families reunite in Canada.

Will the Minister of Immigration lift this ill-conceived cap and let Canadians do the right thing for refugees and their families?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are proud of our record of welcoming refugees who flee persecution, terrorism, and war. Under the previous government, the private sponsorship of refugees level was one-quarter of our levels. We have almost quadrupled the privately sponsored refugees who come into Canada. The caps that the hon. gentleman refers to only deal with one stream within the larger stream of private sponsorship of refugees. There are the sponsorship agreement holders, community sponsors, and others that are available. We will continue to welcome those seeking protection and sanctuary in our country.

* * *

• (1500)

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence and the chief of the defence staff are seeking to facilitate the transition to civilian life for soldiers who retire or leave the Canadian Armed Forces. They want to close the seam. We owe a huge debt to our troops who retire after serving our country.

Can the parliamentary secretary tell the House what is in the new defence policy to facilitate the transition for those leaving military life?

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we owe a debt to the men and women who served our country. The new defence policy reworks our approach to their transition to civilian life. A group of human resources experts will be created to ensure that members leaving the Canadian Armed Forces receive personalized support. This new transition group will also ensure that all the benefits are in place before a soldier transitions to civilian life. Special attention will be given to those who were injured or sick.

[English]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Atlantic Salmon Federation has recently urged the Liberal government to take an aggressive approach to dealing with the egregious overfishing by Greenland of Canadian Atlantic salmon. Canadian Atlantic salmon numbers are critically low and greatly affecting the economy of many maritime communities. While Greenland plunders Canadian salmon while producing no salmon of its own, our stocks are becoming more difficult to maintain.

When will the Liberals stand up for Atlantic Canada, and put strong diplomatic and economic pressure on Greenland in order to restore Canada's Atlantic salmon and protect our fisheries?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the conservation and rebuilding of wild Atlantic salmon stocks is a shared responsibility. It is a continuous, long-term process that requires the concerted efforts of everyone involved. I am encouraged by the steps that Greenland took in 2016 to strengthen its measures to manage its salmon fishery. However, there is still room for improvement. Fisheries and Oceans Canada will keep encouraging Greenland to reduce Greenland's harvest, both bilaterally and through bodies like NASCO, the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec minister of culture has criticized the Minister of Canadian Heritage regarding the CRTC's terrible decision to abandon Quebec television. He said, and I quote, "Quebec is internationally recognized for its rich and diverse television production. The CRTC's recent decision can only hinder the creation of original French-language productions."

Will the minister take responsibility and cancel the CRTC's decision regarding the licence for *Séries+* and *Historia*, as allowed under the legislation?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government firmly believes in the importance of arts and culture. That is why we invested more than \$1.9 billion in this area, the largest investment in the past 30 years. We did so because we know that arts and culture are key drivers in our economy. We are currently studying the repercussions of the CRTC's decision.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the CRTC's decision is having a negative impact on Quebec television. As soon as the CRTC made its announcement, *Séries+* cancelled three TV series. Speciality television that reflects Quebec culture is in danger of disappearing, and it will be the CRTC's fault. It will be responsible.

Business of Supply

However, the law gives the Minister of Canadian Heritage the power to act on her own initiative. Will she take that initiative? Will she react to this attack on Quebec television? Will she overrule the CRTC's decision regarding the renewal of licences for *Séries+* and *Historia*?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, our government has invested over \$1.9 billion in arts and culture, the largest investment a federal government has made in this area in 30 years. What is more, we are the only country in the G7 to have invested so much.

We are very aware of the fact that creative industries are facing challenges in the digital era, and that is why we have taken leadership on this issue. We are developing a new cultural policy that better reflects the issues facing our 21st-century creators.

* * *

• (1505)

SECURITIES

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this government is working for Bay Street. It tried to override Quebec's Consumer Protection Act for Bay Street, and it is setting the infrastructure bank up on Bay Street for its Bay Street buddies.

Now Ottawa is once again facing off against Quebec in court defending another bad idea: the securities regulator.

When will Ottawa stop taking Quebecers' money and using it to try to undermine Quebec in court for Bay Street's benefit?

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we respect the jurisdiction of Quebec. We believe that the co-operative capital markets regime is something that can help our economy work well with risks in the economy. That said, we expect to be able to continue to work with those provinces that do not participate, and we will respect Quebec's decision in that regard.

* * *

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of His Holiness the 17th Karmapa.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: I would also like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Dale Kirby, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador; and the Honourable Brian Kenny, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development for the Province of New Brunswick.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: To people across the country, Canadian Forces Day is an opportunity to honour the sacrifices that our military personnel make on our behalf.

[*English*]

It is with great pleasure that I draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of six members of the Canadian Forces who are taking part in Canadian Armed Forces Day today: Major Gustave Garant, Master Warrant Officer Agata Slominska, Petty Officer 2nd Class Edward Keith Slade, Master Corporal Anthony Vail, Master Corporal Catherine Desmarais, and Leading Seaman Chad Baldwin.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: The member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Romeo Saganash: Mr. Speaker, I am sure you will agree that respect in the House must be a priority for all members, and that includes the Prime Minister. During question period, the Prime Minister said that adopting the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples would be tantamount to imposing something on indigenous peoples in this country.

[*English*]

Will the Prime Minister rise to withdraw that insulting statement that suggests that there is anything wrong with simply respecting indigenous human rights in this country?

We are all bound by the rule of law in this chamber. To even suggest that the rights of indigenous peoples are subject to debate is troublesome, especially coming from the Prime Minister of Canada.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou for raising this point. However, it is more a point of debate. I do not see anyone rising to respond to it.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1510)

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

The House resumed from June 8 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the deferred recorded division on the motion. Call in the members.

[*And the bells having rung*]

The Speaker: Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

• (1515)

[*Translation*]

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

*Business of Supply**(Division No. 313)*

YEAS

Members

Aubin	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benson
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boudrias	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brosseau
Cannings	Choquette
Cullen	Donnelly
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseault	Duvall
Fortin	Garrison
Hardcastle	Hughes
Johns	Kwan
Laverdière	MacGregor
Malcolmson	Marcil
Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Moore
Mulcair	Paucé
Plamondon	Quach
Ramsey	Rankin
Saganash	Sansoucy
Ste-Marie	Stetski
Thériault	Weir— 44

NAYS

Members

Abouttaif	Albas
Albrecht	Aldag
Alghabra	Alleslev
Ambrose	Amos
Anandasangaree	Anderson
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Barlow
Baylis	Beech
Bennett	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Bittle
Blair	Block
Boissonnault	Bossio
Boucher	Brassard
Bratina	Breton
Brison	Brown
Caesar-Chavannes	Calkins
Carr	Carrie
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Chan
Clement	Cooper
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Deltell
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Di Iorio	Diotte
Doherty	Dreeshen
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Easter	Eghinski
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Falk
Fergus	Finley
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Gallant
Garneau	Genius
Gerretsen	Gladu
Godin	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Gourde	Graham
Grewal	Harder
Hardie	Harvey
Hehr	Hoback
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings

Iacono	Jeneroux
Jordan	Jowhari
Kang	Kent
Khalid	Khera
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kusie	Lake
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lapointe	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	Lebel
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lemieux	Leslie
Levitt	Liepert
Lightbound	Lobb
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
Lukiwski	MacKenzie
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Maloney	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Medicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	
Morneau	Morrissey
Motz	Murray
Nassif	Nater
Nault	Ng
Nicholson	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Paradis	Paul-Hus
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Picard
Poilievre	Poissant
Qualtrough	Ratansi
Rayes	Reid
Rempel	Rioux
Robillard	Rodriguez
Romanado	Rota
Rudd	Ruimy
Sahota	Saini
Samson	Sangha
Sarai	Saroya
Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Schiefke	Schmale
Schulte	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Shields
Shipleu	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simms
Sohi	Sopuck
Sorbara	Sorenson
Spengemann	Stanton
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Tilson	Tootoo
Trost	Trudeau
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Vecchio
Viersen	Virani
Wagantall	Warkentin
Watts	Waugh
Webber	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Wong	Wrzesnewskyj
Yurdiga	Zahid
Zimmer— 245	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

• (1520)
[English]

SALARIES ACT

The House resumed from June 8 consideration of the motion that Bill C-24, An Act to amend the Salaries Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Financial Administration Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 30, 2017, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the second reading stage of Bill C-24.

The question is on the amendment.

• (1525)

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

(Division No. 314)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Ambrose
Anderson	Arnold
Aubin	Barlow
Benson	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Block
Boucher	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Brosseau	Brown
Calkins	Cannings
Carrie	Choquette
Clement	Cooper
Cullen	Deltell
Diotte	Doherty
Donnelly	Dreeshen
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseault	Duvall
Eglinski	Falk
Finley	Gallant
Garrison	Genuis
Glada	Godin
Gourde	Hardcastle
Harder	Hoback
Hughes	Jeneroux
Johns	Kent
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kusie	Kwan
Lake	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Laverdière	Lebel
Liepert	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Maguire
Malcolmson	Masse (Windsor West)
Mathysen	McCaughey (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Moore
Motz	Mulcair
Nater	Nicholson
Paul-Hus	Poilievre
Quach	Ramsey
Rankin	Rayes
Reid	Rempel
Saganash	Sansoucy
Saroya	Scheer
Schmale	Shields
Shipley	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Stetski	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Tilson	Trost

Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Wagantall
Watts
Webber
Wong
Zimmer — 117

Government Orders

Van Loan
Viersen
Warkentin
Waugh
Weir
Yurdiga

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Barsalou-Duval
Baylis	Beaulieu
Beech	Bennett
Bittle	Blair
Boissonnault	Bossio
Boudrias	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Chan
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Fergus
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Garneau	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Grewal	Hardie
Harvey	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Jordan
Jowhari	Kang
Khalid	Khera
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lemieux	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Marcil	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Medicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Érables)
Soeurs	
Monsef	Morneau
Morrissey	Murray
Nassif	Nault
Ng	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Paradis	Pauzé
Pescholido	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Picard
Plamondon	Poissant
Qualtrough	Ratansi
Rioux	Robillard
Rodriguez	Romanado
Rudd	Ruimy
Sahota	Saini
Samson	Sangha

Government Orders

Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms	Sohi
Sorbara	Spengemann
Ste-Marie	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Thériault	Tootoo
Trudeau	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Virani	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Wrzesniewski	Zahid— 172

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

[*Translation*]

The next question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: The hon. Chief Government Whip.

[*English*]

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I believe that if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to apply the results of the previous vote to this one, with the Liberal members voting in favour.

Mr. Gordon Brown: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives agree to apply, and will be voting no.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees to apply the vote and will vote against the motion.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote and will be voting against the motion.

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Green Party agrees to apply the vote, and votes yes.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting in favour.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

● (1530)

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

(*Division No. 315*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bittle	Blair
Boissonnault	Bossio
Bratina	Breton
Brisson	Caesar-Chavannes
Carr	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Chan	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Di Iorio	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Gameau	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Grewal	Hardie
Harvey	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Jordan
Jowhari	Kang
Khalid	Khera
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lemieux	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
May (Saarich—Gulf Islands)	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Mencicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	
Morneau	Morrissey
Murray	Nassif
Nault	Ng
O'Connell	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Paradis
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Picard
Poissant	Qualtrough
Ratansi	Rioux
Robillard	Rodriguez
Romanado	Rudd
Ruimy	Sahota
Saini	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Schulte	Serré

Government Orders

Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Tootoo
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Zahid — 163

Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Simms
Sorbara
Tabbara
Tassi
Trudeau
Vandenbeld
Virani
Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskyj

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2017, NO. 1

The House resumed from June 9 consideration of the motion that Bill C-44, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017 and other measures, be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: Pursuant to an order made on Tuesday, May 30, 2017, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the third reading stage of Bill C-44.

The hon. Chief Government Whip is rising.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I believe if you were to seek it, you would find unanimous consent to apply the results of the previous vote to this vote. Liberal members will be voting in favour of this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Gordon Brown: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives agree once again to apply, and once again we will be voting no.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees to apply the vote and will vote against the motion.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote and will be voting against Bill C-44.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Green Party agrees to apply the vote and will be voting against the motion.

[*English*]

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply, and will be voting yea.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

(*Division No. 316*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag
Alleslev
Anandasangaree
Arya
Badawey
Bains
Beech
Bittle
Boissonnault
Bratina
Brisson
Carr

Alghabra
Amos
Arseneault
Ayoub
Bagnell
Baylis
Bennett
Blair
Bossio
Breton
Caesar-Chavannes
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Anderson
Aubin
Barsalou-Duval
Benson
Bergen
Bezan
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boucher
Boulerice
Brassard
Brown
Cannings
Choquette
Cooper
Deltell
Doherty
Dreeshen
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Falk
Fortin
Garrison
Gladu
Gourde
Harder
Hughes
Johns
Kitchen
Kusie
Lake
Laverdière
Liepert
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Malcolmson
Masse (Windsor West)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Moore
Mulcair
Nicholson
Pauzé
Poilievre
Ramsey
Rayes
Rempel
Sansoucy
Scheer
Shields
Sopuck
Stanton
Stetski
Stubbs
Thériault
Trost
Van Loan
Viersen
Warkentin
Waugh
Weir
Yurdiga

Albas
Ambrose
Arnold
Barlow
Beaulieu
Benzen
Berthold
Blaikie
Block
Boudrias
Boutin-Sweet
Brosseau
Calkins
Carrie
Clement
Cullen
Diotte
Donnelly
Dubé
Dusseau
Egliniski
Finley
Gallant
Genuis
Godin
Harcastle
Hoback
Jeneroux
Kent
Kmiec
Kwan
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lebel
Lobb
MacGregor
Maguire
Marcil
Mathysen
McColeman
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz
Nater
Paul-Hus
Plamondon
Quach
Rankin
Reid
Saganash
Saroya
Schmale
Shipley
Sorenson
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Sweet
Tilson
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Wagantall
Watts
Webber
Wong
Zimmer — 126

PAIRED

Nil

Routine Proceedings

Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Block
Chan	Cormier	Boucher	Boudrias
Cuzner	Dabrusin	Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Damoff	DeCoursey	Brassard	Brosseau
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Brown	Calkins
Di Iorio	Drouin	Cannings	Carrie
Dubourg	Duclos	Choquette	Clement
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Cooper	Cullen
Dzerowicz	Easter	Deltell	Diotte
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Doherty	Donnelly
Ellis	Erskine-Smith	Dreeschen	Dubé
Eyking	Eyolfson	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Fergus	Finnigan	Duvall	Eglinski
Fisher	Fonseca	Falk	Finley
Fortier	Fragiskatos	Fortin	Gallant
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)	Garrison	Genius
Garneau	Gerretsen	Gladu	Godin
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale	Gourde	Hardcastle
Gould	Graham	Harder	Hoback
Grewal	Hardie	Hughes	Jeneroux
Harvey	Hehr	Johns	Kent
Holland	Housefather	Kitchen	Kmiec
Hussen	Hutchings	Kusie	Kwan
Iacono	Jordan	Lake	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Jowhari	Kang	Laverdière	Lebel
Khalid	Khera	Liepert	Lobb
Lambropoulos	Lametti	Lukiwski	MacGregor
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	MacKenzie	Maguire
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre	Malcolmson	Marcil
Lemieux	Leslie	Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
Levitt	Lightbound	May (Saamich—Gulf Islands)	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Lockhart	Long	McColeman	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Longfield	Ludwig	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Moore
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney	Motz	Mulcair
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)		Nater	Nicholson
May (Cambridge)		Paul-Hus	Paupé
McCrimmon	McDonald	Plamondon	Poilievre
McGuinty	McKay	Quach	Ramsey
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Rankin	Rayes
Mendès	Medicino	Reid	Rempel
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)	Saganash	Sansoucy
Soeurs)		Saroya	Scheer
Monsef	Morneau	Schmale	Shields
Morrissey	Murray	Shipley	Sopuck
Nassif	Nault	Sorenson	Stanton
Ng	O'Connell	Ste-Marie	Stetski
Oliphant	Oliver	Strahl	Stubbs
O'Regan	Ouellette	Sweet	Thériault
Paradis	Peschisolido	Tilson	Trost
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor	Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Picard	Poissant	Vecchio	Viersen
Qualtrough	Ratansi	Wagantall	Warkentin
Rioux	Robillard	Watts	Waugh
Rodriguez	Romanado	Webber	Weir
Rudd	Ruimy	Wong	Yurdiga
Sahota	Saini	Zimmer — 127	
Samson	Sangha		
Sarai	Scarpaleggia		
Schieffe	Schulte		
Serré	Sgro		
Shanahan	Sheehan		
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)		
Simms	Sohi		
Sorbara	Spengemann		
Tabbara	Tan		
Tassi	Tootoo		
Trudeau	Vandal		
Vandenbeld	Vaughan		
Virani	Whalen		
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould		
Wrzesnewskyj	Zahid — 162		

NAYS

Members

Abouttaif	Albas
Albrecht	Ambrose
Anderson	Arnold
Aubin	Barlow
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benson	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaikie

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
(Bill read the third time and passed)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Dan Ruimy (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, entitled “Innovation and Technology—An Exchange of Ideas”.

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Pat Finnigan (Miramichi—Grand Lake, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food in relation to its study on Canada-United States co-operation in agriculture.

* * *

• (1535)

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Arnold Chan (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-359, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (firearms).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table an act to amend the Criminal Code of Canada in respect of firearms in order to create a new aggravated penalty for the selling, trading, renting, or loaning of a firearm that had been previously used in the commission of an offence and is subsequently used in a subsequent offence.

The purpose of this legislation is to give law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and jurists a new optional, consecutive penalty of up to five years to deter trafficking in these illegal firearms. This bill, however, is in no way intended to compromise or target legitimate, responsible gun owners. This bill would instead require criminal intent and purpose.

In particular, I want to give a very quick shout-out to Sergeant Derek Byers of division 42 and the community safety response team and the major crimes unit that service northern and central Scarborough for the concept behind this proposed legislation.

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

Mr. Gordon Brown: Mr. Speaker, I almost feel like the member for Winnipeg North today because I have been up so many times.

I am pleased to introduce Motion No. 143, which recognizes that the need for pyrotechnic devices on board pleasure craft may not be the most appropriate course of action when there are alternative distress signals available. It asks that the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities undertake a study of the requirement to carry such devices on board in order to recommend alternatives for Canadian waterways.

* * *

PETITIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a petition today from 222 constituents and others who live in Calgary. The petitioners remind the government of the illegal detention of Sun Qian. They are concerned about the fact that the government has been unable or unwilling to act in that regard. The petition quotes other members saying that the government has not been seized with this particular matter and that there has been no movement. It specifically asks the government to condemn the

Routine Proceedings

illegal arrest of a Canadian citizen for practising the faith of Falun Gong and it calls for her immediate and unconditional release.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition sent to my office by a constituent, Hildegard Krieg, who is a very active resident in my area. The petition is signed by residents of North Okanagan—Shuswap, and calls upon the Government of Canada to identify hospice palliative care as a defined medical service under the Canada Health Act.

BEE POPULATION

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I once again stand in this House and present more petitions on behalf of constituents who are concerned about bees.

The petitioners are concerned that the mortality rate for bee colonies has been rising for the past three years, and that they play a role in the pollination of flowering plants, which contributes billions of dollars to Canada's agricultural economy each year. Therefore, they ask the government to take concrete steps to solve the problem of the high mortality rates among bees and other insect pollinators and to develop an effective strategy to address the multiple factors related to bee colony deaths, such as the destruction and disturbance of habitat, pesticide use, the side effects of pathogens, and parasites.

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present two petitions today. The first petition is from residents of Ontario, primarily around the Ottawa area, calling for a national strategy to deal with the crisis of violence against women, particularly as it pertains to missing and murdered indigenous women.

• (1540)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from residents within Saanich—Gulf Islands. It points out that Canada has committed to the Paris agreement, yet we do not yet have a plan or even targets consistent with achieving the targets of the Paris commitment.

The petitioners call upon the government to bring into place targets that will assist in the global effort to avoid a 1.5°C global average temperature increase, as well as to work to expedite the closing down of coal-based and other thermal coal exports to essentially decarbonize electricity as quickly as possible.

The Speaker: I think I am being asked by the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes to go back to motions for a minute because of an error.

Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Routine Proceedings

The Speaker: The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

* * *

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if you seek it I believe you will find consent for the following motion.

I move:

That, at the conclusion of today's debate on the opposition motion in the name of the Member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Tuesday, June 13, 2017, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

The Speaker: I wonder if I could ask the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes for a clarification.

Did he intend to put the motion that he raised earlier before the House?

Mr. Gordon Brown: Mr. Speaker, I did intend to do that as a private member's motion. There may have been some confusion in terms of the other motion to defer the vote.

The Speaker: I think the hon. member might agree that the intention was different. What I would propose to do is to take this as notice of a motion before the House.

Mr. Gordon Brown: Mr. Speaker, I am in agreement with that.

* * *

PETITIONS

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DYING

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present today on behalf of the constituents of the riding of Prince Albert.

The first one is a petition to establish the conscience protection of physicians and health care institutions.

SYRIA

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is calling on the House of Commons for action on peace in Syria.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition is in regard to hospice care, and patients and families.

[Translation]

ALGOMA PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I again rise in the House to present a petition addressed to the Minister of Transport. I am always pleased to rise to give voice to my constituents, but there are also people across Canada signing my petitions. This one was signed by people from Hearst, Hamilton, Gatineau, Quebec, and Sussex, New Brunswick.

This petition has to do with the passenger train between Sault Ste. Marie and Hearst. People say it is impossible to access 75% of the properties and that other means of access are not reliable or safe, since many roads are industrial roads that are maintained only if industry continues to maintain them.

The petitioners are also concerned about the economic repercussions. A \$2-million grant brought roughly \$42 million into the region. They are calling on Transport Canada to reconsider the file in light of their support and restore the rail service.

[English]

PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to present a petition on behalf of constituents living in the communities of Sheet Harbour, Tangier, and Mushaboom on the issue of palliative care.

Specifically, the undersigned would like to identify hospice palliative care as a defined medical service covered under the Canada Health Act so that provinces and territories can use transfers from the federal government for this kind of important care.

● (1545)

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF CONFEDERATION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal war on history continues to prompt the forwarding of many petitions to my office. I rise today to present petitions from three Canadian historical societies, stating that they want history to be respected and celebrated during the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

The Wellington County Historical Society includes the city of Guelph. Mr. John Galt was the founder of the city of Guelph. His son, Alexander Galt was one of our Fathers of Confederation and Sir John A. Macdonald's first finance minister.

The Société historique de Saint-Côme—Linière in Quebec has also expressed their support for the petition's cause. The society has been active for the past three decades, cataloguing and recording their local history, and through their municipality ran the remnants of the Quebec Central Railway, which was established in 1869 as part of the important railway industry that was critical to Confederation.

Members of the Tyrconnell Heritage Society run the Backus-Page House Museum in the historical Talbot settlement in Elgin County, and they have signed this petition. Colonel Thomas Talbot was once the personal secretary of John Graves Simcoe. His charismatic leadership guided the settlement of the area, including establishing Port Stanley, interestingly named after his friend whose son, Frederick Arthur Stanley would become Canada's Governor General and donate the Stanley Cup, awarded last night, which was at the time it was presented originally to be awarded to Canada's top amateur hockey club.

The petitioners call on the government to reverse the decision not to have Confederation included as a theme of the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Anthony Rota (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to present a petition from many of my constituents.

The petitioners are drawing to the attention of the House of Commons the fact that not all residents of Nipissing—Timiskaming have equal access to unlimited, high-speed Internet. Therefore, the residents of the Nipissing—Timiskaming electoral district need to have equal access to unlimited, high-speed Internet, something that is found in most cities. However, once we get into rural areas, people have a hard time connecting. The petitioners find that a disadvantage to running a business and to getting a proper education.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for reasons that will shortly become apparent, I too feel a certain resemblance to the member for Winnipeg North. Accordingly, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman is asking for unanimous consent to return to petitions. Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

PETITIONS

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to present two petitions. They are both from the Vietnamese community. They call upon the Government of Canada to accept the two bills that are in the House right now. We will be debating one tomorrow, my private member's bill, Bill S-226, the justice for victims of corrupt foreign officials act, the Sergei Magnitsky law, which I am sponsoring on behalf of Senator Raynell Andreychuk. Petitioners are asking the Government of Canada and Parliament to accept the legislation as a way to sanction those individuals who are committing gross human rights violations, as well as those enriching themselves through corruption.

Business of Supply

One petition has over 400 signatures on it, and the other has 1,262 signatures. The second one is slightly different in that the petitioners ask that we particularly target Vietnam, which is still suppressing political dissidents. Over the last number of years, over 420 political prisoners have been executed, and that has to come to an end.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1550)

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CANADIAN ECONOMY

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Brandon—Souris has five minutes remaining for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a little strange to have Conservatives rise in the House and bemoan the state of grain transportation while praising the record of the Harper government, because of course it was the Harper government that dismantled the system of orderly marketing that we used to have for grain in western Canada. The member for Brandon—Souris quite rightly described the railways as a duopoly. The Canadian Wheat Board used to give farmers a fair bit of negotiating power in dealing with the railroads.

I am doubtful the member for Brandon—Souris would agree with me that we should reinstate a system of orderly marketing, but I wonder if he would agree, for the sake of transparency and openness, that the government should conduct an audit on the dismantling of the Canadian Wheat Board so that Canadian taxpayers have some accounting of what happened to all of the assets in that organization.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously, the member has never sold a bushel of grain or a tonne of grain on the Prairies in his life. Otherwise, he would realize that in terms of the marketing system today, as my colleague from Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman indicated earlier, we get no calls wanting to reinstate that particular old style of marketing.

Young farmers today are marketing all of their grain on their own. He is incorrect in his analogy. If he had done some scouting he would have seen that the Canadian Wheat Board did not do the allocation of cars all the time. The whole process of marketing grain on the Prairies has been modernized by the act that was done by my colleague here in the House, by opening up the opportunities for more processing, more expansion of grain, and particularly cleaning. Just like getting rid of the Crow rate benefit years ago, we are seeing the benefits of much more productivity and jobs in the Prairies due to the opening up of these marketing opportunities.

Business of Supply

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I find this to be a very difficult discussion. The Conservatives put forward a motion calling on the government to do more for forestry workers. In 2006, in my community, 82,272 tonnes were shipped out of the Port Alberni harbour. In 2016, it was up to 783,381 tonnes. That is a tenfold increase under the Conservative government's watch. There was no federal help. The government across the way talks about how the Liberal government is doing great at creating jobs. There are mills closing in my community and people are out of work. We should be talking about solutions today. I am not hearing about solutions. In fact, I find it really disrespectful to the people in the forest sector right now who are looking for jobs.

Who is going to take responsibility? Is it the federal government across the way for the last 10 years, or is it Christy Clark? I would like to find out who is going to take responsibility for inaction in my community.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, the member should have directed his question to a member of the government on the solutions it may have for some of these areas.

Conservatives were able to extend the softwood lumber agreement that was in place previously until 2016 and the Liberal government has let it lapse. We have now seen the results of tariffs on products coming from the United States due to the new government in the U.S. putting the tariffs on. As I said in my speech earlier, the stopgap measures that have been put in place by the Liberal government, while helpful to the individuals working in those plants, are not long-term solutions.

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will advise the House that I will be splitting my time with the member for Central Nova.

It is a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to how the Government of Canada is building a strong middle class and a strong economy for Canadians. Before I talk about the Canadian economy, let me begin with a few words about the global economy.

After roughly six years of lacklustre performance, global economic growth is expected to strengthen in the near term. However, the recovery and pace of growth since the global financial crisis has been slow in many corners of the world. Rising inequalities, an aging population, and rapid technological changes have become the defining policy challenges of our time. Coupling those challenges with the anxiety felt by families around the world and their concern for their children's futures has fuelled a very powerful movement. People are looking at the pace of technological changes and the need for new skills, and are undoubtedly anxious about the future. It is hard to feel confident and face every day with optimism, when we cannot see what is just around the corner.

In Canada, we have chosen to meet these challenges head-on with a positive and generous response.

We are doing what confident countries do: investing in people and in our future. The Government of Canada has an ambitious plan that involves making smart investments to create good middle-class jobs; build modern, more resilient neighbourhoods and communities; grow the economy; and provide more opportunities for all

Canadians. We know that when we have an economy that works for the middle class, we have a country that works for everyone.

● (1555)

[*Translation*]

That is why, when our government first took office in late 2015, we immediately implemented measures to strengthen the middle class.

We began by asking the wealthiest 1% to pay a little more so that we could lower taxes for the middle class.

We then implemented the new Canada child benefit, which, compared to the old system of child benefits, is simpler, more generous, and better targeted to help those who need it most.

We then signed a historic agreement with the provinces to help people live with more dignity in retirement by strengthening the Canada pension plan.

We did even more to support Canadian families by committing to invest \$6 billion over 10 years in home care and \$5 billion over 10 years to support mental health initiatives.

In short, we have taken the necessary first steps to give back to the middle class. We have done this by making Canadians our first priority and by making the types of investments that will promote their talents, improve their communities, and ensure the long-term growth of our economy.

The action taken by the government, such as cutting taxes for the middle class and introducing the Canada child benefit, has played a major role in supporting household spending.

Canada's economy saw 3.7% economic growth in the first quarter of 2017, which is very interesting. The unemployment rate continues to drop. It is now around 6.6%, compared to 7% early in our term in fall 2015. Since then, Canada's economy has created about 350,000 new jobs. That is an impressive number.

This is all very encouraging. However, we remain vigilant and are fully aware that a lot of work remains to be done.

We will continue to focus on sustainable growth, better-paying jobs, greater opportunities for the middle class, and greater prosperity for future generations.

[*English*]

We are doing this by getting people ready for jobs of today, but also for the jobs of tomorrow. We call it our innovation and skills plan. To ensure that skills training effectively helps unemployed and underemployed Canadians get good jobs, budget 2017 significantly boosts federal support through labour market transfer agreements with provinces and territories by an amount of \$2.7 billion over six years.

For Canadians looking for work, this means more opportunities to upgrade their skills, gain experience, or get help to start their own business. It also means more support like employment counselling to help them plan their careers.

Business of Supply

For Canadians who have lost their jobs, we will make it easier for employment insurance claimants to pursue self-funded training, while remaining eligible for their benefits.

For Canadians going back to school for retraining, budget 2017 will expand eligibility for student financial assistance so each year an additional 10,000 part-time students and a further 13,000 students with dependent children can get the financial help they need to pursue post-secondary education.

This comprehensive set of skills and training measures will help Canadians at every stage of their career make Canada's greatest resource, our people, even greater.

Also part of the plan, the new venture capital catalyst initiative, will increase late-stage venture capital available to Canadian entrepreneurs. With funds leveraged from the private sector and depending on the proposals received, this investment could inject around \$1.5 billion into Canada's innovation capital market. A strong investment culture coupled with free trade agreements are a critical component to creating good, well-paying jobs and substantial economic growth.

Over the past year and a half, Canada has strengthened its relationship with its top five trading partners: the United States, Mexico, China, Japan, and the European Union. The work continues.

Our government was elected to help the middle class and those working hard to join it. There are positive signs throughout the economy that show that our plan is working. Canada is in the best fiscal position among G7 countries, and the federal debt-to-GDP ratio is expected to remain low.

In the first quarter of 2017, the Canadian economy had a 3.7% growth. In the past six months, the Canadian economy has more than 250,000 new, full-time jobs.

● (1600)

[Translation]

Lastly, the Government of Canada will continue to concentrate on making sound and necessary investments in Canadians, our communities, and our economy. These investments will strengthen long-term growth and will build a solid middle class and a more promising future for all Canadians.

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when members speak about the economy, I caution them to ensure they understand that some areas of the economy are not doing so well.

To give members a breakdown, my riding of Courtenay—Alberni has an unemployment rate of around 10%, which is the highest unemployment rate in southwestern British Columbia. One-third of the children live in poverty. In fact, we are 240% above the provincial average for income assistance.

Therefore, when the government speaks about how great the economy is and how things are going, it would be great if its members would actually come to my riding where they would see clearly that mills have closed and it has been just announced that the

sockeye run is closed. Fishers and support workers are out of work, plunging people further into poverty. The only minister we can get to come to our riding is the Prime Minister, and he just goes to the beach and plays. It would be really good if he came to communities like Port Alberni to see first-hand what is really going on in the economy in western Canada and in forestry communities.

Why are we not talking about answers? I would love for the parliamentary secretary to start talking about what she is going to do for forestry communities and if someone is going to show up in Port Alberni. Is a minister going to come to see first-hand what is happening in my community. People are out of work and living in poverty. They need a lift.

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor: Mr. Speaker, the first thing our government did when we took office was lower taxes for middle-class Canadians and increased them for the richest 1%. The other thing we did to help Canadian families was introduce the Canada child benefit program, which has lifted hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty.

Today, I have some figures from my riding, and I am sure we can get the breakdown for the member's riding, on how this has impacted Canadian families. In my riding of Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, 14,280 children are benefiting from the Canada child benefit program. Out of those payments, we can see that, on average, families are receiving \$630 per month. Again, these are the types of policies we put in place, which are progressive and help Canadian families.

Also, when we look at the unemployment rate, we have made a commitment to support the economy and help support middle-class Canadians. So far our plan is working. The unemployment rate has decreased from 7.1% to 6.6%, and we will continue to work with our plan.

The evidence is clear. Our plan is working and we are moving in the right direction.

● (1605)

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate and respect the concerns brought forward. I represent a riding with high unemployment, and there is no single tool to change that. Obviously, as the economy changes, grows, alters, and rescinds in some areas, we have to be adaptable and flexible as a government.

One thing the previous Conservative government really jiggled up, and what we are working hard to unjig, was access to global talent.

Business of Supply

First, Canadians need to have first crack at Canadian jobs. We can agree on that. We want to ensure that wages are not suppressed. However, when we talk about unlocking the potential of our Canadian companies, they need access. Everybody knows that investment will follow talent. Today we made an announcement, and I would like my colleague's comments on this, about innovation and what we have done for it. Changes were made by the last government. The Conservatives pushed back a little controversy around the foreign workers program. When they pushed back the entire House just to tighten the clothesline, they hurt Canadian companies. They did not allow Canadian companies to be that mobile.

Therefore, on access to talent, on investment and innovation, how will that change those communities and hopefully help those who are currently suffering hard times?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor: Mr. Speaker, in budget 2017, I was very pleased to see the global skills strategy introduced. Once again, as my colleague indicated, we need to ensure we recruit the best and the brightest talent in Canada. We have fast-growing industries, and they do not need more obstacles. They need us to make the process simpler for them to get the skills they need here to create those good jobs.

Today was a good day when we heard the announcement. I look forward to continuing work in those sectors.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure, as always, to rise in the House to contribute to the discourse on what may be the most important issue facing my constituents, and that is the Canadian economy. The motion essentially seeks to address four constituent parts. The first is a broad statement about the Canadian economy. Then it has three sub-issues: softwood lumber, the western Canadian energy industry, and the western Canadian grain farming, specifically the transportation sector.

Before I get into each of these and explain why I will not support the motion, I would like to point out that the assumptions built into the language of the motion do not accurately reflect the facts at hand. I will start with the statement of the overall economy.

There is an attempt to build a narrative that the governing party is not an effective manager of the economy. I disagree wholeheartedly.

I find it somewhat ironic that around the same time the motion was put forward, we saw a very positive jobs report. Specifically, we have seen over one-quarter of a million new jobs in Canada over the six month period preceding, including just last month, with 55,000 new full-time jobs. Unemployment has gone down from 7.1% to 6.6%, and GDP growth is at 3.7% in the first quarter.

The reason I lay these statistics out is because I find data to be a helpful tool when we form analyses. Instead of projecting a narrative that we would hope would be true, it is important we consider the facts along the way.

We have seen a plan starting to take hold. I know history will be the judge of the success of this government and its economic performance, but the early signs are encouraging in my opinion. The economy is growing. The plan seems to be working, and I am quite proud to be part of it.

I would like to address each of the sub-issues raised in the motion, the first being the softwood lumber dispute.

Of course this is an important and challenging issue that faces regions of the country differently, including Atlantic Canada where I live. There is a number of stellar producers in my own backyard, like Scotsburn Lumber, Williams Brothers, Ledwidge Lumber, that have done a great job, historically, of employing Canadians. This is a fight that we continue to fight every day.

The opposition would have Canadians believe that we have stumbled over this as a federal government, but the agreement did expire under the last government. Although it is not our fault, it is our problem. I have been working closely with the minister and with my Atlantic Canada and Nova Scotia colleagues to help find a solution to this pressing issue for our producers.

In my conversations with the minister on this file, I have full faith in her ability to go head-to-head with the toughest negotiators south of the border. However, the fact is that right now she is facing a climate of protectionism that we have not seen in my lifetime when it comes to this file or trade more generally. Our neighbours are going to do what they think is in their best interests. However, the folks at the helm on our side are very capable and I have full faith in their ability to get a resolution. In the interim, we have introduced an important aid package to ensure we are there to help at a time when help is desperately needed.

On the energy file, specific reference is made to the western Canadian energy sector and carbon pricing. This is of extraordinary importance. I am no enemy to the energy industry. I have made a living working as a lawyer in Calgary and have significant experience working with oil and gas companies in different parts of the energy sector. I understand the strategic importance of this industry to the Canadian economy. However, the characterization of a price on carbon as an attack on the economic industry is wrongheaded, respectfully to the member who has put forward the motion.

We have to understand that the atmosphere in Canada and across the world belongs to all of us. Polluting that atmosphere is not and should not be free. Putting a price on carbon is the most effective way to reduce emissions and help mitigate the negative impacts of pollution that contribute to anthropogenic climate change. Moreover, I see this as a massive opportunity for us as Canadians. With the ability to develop a skilled workforce, we can take part in a growing industry that will contribute to clean growth and help reduce emissions at the same time. When this opportunity is staring us in the face, I cannot help but take a crack at it, and we are on the right track.

Business of Supply

We are making investments in green infrastructure and putting a price on carbon. Some of the biggest energy companies in Canada and around the world are proponents of this approach, companies like Synovus, Suncor, Shell, CNRL, Total, TransCanada, Enbridge, and so on. Some of the people who on a first blush might stand to lose the most are some of the biggest supporters of this kind of an approach to climate policy. I am proud we have industry leaders who have stepped up to the plate.

•(1610)

The final issue raised in this motion has to do with grain farmers, specifically the impact of certain rules and the potential expiry of a unique feature of Canadian transportation called inter-switching.

In 2013, we were facing a truly unique circumstance, with a bumper crop in western Canada and a very harsh winter that made it very difficult to get all our products to market in a timely way. I have had some exposure to this issue, although I am from Atlantic Canada, in my role as a member of the transportation, infrastructure, and communities committee, where we dealt with it. What we saw was that at the time, there was actually a short-term, prudent measure that helped, in an emergency situation, get products to market. This was a difficult situation that needed to be addressed.

The tool created at that time to deal with a pressing circumstance may not be the best tool for the long term. What we have in Bill C-49 is a commitment to long-haul inter-switching such that if there was only one company that could meet transportation needs to get goods to market, we would introduce competition of sorts that would allow a farmer to piggyback on the rates that would be offered had there been another rail company there.

We have made a commitment that rather than dealing with short- or medium-length inter-switching to 160 kilometres, we are going to implement a long-term solution. I cannot help but notice that Alberta's barley growers have indicated that this is fantastic news. *The Western Producer*, a publication in western Canada, said that the Minister of Transport met with producers and listened carefully and agreed with what was said.

This is a positive development. We have engagement with different communities and policy that is going to, hopefully, meet their needs in the long term and not simply be a response to a short-term issue.

I will try to wrap up by revisiting the initial point I made. What we are trying to do is focus on steps that are going to improve the economy in the long term. I recognize that there are communities that are hurting today, including many I represent, that need jobs more than anything. What we are trying to do is put a plan into action that is going to help kick-start economic growth in the short term and sustain policies that will contribute to long-term economic growth.

We are seeing investments in innovation. For example, at St. Francis Xavier University, Dr. Risk's Flux Lab has, with the help of federal funding, been able to create a product that has entered into a commercial partnership. It detects gas leaks by affixing a detector to the front of a vehicle. This kind of technology would not have benefits just in my community. It would be able to help reduce

greenhouse emissions across Canada by preventing leaks and would employ people in the process.

We are seeing investments in infrastructure, such as municipal infrastructure projects, that have kept people in my communities employed during months when they might ordinarily be laid off.

We are seeing commitments to expanding trade relationships between Canada and its trading partners, because we know that with the natural resources we have and the skilled workforce we have, we can produce more and higher-value goods than we can consume as a country. What we need to do is expand our trade relationships to ensure that communities across Canada have the opportunity to benefit.

I appreciate that this may take some time, and more time than many members of this House would like, including me. If there was a job for every one of my constituents tomorrow, I would be the first person advocating for the policy that would give it to them. The fact is that this is a long and difficult process, but we have to start today. I believe that the government is on the right foot, and I look forward to the historical record that will be laid down, because I have to say, the early signs are quite encouraging.

•(1615)

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to say briefly that the Liberals love to quote from millionaire CEOs and billionaire multinational companies that are just thrilled with the new carbon tax as it relates to the energy sector. Many of those same CEOs and companies stood behind Rachel Notley when she announced the carbon tax that was supposed to pave the way for energy access to the west coast. We have seen that go off the rails. Many of those same companies have now abandoned their Canadian oil plays altogether. Royal Dutch Shell left Canada's oil patch and has gone to the United States, which has no carbon tax. This is a concrete example of carbon leakage, where the carbon the Liberals want produced less is just being produced elsewhere.

Would the member address the issue of competitiveness? Does he think making Canadian companies less competitive and having them simply move to lower-tax jurisdictions will actually have a positive impact on the climate?

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I thought it ironic that we are painted on the one hand as loving quoting these CEOs but on the other hand of taxing them too much, to the point that they are furious with us. I think the truth lies somewhere in between. The fact is that we are trying to adopt policy that will help grow the Canadian economy, writ large.

Specifically, on the issue of competitiveness, if we miss out on the front crest of the wave of green industry, of clean investments, we will not be competitive, because the rest of the world will leave us behind.

Specific to the natural resources industry in Alberta, though, I would like to point out that I had a look at the Stats Canada report this morning, and year over year, May 2016 to May 2017, we have seen a 9.9% uptick in jobs in that sector—

Mr. Ted Falk: Well, count zero.

Business of Supply

Mr. Sean Fraser: So with respect, Mr. Speaker, I believe we are on the right track, and these policies will make a positive difference to the Canadian economy.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before we go on to the next question or comment, I just want to remind hon. members that shouting across the floor is not the way the procedure works. Normally we recognize one person. That person asks a question and gets a response.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Central Nova. It is actually a huge relief to have a member from the government benches not just speaking rhetoric and government lines but coming up with original ideas. I share his passion to tackle climate change, and he identified specifics. I appreciate that.

We have seen raw log exports go up tenfold in 10 years. The Conservative motion says, “failing to negotiate a deal on softwood lumber and instead offering a compensation package rather than creating sustainable jobs for Canadian forestry workers.”

I would like to speak about creating sustainable jobs for forestry workers, because on Vancouver Island, we have seen raw log exports go up tenfold in 10 years. We are not adding value to those jobs. In fact, we are shipping wood to Washington and Oregon, and often we are buying the chips back, just to feed our mills, at double the price. We have other mills that are not even operating, because they are not up to speed on the technology to cut the very wood we are shipping out, and they have closed.

We are looking to see who will take responsibility. We do not want a government that will point to the past government or point to the provincial government. It would be nice to have some leadership. I am hoping that the member could maybe talk about some of those solutions moving forward.

• (1620)

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, before I address the question, I would like to say, to the extent you heard shouting, I heard some friendly conversation back and forth.

To answer the question from the member for Courtenay—Alberni, and I enjoy his passion for this issue, the forestry sector is strategically important to the Canadian economy. In the short term, there are issues we need to address, and I believe that the minister is on the right foot trying to address them.

I am of two minds when I deal with the specifics of how we protect the sustainable nature of this important industry. On the one hand, I believe that the private sector has a serious role, and to the extent that they are exporting some raw products, they may deem, with their own money, that it is in their best interest.

On the other hand, and perhaps this is an advantage I have of being one of the younger members of this House, I have the opportunity to look 60 years down the road and think it may be within my own lifetime, because that is how long it will take a forest to grow.

I have met with groups such as the eastern hardwood partnerships in Nova Scotia, which are trying to put together a plan that will help us take advantage of private woodlot owners and ask what kind of wood product will be a successful industry in 10 years that we could process locally. What will be successful in 30 years? To have that kind of foresight is something I very much enjoy. To the extent I can be supportive of creating a long-term sustainable forestry industry, not just in Atlantic Canada but across the country, I am happy to be an advocate to do so.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me say that for the next half hour, I will have the pleasure, as will my colleague from Chilliwack—Hope, with whom I will be sharing my time, to speak to this motion on the economy that we introduced today.

After hearing this very eloquent speech, I think that it is good to remember why we are here and what the meaning of the opposition motion is. I am going to read it, because I think it is good for us to remember why we are here and why most of us represent our ridings. It is to create hope, create jobs, get people working, and get the government out of the way of small businesses trying to succeed and to participate in growing our economy by creating jobs. However, this government does not seem to understand that.

The motion before the House today is very simple. It reads as follows:

That the House recognize that the government has mismanaged the economy in a way that is damaging Canadian industries and diminishing Canadians' economic stability by:

(a) failing to negotiate a deal on softwood lumber and instead offering a compensation package rather than creating sustainable jobs for Canadian forestry workers [I expect to have the opportunity to come back to this];

(b) attempting to phase out Canada's energy sector by implementing a job killing carbon tax, adding additional taxes to oil and gas companies, removing incentives for small firms to make new energy discoveries and neglecting the current Alberta jobs crisis; and

(c) refusing to extend the current rail service agreements for farmers in Western Canada which will expire on August 1, 2017, which will result in transportation backlogs that will cost farmers billions of dollars in lost revenue.

These three points speak volumes about the Liberal government's interest and lack of vision when it comes to the economy. Generally speaking, the Prime Minister's economic policies are doing nothing to foster Canadian economic growth or job creation, despite what we hear and what he would have us believe.

If the Prime Minister had really wanted to stimulate growth in our economy, he would, first and foremost, have made it his priority to negotiate a softwood lumber agreement with the United States and to protect Canadian jobs. What has the government done instead? It has not given them the weight they deserve. It has not adequately addressed the softwood lumber agreement negotiations.

Business of Supply

Given that the Prime Minister believed deficits would balance themselves, the Liberal government probably thought the softwood lumber agreement would sign itself. Unfortunately, as we have seen, in the case of both the deficits and the softwood lumber agreement, the government was completely mistaken when it comes to negotiating with the Americans.

There are 210,000 families who are directly or indirectly affected by the countervailing duties imposed, which currently affect all regions of Canada. The reason we have countervailing duties is that this government has not been able to stand firm when it needed to or to negotiate an agreement that would be good for both parties—a good agreement, not just any agreement, but an agreement, at least. We are left with a minister who keeps telling the House they are looking to negotiate a good agreement, not just any agreement.

On this side of the House, we are tempted to say that what we needed was a good minister to negotiate the agreement, not just any minister.

What happens when we wait for people to come to us before moving forward? We end up not moving forward. That is unfortunately what has happened on softwood lumber.

The Canadian industry no longer has confidence in the Prime Minister to achieve a real agreement. What has the Prime Minister done since March 10, 2016, when he promised there would be a new agreement to replace the one the Harper government had obtained and that it would be signed in less than 100 days?

Almost 500 days later, nothing has yet been done. Even worse, the Prime Minister has practically never raised the issue with the President of the United States at any of their various meetings.

• (1625)

To the plant workers located near the border in ridings like mine, to the forestry workers in my riding, the forestry workers across Quebec and the forestry workers all over Canada, this file can mean the difference between having to wait and make sacrifices, or being able to support their family and put food on the table, raise their children properly, give them a good education, and provide them with recreational opportunities.

Who is going to pay for this? It is the children in those families, who may not have all the tools they need to move our economy forward and develop it later. That is what the government does not seem to understand. These children will be deprived, because their families will have been deprived of an income for too long.

This government has a bizarre vision of our future generation. To begin with, the government is leaving an enormous debt for future generations. It is inflating their debt, supposedly to create jobs now. However, we have not yet seen those jobs that it is promising for now, in spite of the big deficits the government is running up.

I remember hearing during the election campaign that the government was going to run very small deficits and was going to get Canadians back to work right away. In fact, that was the reason it was going to run very small deficits. We were promised a return to a balanced budget in 2019.

That plan has not worked. Not only has the government failed to hold to small deficits, given that it now has enormous deficits, but we do not foresee a return to a balanced budget for a very long time. The forests will have time to grow and be harvested before we get back to a balanced budget, to paraphrase what was said by my colleague who spoke before me. The forests will have time to grow and be harvested before the deficit is repaid. Who will have to pay for that? Our young people will. Where are the jobs that were promised, where are the investments in infrastructure that were supposed to be made in 2016 and 2017?

The money borrowed has not been used to create jobs. It has been used to make the machine bigger. It has been used to do favours for the regime's pals and the people who put their faith in the Liberals in the last election because of all kinds of false promises. Unfortunately, they were hollow promises.

I do not want to sound alarmist, but the Minister of Foreign Affairs said today that the positions of Canada and the United States are still very far apart. She explained that nothing has yet been resolved in this trade dispute since Washington imposed countervailing duties as high as 26% on Canadian softwood lumber. The Minister herself admitted today that she is unable to reach an agreement on softwood lumber.

What is the Prime Minister waiting for before he does something? What is he waiting for before he himself, once and for all, defends Canadians and softwood lumber industry workers?

We need leadership. Canada needs strong leadership to show the United States that this softwood lumber agreement is a good one for both parties. It is an agreement that can create jobs, preserve our jobs, create jobs in the United States, and show that we are not going to let ourselves get fleeced. A good agreement means having an agreement, first and foremost. The best agreement is within our reach if we really want it.

The Prime Minister does not want to find a speedy solution, however, because they would not want to rub our American neighbours the wrong way.

Liberal policies have hurt our economy. I have not had an opportunity to say much about the carbon tax, but I would like to mention, in closing, that the carbon tax is just one more way the Liberals have found to dig deeper into Canadian taxpayers' pockets. Why? Because they want taxpayers to bear the entire burden of fighting climate change.

The government wondered why not tax the taxpayers more, and why not arrange it so taxpayers are the ones to pay, rather than finding a real plan that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In Quebec, a green fund was created with contributions from all kinds of green taxes. Unfortunately, there has been no reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Quebec's green fund is a dismal failure in every way. That is the kind of example they want to recreate everywhere in Canada. We will not be more competitive. We do not have a softwood lumber agreement.

In a nutshell, this government has no vision for developing our economy. I can only hope that someone on the other side of the House will stand up and show some leadership and restore the faith of our forestry workers.

Business of Supply

●(1630)

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer a little reminder about the softwood lumber crisis.

The Conservatives put the agreement in place in 2006, and in 2008 we had the forestry crisis. That crisis happened after the Conservatives' agreement with the Americans was implemented. It was a bad agreement that they signed in a hurry to get rid of the issue without solving the problem. That is what has brought us to where we are today.

In addition, the member said we have not created jobs. In fact, over 300,000 new jobs have been created in the last year. That may be why the Conservatives were unsuccessful as a government: they do not see the difference between 300,000 and a negative number.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Since he comes from a forestry region, I would have very much liked to know his position on the lack of leadership on the part of his own government, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of International Trade, when it comes to negotiating. They have been unable to find common ground with the Americans since 2015. It is all too easy to shift the blame onto others.

It has been almost two years since the Liberals got elected, which they managed to do under all sorts of pretexts. They said they would make real changes and they would be open and transparent. However, not only have they failed to negotiate, but also, according to the Information Commissioner, they are the least transparent government in recent years. So much for the lecture, then.

[English]

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my riding of Kootenay—Columbia is very dependent on softwood lumber. There are almost a dozen family-owned and larger mills in the riding. We are quite concerned that the Liberal government has not been able to negotiate a new softwood lumber agreement. I am hoping that some of the interim measures will be helpful, and I am going to check with the mill owners a couple of weeks from now to see whether the interim package has done anything for them.

The Conservatives had an opportunity to do something because the softwood lumber agreement expired in 2015. Why did the Conservatives not do something about it two years ago?

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, it may be useful to remind my colleague that there was an election in 2015.

In fact, had we stayed on the other side of the House, the agreement would probably be already approved today. We would have negotiated, we would have resolved this issue, and we would have signed a softwood lumber agreement, because we had a prime minister, Mr. Harper, who was not afraid to stand up to the President of the United States and taken a tougher stance to get the issue resolved. He said the issue was going to be settled, and it was settled immediately.

Therefore, yes, we would have liked to be still on the other side, and we would have settled the issue.

●(1635)

[English]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to cast the member's mind back, perhaps take a trip down memory lane with me, and remember when the bromance was in full effect. It was the Prime Minister and President Obama, and it was all cocktails and canapés and state dinners here and there. However, when they went for their fancy state dinners to Washington, they left behind the Minister of Natural Resources, who is responsible for softwood lumber.

Can the member talk about the priorities of the government and why, during a time when it supposedly was the closest relationship in Canadian and U.S. history, it failed to get the job done?

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, that is called a lack of leadership.

This is exactly the point I have been trying to make from the beginning of my speech. A leader who wants to really settle an issue puts aside the fancy hors d'oeuvres and tackles the real questions with his counterpart. Instead of asking whether to take a selfie with the left hand or the right, a leader is going to ask whether or not they are going to resolve the softwood lumber issue.

Unfortunately, our Prime Minister is more concerned about finding out whether to take selfies with the left or right hand. So much for the Liberal promise to cut taxes for employees in the softwood lumber industry or Canadian small businesses. This promise, made during the last campaign, was not kept.

It seems to me that the Liberal government's priorities are misplaced. Indeed, when the sun is shining and our two countries are indulging in something of a lovefest, it never occurs to anyone to ruin the fun by raising the real issues that Canadians care about.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, National Defence; the member for Courtenay—Alberni, Fisheries and Oceans; the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

[English]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is a pleasure to stand on behalf of the constituents of Chilliwack—Hope to speak in the House. Today we are debating the following motion:

That the House recognize that the government has mismanaged the economy in a way that is damaging Canadian industries and diminishing Canadians' economic stability by:

- (a) failing to negotiate a deal on softwood lumber and instead offering a compensation package rather than creating sustainable jobs for Canadian forestry workers;
- (b) attempting to phase out Canada's energy sector by implementing a job killing carbon tax, adding additional taxes to oil and gas companies, removing incentives for small firms to make new energy discoveries and neglecting the current Alberta jobs crisis; and

Business of Supply

(c) refusing to extend the current rail service agreements for farmers in Western Canada which will expire on August 1, 2017, which will result in transportation backlogs that will cost farmers billions of dollars in lost revenue.

I want to concentrate on the first two sections of the motion during my remarks. I know that members, like the members for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, Brandon—Souris, and others, have done an excellent job of talking about how the government is failing western Canadian farmers. That is certainly part of the Liberal legacy that continues whenever Liberals are in government.

I want to talk about the failure to negotiate a softwood lumber agreement. This is truly something that the Liberals have over-promised and under-delivered on. They promised that they would have a deal done. The Conservatives did not get it done, and Liberals were saying just watch us. I have several quotes, all from CBC News. On March 12, the then minister of international trade heralded a real breakthrough on softwood lumber negotiations, and we were promised that within 100 days, there would be the structure of a deal. I remember being in the House and hearing the thunderous applause, when members were still allowed to applaud, by the Liberal MPs heralding this 100-day breakthrough. Boy, were they ever going to get it done. Of course, that deadline came and went. “No softwood lumber deal, as ‘challenging but productive’ talks drag on” was the headline after that deadline came and went. However, the key features were now set, and we were told we should just wait, because they were going to sign a good deal for Canada. That is what we were promised.

In the interim, as I mentioned in my question, there was back-patting and photographs like we would not believe. It was the photogenic President Obama and the photogenic Prime Minister of Canada exploring their relationship, strengthening their personal ties. In fact, speaking of personal ties, when there was a state dinner in Washington, it was the personal ties of the Prime Minister of Canada that took priority over forestry workers. It was the in-laws of the Prime Minister of Canada who got a seat at that table, while the Minister of Natural Resources had to cool his heels at home. There was room for family, and there was also room for Liberal bagmen. The chief fundraisers of the Liberal Party got a seat at the table, but the Minister of Natural Resources did not. Why would he want to go to Washington? There was not much going on. There was no Keystone XL and no softwood lumber deal to negotiate. He was nowhere to be found because no one could get him a seat at the table. There were just too many favours to call in and too many photos to be taken with the two beautiful leaders of the two beautiful countries.

We have seen just today that Canada and the U.S. remain quite far apart on softwood lumber, and it is amazing how the reality has set in. To paraphrase the former Liberal leader, Michael Ignatieff: They didn't get it done. They haven't gotten it done. They promised they would, and they failed Canadian forest workers.

Liberals have come up with a \$900-million aid package. We, in the official opposition, will be watching very closely to ensure it goes to those who have been impacted by the failure of the Liberals to get a deal done, that it goes to the workers who need it most urgently, those who will be laid off as a result of the punitive countervailing duties that are coming up. Again, this is something the Liberals promised they would get done. They promised Canadians this would be done, and they have failed to deliver. That

is one part of this motion today. They did not get the deal done and they put jobs at risk. As a result, we have already seen mill closures and are expecting more in the days ahead.

● (1640)

The second part of the motion that I want to address is on the issue of competitiveness for our energy sector. Quite frankly, I am not concerned about the bottom line of companies like Royal Dutch Shell or Chevron or Cenovus or CNRL. I am concerned about the workers, the men and women who earn their paycheques every day and put food on their tables, those middle-class employees of these companies. That is whom we in the official opposition are concerned about, and that is why we have been so concerned about the lack of foresight by the government in terms of our competitiveness, which means that our jobs are put at risk.

The Prime Minister let slip his true feelings on the energy sector when he was on his apology tour after his Christmas vacation on billionaire island, where he went coast to almost coast. He did not go to British Columbia of course. He did not want to have to talk about pipelines there. When he was in Peterborough, Ontario, he said quite clearly that we need to “phase out” the oil sands. He claimed several days later, when he was in Alberta this time, that he misspoke, but we see from action after action of the current government that he was actually just revealing the truth. He let slip the truth. He did not misspeak, because time after time, action after action, the Liberals are punishing the energy sector.

In the budget, as is referenced in the motion, the Liberals cut the Canadian exploration expense, which is a tax incentive that allows for exploration that encourages companies to find that next well that would provide those next sets of jobs for energy workers, that would put food on the tables of people across the country, not just in the prairie provinces. While our biggest competitor, which used to be our biggest customer but is now our biggest competitor, the United States is busy cutting red tape, cutting taxes, and making it easier for energy companies to hire workers, the current government is putting up roadblocks.

We talked about the national tax on carbon that the Liberals are implementing, that they are forcing the provinces to implement. That will have a negative impact on our competitiveness. Taking away the incentives for new exploration will have a negative impact on our competitiveness and the ability for Canadian workers to keep doing the jobs that they have always done.

We have quotes here from people like Jack Mintz at the school of public policy at the University of Calgary. He said:

I think this competitiveness issue is a huge issue for Canada coming down the road and I am surprised [the government] took actions right now on this when they will be needing to deal with a much bigger set of changes next year.

The U.S. is going in a completely different direction on carbon and major U.S. tax reform. That's in addition to the measures being taken on carbon in Alberta. You start adding it all up and it's not a healthy climate. Businesses are taking their money elsewhere.

Business of Supply

That is what we have seen. We have seen businesses walking with their money. We have seen some of the same businesses who lined up behind Rachel Notley and talked about how excellent it was that there would be a new carbon tax on Albertans and how that was going to create all kinds of social licence, weeks later say, “Good luck with that. We’re going to the United States. We’re going to Kazakhstan. We’re going to jurisdictions that do not have a punitive carbon tax.” Therefore, what is happening is that there is not less carbon being emitted. There is just less carbon being emitted in Canada. If we are in this worldwide fight against climate change, that does not do anything except kill jobs in Canada.

On softwood lumber the Liberals did not get it done, and on the energy sector what they are doing is making things even worse. They need to change course or even more Canadian workers are going to lose their jobs.

• (1645)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my honourable colleague for his highly amusing speech.

What makes it so amusing is that the resolution refers to the way we are managing the economy. Over the last 12 months, we have created over 300,000 good jobs in Canada, which is quite amusing, indeed.

I have a question for my colleague about creating jobs for the future. There is a lot of work being done in my riding of Châteauguay—Lacolle in the vibrant sectors of innovation, agri-food and cutting greenhouse gases. A lot of work is being done on exciting projects, but investment is needed.

I would like my colleague to comment on our idea of creating the infrastructure bank.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the member finds it amusing when we are talking about job losses in the energy sector. When we are talking about job losses in the forest sector, that is not amusing to us on this side of the House, which is why we put forward the motion.

Our Conservative government had a strong record on creating jobs, 1.3 million net new jobs after the recession. That is something we take pride in.

The member talked about the infrastructure bank, which, again, for communities like mine, Chilliwack—Hope, where the threshold is \$100 million for a project, I am sorry if the people of Chilliwack—Hope do not have that kind of reserve on hand so that they can be part of that. They will be completely excluded from the Canadian infrastructure bank. It will be reserved for the big cities and for the big bankers, and Canadians will be the ones who will be asked to foot the bill if any of these investments go sideways.

The big investors, the foreign national bankers, get all of the upside profit and Canadian taxpayers take all of the downside risk. That does not sound like a very good program to me.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Chilliwack—Hope did a fine job of explaining the

problem of carbon leakage arising from the fact that there will be a carbon price in Canada but not in the United States. That is certainly a real challenge that we must address.

Canada has a goods and services tax, whereas the United States has no comparable national sales tax. The way in which we deal with that difference is by rebating the GST on exports and applying it to imports.

I wonder what the member for Chilliwack—Hope thinks about applying the same solution to carbon pricing, applying it to the carbon content of imports from countries that do not have a carbon price and rebating it on Canadian exports.

• (1650)

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, I have never seen more bureaucracy drive down the costs for consumers or for Canadian taxpayers. I just want to thank the premier of the province that member comes from for standing up for his people, for standing up for the rights of provincial governments to determine their own way forward to address this issue and to fight against a national made-in-Ottawa carbon tax.

Canadians will not hear this side of the House, certainly not this side of this side of the House, advocating for a carbon tax. We believe that there are other ways we could bring forward regulations that will address the issues of climate change that would not be so punitive to individuals, that would not drive jobs elsewhere, and that would not kill jobs as the government has been doing in the energy sector.

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

I want to thank the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman for his motion today. I am sure that he has many qualities but timing is not one of them, because if one wanted to criticize a government for economic performance, one would think it would be done when things are bleak and jobs are not being created.

Just last Friday, Statistics Canada reported even better than expected job numbers with the creation of 77,000 new full-time jobs, the third-largest one-month increase in the past five years. Behind those numbers are individual Canadians, tens of thousands of them, tens of thousands who can begin to take greater control over their personal finances, tens of thousands who can provide a better life for themselves and for their families.

The latest data continues to show the significant gains made and the jobs growth since the middle of last year, a trend that economists are now citing as evidence that the momentum we set earlier this year is continuing. More than 38,000 young Canadians found full-time work last month, making it possible to save for next year’s tuition, get into that first apartment, or buy that first home.

TD’s senior economist Brian DePratto concluded, “We think the Canadian economy is in a very good place right now.” The economy is in a very good place indeed, thanks to very good management.

Business of Supply

While the economy is in a very good place and we are starting to see a slow and steady recovery in Alberta, many people in my home province are still feeling anxious about the economic situation. I know this because I know people who have been affected by the downturn. They are my neighbours, my family, my friends, and my constituents.

That is why our government has provided significant support both in the short and long term to Alberta during this difficult time. In our very first budget we provided \$250 million in fiscal stabilization funding to the Government of Alberta. We responded to significant levels of unemployment by extending EI benefits for all Albertans who needed it, and we helped diversify our markets by providing \$750 million in loans from Export Development Canada.

In the medium term, in budget 2017 we provided the province of Alberta with up to \$30 million in grant funding to cover the interest costs on a \$250-million loan, which will put more than 1,500 Albertans to work over the next three summers cleaning up orphaned and abandoned wells. The work will happen now and industry will pay back the loan over the next 10 years.

Since taking office, we have made historic investments in infrastructure in Alberta. My department has approved 138 infrastructure projects in Alberta worth a combined investment of \$4.8 billion. As a matter of fact, today we marked a milestone. We have approved 3,000 projects since taking office, a combined investment of \$23 billion in Canadian communities. The vast majority of these projects are under way, creating jobs for Canadians.

These include important projects to deal with waste water in Lacombe, Alberta, and highway improvements throughout the province. After a decade of inaction by the previous government, we finally secured federal funding for the Yellowhead Highway freeway conversion project in the city of Edmonton, my hometown.

• (1655)

What we hear from our municipalities and provinces is that they are very happy with the way we are making significant investments to support them in building the infrastructure that their communities need.

For the long term, we have a track record of energy infrastructure approvals that my friends across the aisle are envious of. We have approved three pipelines, including the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain expansion, which will create 15,000 jobs during construction, and hundreds more permanent jobs.

This was made possible through the collaboration we have been able to establish with the Government of Alberta and Premier Rachel Notley. Through the climate leadership plan, and as part of the pan-Canadian framework on climate change, our government has proven that we can focus on energy and the environment together. Through this, we have accomplished results for Albertans and Canadians and will continue to do so.

The party opposite is offside with this approach. Conservatives prefer their failed approach of the last decade that did not see one single pipeline to tidewater approved. They were offside with every other party in the House, and offside with Canadians and Canadian businesses, which are telling them that pricing carbon is the single best way to spur innovation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

More than 60 businesses, labour, and environmental organizations have come out in support of pricing carbon. Here is what some of the members had to say. Pierre Gratton, president of the Mining Association of Canada, which represents 39 mining companies as well as several oil sands companies, said, "We think it's the best way to send a market signal to reduce emissions. This is something the industry believes. It's a generally held view that it is the best way forward to fight climate change."

Apparently, this generally held view does not extend to the people on the opposite side.

Jean Simard, president of the Aluminum Association of Canada went even further, saying, "We think definitely the challenge is not to slow down this process but to accelerate the transition."

Canadians understand that climate change and economic growth can happen at the same time. I do not want to be unfair to members opposite. Finally, belatedly, the party opposite has recognized that climate change is real. That is a good start. Who knows, perhaps by this time next year the party opposite will come to see the need to take action on climate change by pricing carbon. Perhaps, but I am not holding my breath. The fact is, the world has moved beyond the position of the Conservative Party. Some 40 countries, over 20 cities, states, and regions, including seven of the 10 largest economies, are putting a price on carbon.

The direction is clear. More and more countries are moving toward pricing carbon, and our government is proud to place Canadians among their number. We realize, unlike the hon. member and his party, that fighting climate change requires more than fine words. It requires firm action. Our government is taking that action. It is the same action that is urged by businesses, endorsed by environmentalists, and embraced by jurisdictions around the world.

As the recent economic data shows, it is clear that we can create jobs, drive growth, and protect the environment all at the same time. Indeed, in today's economy, there is no better way of creating prosperity.

• (1700)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before going to questions, I want to remind the hon. members that when they are shouting and looking straight down, just because they cannot see the speaker does not mean the Speaker cannot see them when they are speaking loudly. I wanted to point that out in case anyone was wondering.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Provencher.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want it on the record that I am a huge fan of historic spending on infrastructure. I like it, if it is done properly. The problem is that it is not being done properly by the Liberal government.

Business of Supply

Spending on infrastructure is an important investment, but it should be done by Canadians, not Chinese billionaires, and not rich Liberal elites. The way the government has structured it, those are the individuals who are going to be benefiting from the infrastructure bank, with an expected return of up to 20% on their investment. However, if by chance that project goes south, and if by chance there is a loss incurred on some of these infrastructure projects, we know who will take the bite. It will be middle-class Canadians and those working very hard to join it. They are the ones who are going to feel the pain.

When we look at it that way, I am wondering why we would not give middle-class Canadians the opportunity to invest in Canadian infrastructure. We could do it through the Canada savings bond program. However, instead of doing it through that program, offering middle-class Canadians and seniors a vehicle to get a decent return on their investment, the Liberals are doing away with it. They are going to discontinue the Canada savings bond program, and instead offer Chinese billionaires the opportunity to profit off of Canadians. I want to know how the minister feels about that.

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question from the hon. member and his desire to see infrastructure investments creating opportunities for Canadians.

Let me tell the House what our budget 2016 investments have been able to achieve. Through those investments, more than 1,000 buses have been bought in Canadian communities to reduce congestion and improve mobility. Those investments are renovating close to 60,000 housing units to provide a safe place for Canadians to live and provide opportunities for those who are working hard to be part of the middle class.

These investments are helping to build more than 200 schools in indigenous communities. It allows us to build 5,000 housing units in indigenous communities to improve their quality of life. It is moving our public transit, housing, and recreation facilities toward making them more accessible for people with disabilities. We are building more shelters to provide a safe place for women fleeing domestic violence. This is having a real impact on Canadians.

As far as the mobilization of private capital and pension funds are concerned, those are the investments made into pension funds by average Canadians. Our pension funds invest in foreign countries. Why would we not allow them to invest in our own country, to create jobs in our own country for the middle class?

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested when I heard we have had a surge in job growth. That is very good news. That is great news across Canada. The member mentioned there were 38,000 youth jobs, and a total of 77,000 jobs across the country. My question is on whether these are good-paying full-time jobs, or seasonal work. In the steel industry and the manufacturing industry, there is always a surge in May because everyone is going on vacation, so we have to do the backfill. In September, they are all laid off.

With some of those jobs, it does not say how much the pay is. Is it the \$200,000 middle-class jobs that he is talking about—that is our new middle class now—or are these low-paying retail sector jobs for the ones who are striving to get to the \$200,000 middle-class jobs?

• (1705)

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi: Mr. Speaker, all of us in the House want the best for our communities. We want to do our best to make sure that Canadians succeed, regardless of where they live. We want to give them opportunities. Absolutely, the vast majority of the jobs that are being created are full time. These are good-paying jobs. I cannot give the member the exact number on the wages because they are created throughout the communities.

What I can say is that the actions we have taken, whether reducing taxes for the middle class, or introducing the Canada child benefit that is lifting 300,000 children out of poverty, or the historic investments we are making in infrastructure, are acting as a catalyst to spur economic growth and enable the private sector to invest and create more jobs. That is where we see the opportunities. That is where we see the positive relationship that we have with our private sector doing more.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure for me to rise as the representative of the magnificent riding of Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

I would like to begin by thanking the member for moving this motion, since it gives me the opportunity to once again talk about Bill C-49, the transportation modernization act, a bill that will help our farmers and others who transport their goods using our rail system.

Rivière-des-Mille-Îles is home to a great company called Elopak, which manufactures containers for liquid food, and it needs the rail system. It brings in big rolls of paper to manufacture containers for cream or juice, such as the refrigerated juice that we buy at the grocery store. Canada's rail system is important for moving goods and services within the country.

Users have been asking for many years for an effective, long-term solution to improve this system, and I am proud that our government can keep its commitments.

Our government is committed to ensuring that the grain industry has a balanced, effective, and transparent rail transportation system to get its products to market. That is why Bill C-49 includes a large number of measures to help meet that objective.

Specifically, Bill C-49 is making the most significant changes to rail policy in a generation. This legislation caps the maximum grain revenue entitlement to keep grain transportation rates low. Our government listened to the concerns of Canadian farmers on this issue, which is extremely important to them. Having the chance to sit on the Standing Committee on International Trade, I have often heard about this issue. Furthermore, we are making changes to the maximum revenue entitlement, or MRE, to encourage investment in railway companies and expand the network to benefit all users.

Business of Supply

Bill C-49 provides monetary penalties for railway companies. These penalties will hold them accountable for poor service. As well, we clearly set out in the bill that the option for shippers to seek penalties from railway companies will not prevent them from seeking full compensation for expenses or losses due to poor service, such as late charges.

This is a long-standing issue for the grain industry, and this legislation will keep in place the Canadian Transportation Agency's temporary authority to award compensation for such failures. This bill also provides a robust definition of "adequate and adapted" services by specifying that railway companies must provide the highest level of service under the circumstances. The level of service would be available to everyone, including farmers affected by poor railway service.

To ensure that this mechanism will provide quick compensation, we are reducing the agency's time frame for rendering a decision from 120 to 90 days.

Furthermore, Bill C-49 ensures that small users can use a centralized process to challenge high rates charged by railway companies.

We will raise the cargo load limit for access to final offer arbitrage from \$750,000 to \$2 million, indexed to inflation.

This system will be easier for small users. Since there are no hearings, small users will not have to provide evidence in their case against the facts provided by railway companies regarding alternatives for moving their goods.

Users will be able challenge rates, and an arbitrator can make a decision applicable for a period of up to two years.

Bill C-49 will also enhance transparency. For the first time ever, big rail companies will be required to provide detailed information about the rates they charge, including amounts to be paid under the terms of confidential contracts. They will also be required to make all important information about their services publicly available through the agency.

Under this bill, we will establish new requirements for railways with respect to their plans and the steps they are taking to enable them to move grain for the following crop year. The agency will also have clear authority to hold hearings and issue recommendations on any issue of concern.

Taken together, these measures will ensure that problems are identified ahead of time and that all affected parties can take steps quickly to ensure that what happened in the winter of 2013-14, when record grain production and a harsh winter caused major delays, never happens again.

● (1710)

Through the measures included in Bill C-49, our government is protecting our reputation as a reliable trade partner and ensuring that we can grow our economy to benefit all Canadians.

This bill includes an important new measure to promote competition between the railway companies. Railway interswitching would provide users with access to an alternative railway company for distances up to 1,200 kilometres or 50% of the total long-haul

distance in Canada, regardless of which is greater. This would give users a significant bargaining tool when negotiating prices and service options.

Members of the House will recall that this was temporary legislation passed in response to extreme circumstances that are no longer an issue in the transportation and grain shipping system. In that context, we will allow Bill C-30 to lapse as planned on August 1, 2017.

There are four measures in this legislation that our government looked at in detail. We heard the users' concerns about each of them and we considered their future in order to ensure that adequate conditions will remain in place for the long term.

First, the agency has the authority to order a railway company to compensate users for inadequate service. As mentioned earlier, Bill C-49 makes that measure permanent.

Second, the agency has the authority to clarify service agreements that users have submitted for arbitration. This solution allows users to obtain a service contract when negotiations fail. Bill C-49 also makes that measure permanent.

Third, the temporary measures concerning the minimum volume of grain for Canadian National and Canadian Pacific will finally be removed as planned. Users have said that the minimum volumes were having an adverse effect on the system and that some corridors had received preferential treatment. Although it was understandable given the situation, I am sure all members of the House will agree that this is not the type of policy that we want to maintain in the long term, given its unintended consequences. Long-haul interswitching therefore provides a national solution to the major problem of captive shippers.

The report by the Hon. David Emerson on the state of transportation in Canada, began in 2014, recommends that railway interswitching in the Prairies, introduced in the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act, be withdrawn as planned. This report did not make any recommendations about some alternative instrument for encouraging competition or providing users with additional tools for negotiating with the railway companies.

Our government did not think that this was acceptable. Captive users told us that it was crucial to get better service and rate options. That is why Bill C-49 proposes long-haul interswitching. While that would encourage competition in the system, railway companies would be appropriately compensated for directing traffic to a competitor.

This provides me with an opportunity to commend the Minister of Transport for his extensive efforts in consulting farmers and other users before introducing this bill. Our government took the time to listen to farmers. That is why this bill provides them with considerable support.

Business of Supply

Our government understands the importance of a balanced and competitive railway system for its users and for farmers. That is why we are calling on all parliamentarians to act quickly. Meanwhile, the grain industry will continue to enjoy maximum revenue entitlement protections, something that keeps rates low and maintains processes such as arbitration around service delivery.

Bill C-49 is not a temporary fix; it proposes comprehensive measures to ensure the long-term success of Canada's grain industry. Passing them all at once would greatly expedite the legislative process. I am pleased to note that the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities has already agreed to come back earlier, before the House resumes, to consider Bill C-49.

• (1715)

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I have been calling on the government members to address certain questions that are in the motion, asking them what they are doing about creating sustainable jobs for the Canadian forest industry.

I come from a community where raw log exports have gone up tenfold in 10 years. A third of the children are living in poverty in the Alberni valley. Recently, the Somass River was closed for the fishing of sockeye. It is further plunging people into poverty. I am not hearing any solutions from the government side.

I am hoping to hear a serious commitment to the forest sector. I am really grateful that we are finally talking about forestry, because it is not talked about in the House. It was not talked about in the last two Liberal budgets, that we know, and it has been largely ignored by Ottawa for decades.

It would be great to hear some actual commitment. It would be great to actually have a minister show up in my riding. When we have a third of the kids living in poverty, we would think it would be a priority.

I do not want to hear from the members across the way about their child tax saving the day and lifting communities right out of poverty. Jobs lift people out of poverty, and we need jobs in our communities. I want to hear how the Liberals will create jobs in my community. They deserve that.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Linda Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, I thank my honourable colleague for his question.

As I pointed out earlier, I sit on the Standing Committee on International Trade. The forestry sector is one of those issues we quickly discussed last year. When I was a member of the National Assembly, the first sector I was concerned about was precisely the forestry sector. It is a very important issue for both B.C. and Quebec.

You mentioned the Canada child benefit. Obviously, this benefit has helped all Canadian families bring more money in. As for jobs, I agree with you that many families, even in your riding, rely on the forestry sector. Our government is serious about resolving this issue. It is something we need to settle with a long-term solution.

We want a good agreement, but not just any agreement. We want an agreement that will last.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I wish to remind the members to direct their answers and questions through the Chair.

The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has failed to recognize how the Liberal government has completely let down the forestry sector and has sat on its hands for the past year. It should have been renegotiating the extension of the current softwood lumber agreement or, in fact, getting a deal done to protect the 400,000 jobs in the forestry sector from coast to coast to coast. In every province, territory, and region, people work in the forestry sector and rural communities are hurting because of it.

I have to also take exception with the Liberal government for its policy on this regressive carbon tax. This tax will hurt the most vulnerable in our society, those living on fixed incomes and those who are underemployed. The only time they ever get to see a tax cut is when we reduce the input cost taxes, sales taxes. All the Liberal government wants to do is penalize these people who still have to heat their homes, drive their cars, and still have to take transit. All those things get more expensive because of a carbon tax, and will do absolutely nothing to fix the environment.

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Linda Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague across the aisle for his question.

I am a bit surprised by his comment that the softwood lumber issue and the negotiation is our fault. In fact, the Conservatives were in office when the agreement expired. I would say to my colleague across the way that they should have ensured that it was renegotiated.

I will say it again, because perhaps he did not hear me. We do not want just any agreement. We want a long-term agreement. We do not want it to keep coming back, once again threatening jobs in B.C., Ontario, and Quebec.

I would like to remind our colleague that innovation and economic development do indeed go hand in hand with the environment. That is what we need to do to ensure good long-term jobs here in Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

I would like to speak to the motion of my colleague for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, and I will highlight three key things on forestry.

The first part of the motion reads:

Business of Supply

That the House recognize that the government has mismanaged the economy in a way that is damaging Canadian industries and diminishing Canadians' economic stability by: (a) failing to negotiate a deal on softwood lumber...forestry workers;

This is a section of the larger motion the member has brought forward. However, it is a big deal to people in British Columbia and across the country for that matter. However, I will speak to how it affects people of Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies.

There was promise by the Prime Minister and President Obama that this deal would be reached within the first 100 days of the government's regime. I think we can all agree that there are some things other parties do that we like and want to see go through. It is not just about winning the political game; it is about what is good for our constituents. Therefore, we were hopeful that this 100-day agreement would come to fruition.

There was a big announcement that President Obama was going to come to Ottawa to speak, and he did. Regardless of whatever party the president represents, it is an honour to be in this place to hear heads of state speak. However, usually a visit from a head of state, especially one that promised a deal on softwood lumber, would follow with the signing of an agreement. We had hoped for that, and it would have worked out on timing. I think it was 90-plus days when the former president came to speak to us.

We heard the speech in Parliament, and I am sure many Canadians watched it on TV, and we waited. We thought maybe that night an agreement would be signed and we would hear an announcement the next morning that the Prime Minister and President Obama had come to an agreement. However, we were disappointed when President Obama left Ottawa without any documents signed. We knew then that we were in trouble. That was the window of opportunity for Canadians and Americans to get the agreement signed and done.

People say that it is a complicated thing to sign a softwood lumber agreement. I have the agreement that our previous government crafted. Anybody go to the web, under treaty-accord.gc.ca, and find the most recent softwood lumber agreement. All we were looking for was to have that reinstated. We negotiated this agreement before. It was fair to both countries. We were trading softwood lumber across our borders quite well with that agreement.

A group of us went to Washington in February. I wanted to meet with some of the members of the transition team for the new President. This was about a week after his inauguration. I met with about 10 members of the transition team and other members of the natural resource committee. We asked what the intent of the current presidency was on signing this agreement. We wanted to see where they stood on it. The message I received was quite clear. The new President was looking to expand the lumber manufacturing in the U.S. He wanted to develop his own industry and expand it even further. The new administration wanted to look at public land timber as opposed to private land timber, which would greatly expand timber and lumber manufacturing in the U.S.

• (1725)

What was clear to me was that we had a new regime in the U.S. that wanted to dramatically develop its resources, dramatically increase forestry production. What was also clear to me was that our window had passed. The window we had with what Obama and the

current Prime Minister promised would have been the perfect opportunity, but alas, it did not happen.

I want to respond in the latter part of my speech to some of the comments that we hear, such as, "Conservatives didn't get it done under their watch." Actually, we did get it done. We got it done, originally, in 2006, and we got an extension in 2012, up until a few months ago. They say we did not get it done, yet we actually have an agreement and we have an extension to that agreement that carried us from 2006 for 10 years and beyond.

To say that we, as Conservatives, did not get it done is, to me, laughable. We are the only ones who have produced a softwood lumber agreement in my recent memory. I would challenge the Liberals across the way to say otherwise. The fact of the matter is that former MP David Emerson was key in the deal, key in negotiating the softwood lumber agreement. That was under a Conservative watch, not under a Liberal watch, just to clarify that. If the Liberals want to check the record, they are more than free to do that. There is only one signatory at the bottom of the softwood lumber agreement, in 2006, and it is, again, the man I just mentioned, whose name is David Emerson. Certainly, a lot of people's efforts make an agreement. There are a lot of people who are needed to make that happen; for example, a lot of clerks are involved in writing it. However, it was still under a Conservative government that it happened.

I guess the hope was that since we had already done the legwork for the current government and the past president, all that really needed to be done was for it to be resubmitted and re-ratified and we would have another softwood lumber agreement until however long that agreement would be held, maybe six years, maybe more.

This is what is really problematic for me. I do not think the other side really understands how important that window was. We had, apparently, two willing parties to sign the agreement. The will was in the room and the will appeared to be strong enough. We saw the announcements and the Americans saw the announcements that President Obama was willing to do it and our Prime Minister was more than willing to do it. They had their meetings and they seemed to get along quite well. We were not upset about that. We were, frankly, happy they were going to get along, and hopefully get this agreement done, but then we saw that window float by and just disappear. To open that door again is going to be very difficult.

However, I think there is an answer. I think there is a way that we can get this done. Again, the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman has put forward this motion to challenge the government to develop its agreement. I think it is possible. What I think we need to understand, and what the government especially needs to understand, is that the current president of the United States, President Trump, is doing what he is doing for his country. He is trying to make his industry as competitive as possible in the market, to get as much of that market as possible. We cannot fault him for that.

Business of Supply

The way we respond to that is not by putting in a carbon tax to make costs go higher for our industry. I know some may think that is the answer, but it absolutely is not. We need to get more competitive. We need to sharpen our pencils. We need to meet the new president on the same field as he is on. Where he is becoming more competitive, we need to become more competitive to compete with the new reality in the U.S.

There is an answer to this issue. I would suggest we look back at when former prime minister Harper was here. We had a competitive capital tax regime for corporate tax rates. We had a competitive regime for small business tax rates, etc. I think the present government needs to look a few pages back to see why we were so strong in the G7, why we were so strong in the world economy when, really, everybody else was failing.

Why was our economy strong? It was because it was competitive. I think we need to understand how to get back there. I look back to our government in 2011, and a bit further back, as the way we can be successful in the new reality that is before us in Canada.

• (1730)

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I keep hearing all these Conservatives get up and talk about how great their softwood lumber agreement was in 2006. The problem with it was that it was not great. Virtually everybody at the time was opposed to it. They gave \$1 billion to the American industry and not to the Canadian industry, and it directly resulted in the lumber crisis of 2008.

I was wondering what planet he was on with respect to this topic.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, it is actually funny that he wonders what planet we are on. Our government got a softwood lumber agreement and got an extension. I would challenge the hon. member. This is coming from a government that has zero softwood lumber agreements under its belt but just keeps throwing the mud back at us. We are not in government anymore to make that decision. I think the challenge is for the member across the way. The Liberals need to develop their own softwood lumber agreement. If they are so good at making softwood lumber agreements, let us see it. Let us see them pull it off.

The government had the opportunity with a willing Prime Minister and a willing president to get a softwood lumber agreement. What did we get? Absolutely nothing. Until the Liberals can prove they can pull off a softwood lumber agreement, they should think twice about saying that about our former government.

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Madam Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, softwood lumber and getting an agreement is really important in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia. We are really disappointed that we are not there under the Liberal government, but I really cannot let my Conservative colleagues off the hook. If they knew the agreement was expiring, and this agreement expired in October 2015, if they were doing their due diligence, would they not have planned to have a new agreement in place when the old one expired?

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, that is actually a great question. We were working on it in 2006 and got it done. We had it extended in 2012. It is good to have an extension. Why create a new softwood lumber agreement if we can extend it?

There was a little thing called an election that got in the way of 2015. While we were working on a new agreement, trying to work out the details, the election got in the way. Had we got back, it is all speculative what we would have been able to do, but we did it before and we know we could do it again. Now the challenge is up to the government across the way to follow through on its promise of 100 days. The 100 days have gone and are behind us. The challenge is for the government to pull it off.

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for correcting the record. The facts of the matter of the last softwood deal were that the Liberals did not get it done in 2005. We became government in January 2006, and we got the softwood deal in September. Out of that deal the Americans then had to give \$5 billion back to Canadian companies. We then negotiated a seven-year contract, and the hon. member is right that the contract ran out in 2015. There was an extension period there. It ran out in the midst of the election, but we also had a one-year extension where no duties and no countervail would be brought against our companies during that time. That then gave whichever government won the election time to finish the deal.

We heard the Liberals say, “We can do a better deal than they can. This will be easy. We know President Obama. We will have a great deal.” However, they did not get it done.

Would the member also make some comments as to that, how the \$5 billion came from America back to the Canadian companies in 2006?

• (1735)

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Battle River—Crowfoot for bringing that up, because this is how good an agreement that was. It held up in the higher court and we actually won those battles. The Americans came back and tried to get us for \$5 billion, and we won the case and we got the money back.

The proof is in the pudding that we could pull off a great softwood lumber agreement. It held up in the higher courts of the land and in international courts for that matter. Let me remind the Liberals across the way that we got that done under a Conservative government. The challenge before the Liberals now is to get their own softwood lumber agreement that is so strong it will hold up in those higher courts. The challenge is out there. I honestly hope they pull it off.

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak during the Conservative Party opposition day debate on the government's mismanagement of the Canadian economy. When we talk to Canadians, they understand how badly it is being mismanaged.

Business of Supply

More specifically, the Conservative motion states, “That the House recognize that the government has mismanaged the economy in a way that is damaging Canadian industries and diminishing Canadians’ economic stability by”. Then it goes on to list three separate industries and areas where it does it.

First of all is “failing to negotiate a deal on softwood lumber and instead offering a compensation package rather than creating sustainable jobs for Canadian forestry workers”. That is the Liberal way, a compensation package. They cannot get the job done, but they will fork over more taxpayers' dollars.

Second is “attempting to phase out Canada’s energy sector by implementing a job killing carbon tax, adding additional taxes to oil and gas companies, removing incentives for small firms to make new energy discoveries and neglecting the current Alberta jobs crisis”. I will speak more about that later.

Third is “refusing to extend the current rail service agreements for farmers in Western Canada which will expire on August 1, 2017, which will result in transportation backlogs that will cost farmers billions of dollars in lost revenue.”

The constituents of Battle River—Crowfoot want the Liberal government to admit to its failures as described in the motion. There is concern throughout the large agricultural community that I represent about railway service and the challenge of getting our products to ports and markets. There is even more concern when they see the Liberals, as I stated in a question earlier, failing to renew Canada's softwood lumber agreement with the United States. When they came into power, they thought it would be a *fait accompli* and an easy task, and they have failed. Again, their only response is compensation.

Alberta has already seen the Liberal government completely ignore the crisis in the oil industry. There were no hundreds of millions of dollars to help that very important sector of the Canadian economy. The Liberals have nothing to help the oil and gas industry and the workers who are now unemployed. In fact, the government has seemed to only hurt the industry more. There has been what we called back in my football days “piling on”. They have taken one crisis down on the turf and jumped on it all over the place. The Liberals have nothing except handouts and people want more. The unemployed want jobs.

In Battle River—Crowfoot and many other agricultural ridings around the country, people are concerned about the Liberal government's pending mismanagement of our rail system. Liberals are basically saying that what they have done to softwood lumber and the oil patch they want to now take to the railway transportation system. What we are about to receive from the Liberal government as an answer to many of these problems, by the way, is a carbon tax on everything and everyone, and there is no reason for it. That is the good news. Conservatives are here to proclaim loud and clear that there is no reason for a carbon tax at this time or any time, and no reason to call it a solution to the problem.

The Liberals are using the same emissions targets that were calculated by the previous government. The Conservative government set very achievable targets that would not require a carbon tax system for Canada to meet them, and we were committed.

Conservatives know that Liberals are using their carbon tax as a cash grab and Canadians should not take it. Canadians should not just accept that a carbon tax is a way to reach the Paris accord or any other environmental goal that the government may want to reach. It is not required. That is what my constituents tell me when I am home.

Battle River—Crowfoot is a large agricultural riding, approximately 54,000 square kilometres. It is mainly agricultural and individuals who work in the oil and gas industry. The people I meet in groceries stores, on the streets, and at various community events are all being hit hard by the drop in oil prices. In fact, many skilled workers who worked in the oil patch are not employed any longer. Many people have come home and there is little or no work. The Liberal government has not come to the aid of this sector of Canada's economy. In fact, it has added to it. It has ignored the job crisis.

• (1740)

The Conservative members of Parliament from Alberta went through the province and created an Alberta jobs task force. We listened to Albertans and to Canadians about the government's role in helping to create jobs. It is not just hiring more bureaucrats and just hiring more public servants. We wanted to know what it was going to take to create a climate in which the private sector, the small and medium-sized businesses, could create jobs. We did this before the last recent budget, but the Liberals ignored what the people of Alberta said.

In my constituency through most of the time I have served, we have had an unemployment rate of around 3%. It would go down a little and it would just go up marginally, but it was typically around 3%. Even during the recession, it was relatively low compared to what we are seeing now. In the month of March, it was 9.9%. In the month of April, it was 9.7%.

I mentioned some of this in my speech last week. These are the issues facing Alberta and my constituency. Now, as we come into the summer, when there are typically more jobs, the Liberals say there has been a bump in some jobs, including in Alberta, but it is a small marginal jump that happens in the construction season, and it is there again this year.

However, the Liberals are going down the road of a carbon tax, believing that this is going to solve the problems that they want to focus on. It is a shame.

The way the Liberals want to implement the agreement they have would mean speeding up the closure of coal-fired generation plants. The Liberals have gone ahead and seriously limited Canada's softwood lumber industry, but on the coal issue, I have two in my riding. One is Sheerness Mine down by Hanna, on Highway 36. Most of the workers employed there live in and around Hanna. There is also the Battle River generating station, just out of Forestburg. These workers are being told that their jobs are going to end and that it may be sooner rather than later.

Business of Supply

That is not what we see going on everywhere else around the world. China is allowed to continue to use coal. They continue building new coal-fired electrical plants while Alberta shuts theirs down. In fact, some say we are shutting ours down so they can open them in China. China uses their coal-fired electricity to operate manufacturing facilities to make goods that will then be sold back to Canada, and we are purchasing them in record numbers.

The question is, is the carbon footprint being lowered? It was asked earlier in questions. It was asked earlier in this debate. Are we sending money to China to help them fire up their coal furnaces to generate electricity and then send products back to us? Are we actually supporting that? Perhaps we are. All I know is that precious little is offered to communities like Hanna and Forestburg to replace the jobs that are going to be lost there.

I want to talk about the Conservative motion in regard to the mismanagement of the economy around the softwood lumber deal. In the softwood lumber agreement, a rookie government got caught in the promises it made. It said it could do this. Now the average family involved in that industry pays the price, the father who is unemployed or the mother who is unemployed. They used to work in the sector. The child is off at school, but now mom and dad are not working. That is the problem. It did not need to be this way.

What did the Liberals do when the oil industry needed help? Nothing. What did it do when the softwood lumber industry needed help? It came up with an agreement and compensation. Then what did it do when Bombardier needed help? It spent hundreds of millions of dollars, and we know that some of that money went to pay executive bonuses. It is shameful.

• (1745)

The Conservative motion today is about the future of the Liberal government in protecting Canadians' jobs and economic growth. That is what the Liberals are going to fail to do, through the Paris Agreement and others.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one of the comments by the hon. member was that we are phasing out the energy sector, but I think perhaps he is out of sync. I was just reading something on my iPhone from the managing director of Mercedes, predicting that electric cars will become mainstream by 2020. He went on to say that solar production has been on an exponential curve for 30 years, and he said that last year more solar energy was installed worldwide than fossil.

Energy companies are continuing to convert from fossil fuels to solar, wind, tidal, and the other options. Do you not think that it is the Conservative Party that is a little out of sync here?

I have one other point on the softwood lumber issue. This is my fifth softwood lumber negotiation. I have been on that side and on this side, and often there is a compensation plan involved when there is a problem after the Americans take exception to what we do. We end up winning in the end, but meanwhile the lumber producers and labourers are suffering, so there are compensation plans. In previous negotiations, compensation plans have been applied by both parties.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the member for Cumberland—Colchester that as

someone who has a bit of seniority in the House here, he knows he is to address questions to the Chair and not to individual members.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Hon. Kevin Sorenson: Madam Speaker, in regard to the question asked, that member does fit in very well on that side of the House with that party, because when people losing jobs and western Canadians are fighting the winters and the climate, to answer with electric cars as the answer to those problems really does the people of Alberta and the people of this country a disservice. The answer to the issue is not putting electric cars in every driveway across this land.

Certainly there are some places where we can do it, and we fully endorse and support sustainable industries and capital, not just government handouts. We support the promotion of renewable types of energy, including solar, wind, and others. However, no matter where we look, we will not find statistics showing that any more than 20% or 25% of our energy needs could be answered by renewables. Fossil fuel is going to be around, and to be quite frank, China, India, and the world are looking for more. We have it and we should be supplying it.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Madam Speaker, I certainly agree with the member for Battle River—Crowfoot that it would not make sense to shut down facilities in Canada in order to open new ones in China. To produce a tonne of steel in China would mean five times as much carbon as would be produced by Evraz in either my riding or his riding.

Would the member for Battle River—Crowfoot agree that since the federal government is going to apply a price on carbon, it should extend the same price to the carbon content of imports from China, which would mean a carbon tariff about five times as much as the carbon charge put on steel mills here in Canada?

• (1750)

Hon. Kevin Sorenson: Madam Speaker, I am not one who advocates for higher tariffs and higher taxes, and certainly not for larger government and more bureaucracy. What the member is saying is that we can just hit them with a tariff. I can say, and I believe it wholeheartedly, that when we start applying those types of tariffs, there is reciprocity, and then other countries start applying tariffs in retaliation. I know it may be the goal of the NDP just to have this little island here and not need the world, but as an exporting country, we get it that we do need the world. We want to sell our goods to the world. We are an exporter. Therefore, I do not support that idea.

Also, it is interesting that although we signed on to a Paris accord and although China and some of those countries may, their goals are extended beyond what ours would be, to 2030. Our coal plants were initially set to phase out by 2030; now they are being pushed, so it may be as early as 2025, and some are talking 2020. It is not a level playing field. As Canadians, if we are going to compete anywhere, all we ask for is a level playing field.

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Orléans.

Business of Supply

I would like to thank the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman for bringing Canada's softwood lumber industry back to the floor of this House as part of his motion.

It is impossible to overstate the importance of the industry to our country, the Canadian economy, or the many communities that depend on it. There are close to 600 softwood lumber mills in Canada. Many of them are in remote or indigenous communities. A lot of them are family-owned, and some of them are particularly small and vulnerable operations. However, together these mills are a major employer, providing jobs for some 38,000 Canadians, along with another 32,000 jobs for those working in forestry and logging operations who are at the core of the timber supply.

The result is that last year Canada's softwood lumber industry generated almost \$10 billion in exports, more than three-quarters of which were sold south of the border. Therefore, the member opposite is right to be concerned in the wake of the U.S. Department of Commerce's decision to impose countervailing duties in the 20% range on Canadian softwood lumber. We share his concern. This unfair and punitive trade action by our American neighbours could prove devastating and cause lasting damage to Canada's softwood lumber producers, their workers, and local communities. That is why our government plans to continue fighting vigorously for Canada's softwood lumber industry and those whose livelihoods depend on it, including through litigation.

We also expect to prevail because, as members know, every previous ruling by an international tribunal over the last 30 years has come down in Canada's favour. In every case, the U.S. claims of unfair trade practices were found to be flawed, overstated, and overcharged, and ordered changed.

Unfortunately, the motion before us, however well-intentioned, is fatally flawed for two reasons with respect to the softwood lumber file.

First, it accuses our government of failing to negotiate a new deal on softwood lumber with the United States. If the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman is suggesting that we should have accepted any terms with the United States for the sake of a negotiated settlement, then he is simply wrong. Maybe the member opposite supports trade peace at any costs. We do not. Maybe the member opposite is willing to sell out Canada's softwood lumber industry for 30 pieces of silver. We will not. We do not want just any deal for Canada's softwood lumber industry; we want the right deal. We want a durable and equitable solution that is fair to softwood producers, downstream industries, and consumers on both sides of the border—nothing more, nothing less. We will continue to work toward that end.

The ministers of foreign affairs and international trade continue to speak regularly with their American counterparts in search of a new agreement on softwood lumber. In fact, Canada has put forward a number of reasonable proposals to the current U.S. administration that are responsive to the views expressed by the American softwood lumber industry. These proposals would also ensure security of supply at fair prices to American consumers and those U.S. companies that rely on Canadian imports. However, if the member opposite thinks we should just accept whatever the United States is

offering, he should think again, because it will not happen on our watch—no way, nohow.

The other fatal flaw in the motion before us is its implicit opposition to our softwood lumber action plan. Such a suggestion is nothing short of shocking, because it illustrates how out of step the member opposite is with the needs of the industry and its workers. While the member opposite is railing against support for softwood lumber producers, Canada's mill operators and their employees have been praising our government for taking swift action and a measured approach to helping the industry.

I would like to outline some of the highlights in our \$867-million action plan to strengthen Canada's softwood lumber industry.

As an example, under our plan the Business Development Bank of Canada and Export Development Canada will make a combined \$605 million available in financial products and services, on commercial terms, to help viable companies make capital investments and diversify into new markets. There is also more than \$160 million to help the Canadian forest industry expand both its product lines and market opportunities. As well, we will continue to work with the provinces to ensure affected workers have the support and adjustment services they need and deserve.

● (1755)

This includes almost \$90 million in new funding to expand work-sharing opportunities to assist companies to retain employees and help affected workers upgrade their skills and transition to new jobs in the field.

Finally, there is \$10 million for the indigenous forestry initiative to help indigenous communities pursue new economic opportunities in the forest sector. I look at all these measures and I cannot help but wonder what the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman is opposed to. Which ones would he drop, and why is he against supporting our softwood lumber producers' efforts to maintain good sustainable jobs in our forest sector?

His opinion is certainly in the minority. It flies in the face of what we are hearing from the industry and what media are reporting. Look at some of the headlines. "Forest industry embraces Canada's nearly \$870M in softwood aid", or this from New Brunswick's softwood lumber association, "We appreciate the federal government's focus on this", or from British Columbia's Lumber Trade Council, that everything we can do to expand markets for our products around the globe helps decrease our reliance on the U.S. market. We agree.

Business of Supply

That is why the Minister of International Trade was in China in April to promote the use of Canadian wood in home construction, while his parliamentary secretary travelled to Vietnam, Singapore, and Brunei Darussalam to pursue new export opportunities for Canada's forest sector. That is why the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development went to the United Kingdom and mainland Europe at the same time to tout Canadian wood and wood products and why the Minister of Foreign Affairs followed up those efforts with her own trip to Europe last month.

That is why the Minister of Natural Resources just returned from China yesterday, after spending a week promoting Canada's natural resources in the world's second-largest economy and why his trip included renewing a memorandum of understanding to use Canadian wood in sustainable eco-cities.

There is no way I can support a motion that opposes all those things. I cannot and I will not, because our government will never sign a bad deal for Canada's softwood lumber industry or turn our backs on it when it needs us the most. It just will not happen. We believe in Canada's softwood lumber industry too much to do that to it.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, today we have heard a lot of finger pointing while we are trying to get a softwood lumber agreement in place. I understand the frustration from everyone. Coming from a community where mills are closed, where we have seen raw log exports go up tenfold in 10 years, we need investments in retooling our industry. We are actually sending our fir out of the country without even cutting it. We are having to buy the chips back from mills in Oregon and Washington to feed our pulp and paper mills. It is ridiculous. When people are unemployed, and they see a mill close and a boatload full of wood, it is pretty disturbing.

I am grateful to hear about the \$160 million, but I would like to hear how that is going to roll out. I would like to hear that the government is going to make it a priority when the new B.C. government is sworn in to get to British Columbia to find a way to get those jobs to remain in our country so we can cut our wood here and get those mills open. It would be great to have a parliamentary secretary or a minister show up in my riding, where one-third of the kids are living in poverty and there is extremely high unemployment. We really need a hand.

● (1800)

Ms. Kim Rudd: Madam Speaker, one of the ways we are continuing to stay engaged on this file is with the federal-provincial task force the minister set up when this issue came to the fore. That task force is continuing, and there will be further discussions with the provinces. We are also nimble in terms of changes that could happen within the sector, and we will be ready to adjust should that occur.

In terms of diversification of the sector, the member mentioned the chips having to be brought back to Canada. One of the things we are seeing a real appetite for is diversification within the softwood lumber sector and some other things, such as biomass for fuel from the residue from the softwood lumber. I agree with the member opposite that this is a very difficult time for those families and communities, and we will be there, and we are there now, ready to help in whatever way we can.

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, this is not the time to be nimble. We need urgency.

In my community alone, one mill has closed and the other mill has been reduced to one shift. On top of that, the sockeye fishery has closed. We are not going to have a sockeye fishery, which is going to affect indigenous fishers, commercial and recreational fishers, and sports fishing. All will be closed.

We cannot wait. We need the government to show some sense of urgency, and I do not mean six months down the road and bringing everyone together for a conversation. I mean next month. It would be great for the government to show that it means it. People cannot wait. They are being plunged further into poverty. We need the government's help. We need the government to show that it cares about Vancouver Island.

“Coast to coast to coast” is what I hear often from the government. The government says its number one relationship is with indigenous people. Come and see indigenous people in my riding. They will tell you what it looks like when it comes to forestry and fishing and where the government has been. The government has been invisible.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am assuming that the member was addressing those comments to the Chair and not to the government.

Ms. Kim Rudd: Madam Speaker, the member is absolutely right. The urgency is there. That is why we, in record time, provided a comprehensive and very large package to the forestry sector, because we heard those messages on the calls with the provinces from the sector.

The programs are ready now. There has been communication by the provinces to the sector about how to access those programs. There is also \$10 million for indigenous communities to help them diversify in terms of their work in the forestry sector. The member is absolutely right that indigenous communities in particular are affected by this, because they are often remote communities and very involved.

We will continue to work on this. On being nimble, my point was that should things change, we will continue to have those conversations so we are able to adjust to those changes. In the meantime, the package is available. I look forward to working with the sector and the provinces to make sure it gets out to those who need it.

● (1805)

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman has given me to provide an update on the softwood lumber file. I would like to build on the excellent work that has just been done by my colleague and good friend.

Business of Supply

The softwood lumber file is critically important to the Prime Minister, to the government, and indeed, to the people of Canada. It is one we have obviously made a priority. In fact, this has been an absolute priority for the Prime Minister and the government from the very beginning. The Prime Minister raised the softwood lumber issue first with President Obama, during their very first meeting at the APEC summit in November 2015, and again in his first meeting with President Trump in February 2016. I was present for the latter.

Canada's softwood lumber industry supports 220,000 good-paying, middle-class jobs for workers in communities across the country. We have heard some of the very unfortunate incidents that are a result of the imposition of the unfair duties initiated by the Americans.

Softwood lumber production contributes \$22 billion to Canada's gross domestic product. In particular, the industry is an economic anchor in more than 170 rural communities, around which are built wonderful jobs, all focused on mills or facilities given to processing the wood.

Given Canada's geographic proximity and close commercial links to the U.S., it is no surprise that the U.S. is our number one export market for softwood lumber. It comprises 75% of overall Canadian softwood lumber exports.

We all know that there are significant benefits for the U.S. in having access to Canadian lumber. For many decades, the U.S. has relied on our exports to fill the gap between domestic production and demand. Canada's softwood lumber has historically been used to meet about one-third of the U.S. import demand. Ten per cent of the overall requirement comes from Canadian forests.

However, despite this mutually beneficial arrangement, Canada and the U.S. have not always seen eye to eye on this file. The 2006 softwood lumber agreement expired in 2015. Let me just correct some of the assertions made by my friends across the way. The previous Conservative government did not achieve a new agreement. They let the deal expire, putting thousands of Canadian jobs, businesses, and livelihoods on the line. This was followed by a one-year agreed standstill period during which the U.S. agreed not to launch any trade actions against Canada. During this one-year standstill, Canada and the U.S. were actively engaged in discussions.

Between January and November 2016, under this agreement, our government negotiators met 18 times and discussed numerous proposals and issue papers with our American colleagues. This high-level engagement was only possible because the Prime Minister and the entire government kept up the pressure on the U.S. administration. This led to a much better understanding of each other's interests. However, Canada and the U.S. remained far apart on core issues.

I know that recent media reports have said that Canada and the U.S. were close to an agreement, but this is not accurate. In reality, the U.S., which must get support for any proposed deal from the U.S. lumber industry, did not put any offer on the table that was acceptable to Canada.

As mentioned by my hon. friend just a few minutes ago, our government firmly believes a new softwood lumber agreement is in the best interests of both countries. However, where we appear to

differ from the hon. opposition is that we are not willing to accept just any deal. Our goal, and this is a goal shared by the provinces and territories and by the Canadian industry, is to get a long-term deal that protects Canadian jobs and the industry itself. As mentioned, and as proven, we will absolutely not accept just any deal that locks Canada into an untenable path for our softwood lumber producers.

I want to assure the hon. member, and every member here, that Canada continues to engage the U.S. and move toward negotiating a good agreement for Canada. The Prime Minister has raised the issue many times with the President. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Canada's ambassador to the United States will continue to raise this issue with the U.S. Secretary of Commerce and other key members of the U.S. administration at every opportunity.

Recent efforts by the Minister of Foreign Affairs with the U.S. Secretary of Commerce have led to the re-engagement of officials in technical discussions. We are going to continue to push the U.S. administration at all levels to find a way forward on this file. In the meantime, we are also watching very closely developments on the litigation side.

• (1810)

The U.S. recently imposed countervailing duties of 3% to 24% on Canadian softwood lumber. This was a very disappointing development. We also expect the second decision on anti-dumping duties in the very near future.

[*Translation*]

The allegations in the softwood lumber industry are simply not founded. Countervailing duties harm everyone on both sides of the border.

I also want to reiterate that the Minister of Foreign Affairs has clearly and repeatedly said that Canada is prepared to stand firm for the interests of Canadian workers and producers, if necessary with legal action. That is why the government is currently reviewing all its legal options. This includes the option to launch a legal challenge through the World Trade Organization and NAFTA.

I know that countervailing duties are a big concern for our softwood lumber industry. That is why early this month, the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of International Trade announced \$867 million in supports for our forestry industry and our communities affected by these countervailing duties. To help workers, the government is temporarily extending the maximum period for work-sharing agreements from 38 to 76 weeks to reduce layoffs. We are also increasing support for affected workers so they can upgrade their skills and transition to new opportunities.

As the Minister of Natural Resources said, this action plan will be a tangible demonstration of our government's commitment to take quick and reasonable action in order to defend our softwood lumber industry and to provide a better future for workers, their families, and the communities that rely on them.

[*English*]

I want to return to the hon. member's comments about the industry and sustainable jobs.

Business of Supply

Canada's softwood lumber industry is incredibly advanced and forward thinking, and the government is doing everything it can to help create new and sustainable jobs by opening up new markets for Canadian wood products. By diversifying into a variety of markets, of course, we will be less vulnerable to any action from one specific market, i.e., the United States. On this front, the Minister of International Trade and the Minister of Natural Resources have been incredibly active, along with teams from the softwood lumber industry. Earlier this month, the Minister of Natural Resources travelled to China with a delegation, and the Minister of International Trade recently led trade missions to Italy, China, Vietnam, South Korea, Japan, and Singapore, which are markets where there is a growing demand for Canadian forestry products.

Let us not forget the European Union, which is the world's second-largest market, with over 500 million consumers and a \$22-trillion gross domestic product. The Canada-EU trade agreement, CETA, is a landmark agreement that gives the Canadian forestry industry preferential access to EU markets. Once CETA is fully implemented, the EU will have eliminated tariffs on 99% of its tariff lines. Our forestry sector will benefit from preferential access, which will allow us to provide technical services in the EU, including woodlot management, mapping, surveying, reforestation, timber evaluation, forest damage assessment, and logging-related services.

The government is now making the required regulatory changes to implement the CETA agreement. Once our domestic process has been completed, there will be an exchange of diplomatic notes with the EU to set the date for provisional application where all economically significant parts of CETA will be implemented.

Let me once again provide reassurance to the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman that from day one that this government has been in office, we have made softwood lumber a top priority. Yes, we can agree that a new softwood lumber agreement is the best way to bring predictability and stability to the industry on both sides of the border, but we are not going to accept just any deal. It has to be a deal that is in the best interest of the Canadian industry. We continue to engage at the highest levels in this important issue, because it is a matter of Canadian jobs and communities. It is a matter of prosperity and of fairness.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I respect my colleague's service to our country and his experience in that regard. My understanding is that the Prime Minister has given him a specific role in working with the United States, and that is what I want to ask about.

I live in Oshawa, which is famous for building cars, and there is a reality of competitiveness across the border. There is a new government in the United States, which the member is very much aware of. Various companies ask themselves how much it will cost to build a car in Oshawa versus Michigan and look at the different policies. In other words, the U.S. administration is lowering taxes and will not be establishing a carbon tax. Ontario has the highest electrical rates in North America because of policy. We will have a new carbon tax, which is going to have to be as high as the Prime Minister wants or there will be trouble, plus he is going to be raising taxes.

I would like my colleague to reconcile this for the House. If we need to be competitive, especially in manufacturing, and the policies that the government is putting in are making us less competitive with other jurisdictions, one being with our biggest trading partner, how does he reconcile this?

• (1815)

Hon. Andrew Leslie: Madam Speaker, reverting to the discussion at hand, which has to do with softwood lumber, I would make the argument that the softwood lumber industry is one of the most advanced in the world. It is incredibly competitive. It is composed of an extraordinarily skilled workforce. A lot of small mill owners have literally poured their life's blood into ensuring that their facilities are kept modern, with exemplary working conditions. Quite frankly, our softwood lumber industry is as competitive as any in the world. That is indeed why 10% of the imports to the United States rely on the Canadian supply. That is why there are hundreds of thousands of jobs on the southern frontier, i.e., in the United States, which directly depend on the product of the skilled softwood lumber workers in Canada.

It is true that we have vigorously protested against the unfair allegations of dumping or stumpage fees. We are going to contest those in the international courts, and just like we have done for the last four times, this being the fifth, we are going to win the next court action.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know the parliamentary secretary is working hard and that he cares deeply about this, but people are desperate right now. We know that the forest sector is very complicated. It may seem that sometimes laid-off workers are affected by softwood lumber and others are not affected, but because this industry is interconnected and interrelated, I want to make sure that any forestry workers laid off because of the situation affecting our trade relationship with the United States will get the extended EI benefits that the Liberal government has talked about. The people in my community are not getting the extended EI benefits. They want the softwood lumber agreement to get people back to work, but, in the short term, they need the extended EI benefits.

Can the parliamentary secretary ensure that people in my community will get the benefits? A mill is closed right now, people are unemployed, their EI has run out, and they are looking to supplement their incomes during this difficult time. Again, the fishery just closed. We lost the sockeye fishery in the Somass River. We are getting doubly hit, and no one from the government has shown up in my community.

Hon. Andrew Leslie: Madam Speaker, I compliment the hon. member for his passion and dedication to his constituents. I entirely agree with the emotion in his voice when he talks about their plight.

The Government of Canada has allocated approximately \$800 million, under mainly commercial terms, to ensure there is a transition for those who are affected by the current softwood lumber dispute. We are going to win the legal court cases, but they are understandably going to take some time. The point is that we have to make sure that due diligence is applied to all of the compensatory methods we are using in Canada and that they are under commercial terms, because we want to win the WTO trade challenge in court.

With regard to those workers who are currently unemployed or about to be, the Government of Canada is going to work as quickly as it can to make sure that the money starts flowing to those who are most affected.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise this evening to contribute to this debate on the complete failure of the Liberals on this economic file.

For a government that would have us believe it is all about the middle class, as it is wont to add that at the end of every statement it makes, for example, more ethical government for the middle class, a Liberal commissioner of official languages for the middle class, new standing orders for the middle class, better innovation for the middle class, and a carbon tax for the middle class, it is remarkable just how out of touch Liberals are on the most important issues facing the middle class: jobs, the economy, and affordability.

On housing, for example, as the price of homes rose significantly faster than inflation in Toronto and Vancouver, the Liberals decided to implement a one-size-fits-all mortgage policy designed to cool down the housing markets of Toronto and Vancouver. Unfortunately, this policy is having a similar impact across the country, regardless of whether Canadians live in Warman, Saskatchewan or Queen West, Toronto.

Before the Liberals made these changes to the mortgage rules, a person with \$50,000 pre-tax income could qualify for a \$277,000 mortgage. Now, that same person qualifies for a mortgage of \$222,000. This change makes buying a first house more difficult for many. Several people looking to buy their first home, and realtors, have raised concerns about this policy with me. However, these changes have not had the attention they deserve, considering the disproportionate impact they are having on first-time homeowners in smaller communities where housing prices are typically more affordable.

The Liberals are also tone deaf when it comes to western Canada. On May 12, the Minister of Transport introduced the oil tanker moratorium act, a bill that his own political staff conceded would only impact the future development of Canada's oil sands, and no other activity in northern British Columbia. Let us think about that.

It was not enough for the Liberals to reverse the independent National Energy Board's 2014 decision to approve the northern gateway pipeline subject to Enbridge fulfilling 209 conditions. They decided to go one step further by opting to handcuff future governments should they want to diversify Canada's energy exports. Bill C-48, the oil tanker moratorium act, will do nothing to enhance marine safety in British Columbia. U.S. tankers will continue travelling up and down the coast between Alaska and Washington state.

This is the epitome of political irony. Venezuelan oil in Quebec is okay. Saudi Arabian oil on the east coast is okay. Canadian oil in Vancouver is okay. Alaskan oil in northern B.C. is okay. However, Canadian oil in northern British Columbia is not okay. Blocking tidewater access for western Canadian energy producers was not enough. To add insult to injury, this year's federal budget removed incentives for small companies to engage in energy exploration in Canada.

Business of Supply

Furthermore, the new carbon tax will disproportionately impact energy-producing provinces. What the Liberals fail to realize is that Canada does not have a monopoly on the production of energy. In North America alone, western Canadian producers are competing against companies operating in the Gulf of Mexico, Alaska, the Permian Basin, and the Bakken formation. As the U.S. is making important efforts to reduce obstacles to energy development, Canada is going the other way.

Capital and expertise in this sector is very mobile, and Canada is in very real danger of being left behind. Canadian firms and foreign investors will not invest in the Canadian economy if the overall cost of doing business vis-à-vis our American counterparts is higher, as has been mentioned. However, the energy sector is not the only sector being targeted. Western Canadian shippers, and especially captive western Canadian grain shippers, are feeling particularly ignored by the Liberal government.

• (1820)

Unlike Ontario and Quebec, where many products can be trucked to their final destination or to a port for overseas export, western Canada is particularly reliant on rail to get product to market. That is why the Minister of Transport's inaction on critical and time-sensitive rail transport issues is leading to uncertainty for both shippers and railroads. Both need it as they negotiate shipping rates for the season and invest in the required infrastructure to keep products moving to market in a timely manner.

That is why, over the past several months, I have asked many times whether the government intended to renew or build on the sunset measures of Bill C-30 before they expired on August 1, 2017. The response, time and time again, was that the government recognized the urgency to get this done and that legislation was forthcoming. Unfortunately the Liberals now acknowledge that the key measures in Bill C-30 will sunset before any replacement legislation can receive royal assent and become law.

Since the transportation modernization act was introduced on May 16, the government has set aside less than two and a half hours to debate it, with the Minister of Transport taking the floor to lead off debate at 9:45 p.m. on a Monday night. This means there will be at least a two and a half month gap from when Bill C-30 measures sunset and Bill C-49 receives royal assent.

Government Orders

By the time this legislation has passed, the majority of contracts for the year will have been negotiated with the law in flux. Because of the government's mismanagement of its legislative agenda, these popular measures will sunset without any replacement, and shippers will be the worse off. What is worse is that while this two and a half month gap will negatively impact both railways and shippers this year, the replacement legislation will weaken shipper protections from what they are today. While something is better than nothing, the transportation modernization act is not a replacement for the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act.

What the government is proposing in its omnibus transportation legislation is to take a little used existing remedy called a competitive line rate and rename it long haul inter-switching.

Under a competitive line rate, a shipper could apply to the agency to set the competitive line rate, the designation of the continuous route, the designation of the nearest interchange, and the manner in which the local carrier shall fulfill its service obligations. We know from history that this remedy was infrequently used because of the prerequisite that the shipper must first reach an agreement with the connecting carrier and the two main carriers effectively declined to compete with one another through CLRs. While the requirement that the shipper must have an agreement with a connecting carrier prior to requesting a CLR has been removed, the greater issue is whether the terms imposed by the connecting carrier will be acceptable to the shipper.

While railways do have a common carrier obligations, we know there are ways to avoid doing a haul. For example, both railways have set the price of hauling uranium so high that it is no longer economical for it to be shipped by rail. Furthermore, while long haul inter-switching will be extended to 1,200 kilometres or 50% of the total haul distance, the first inter-switch location from any captive shippers in north Alberta and northern B.C. will be located within the Kamloops-Vancouver corridor, where inter-switching is not allowed beyond 30 kilometres. Therefore, these captive shippers will not be able to utilize this remedy to increase railway competition.

By borrowing and spending in good times, the Liberals have made it harder to deal with real crisis. According to the PBO, even a minor recession would cause deficits to be as large as during the great recession, and that is before considering the fiscal costs of any response.

The Liberals have mismanaged Canada's finances and have closed many doors for economic development. Unfortunately, the full effects of their policies have not reverberated across the entire economy yet.

The choices the Liberals have made to date are not random. They are the result of an overarching vision of picking winners and losers. Right now, my province is coming out on the wrong side of nearly every Liberal policy decision.

● (1825)

For a government that professes to be focused on the middle class, first-time homebuyers, farmers, shippers, and energy workers are all feeling left out in the cold.

● (1830)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, it being 6:30 p.m., we do not have time for questions and comments. Therefore, pursuant to order made Tuesday, May 30, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to order made earlier today, all questions necessary to dispose of the opposition motion are deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Tuesday, June 13, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

* * *

● (1835)

CITIZENSHIP ACT

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.) moved:

That a Message be sent to the Senate to acquaint Their Honours that, in relation to Bill C-6, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act, the House:

agrees with amendments 1(a), 1(c), 4 and 5 made by the Senate;

proposes that amendments 1(b)(i) and (ii) be amended by replacing the number "60" with the number "55";

proposes that amendment 1(b)(iii) be amended by replacing the words in paragraph 5(1.04)(a) with the following words "made by a person who has custody of the minor or who is empowered to act on their behalf by virtue of a court order or written agreement or by operation of law, unless otherwise ordered by a court; and";

proposes that with respect to amendment 2:

the portion of subsection 10(3) before paragraph (a) be amended by deleting the word "revoking" and adding the words "may be revoked" after the words "renunciation of citizenship";

paragraph 10(3)(d) be amended by replacing all the words after the words "advises the person" to the word "Court." with the following words "that the case will be referred to the Court unless the person requests that the case be decided by the Minister.";

the portion of subsection 10(3.1) before paragraph (a) be amended by replacing the word "received," with the words "sent, or within any extended time that the Minister may allow for special reasons,";

paragraph 10(3.1)(a) be amended by deleting the words "humanitarian and compassionate" and adding after the words "including any considerations" the words "respecting his or her personal circumstances" and by adding the words "of the case" after the words "all of the circumstances" and by deleting the word "Minister's" before the words "decision will render the person";

paragraph 10(3.1)(b) be amended by replacing the words "referred to the Court" with the words "decided by the Minister";

subsection 10(4.1) be amended by replacing that subsection with the following "(4.1) The Minister shall refer the case to the Court under subsection 10.1(1) unless (a) the person has made written representations under paragraph (3.1)(a) and the Minister is satisfied (i) on a balance of probabilities that the person has not obtained, retained, renounced or resumed his or her citizenship by false representation or fraud or by knowingly concealing material circumstances, or (ii) that considerations respecting the person's personal circumstances warrant special relief in light of all the circumstances of the case; or (b) the person has made a request under paragraph (3.1)(b).";

subclause 3(4) be amended by deleting all the words beginning with "(4) The Act is amended by adding the following" to the words "under this Act or the Federal Court Act.";

proposes that amendment 3(a) be amended in subsection 10.1(1) by replacing the words "If a person" with the words "Unless a person";

proposes that with respect to amendment 3(b):

Government Orders

subsection 10.1(4) be amended by replacing all the words beginning with "If the Minister seeks a declaration" and ending with the words "knowingly concealing material circumstances." with the words "For the purposes of subsection (1), if the Minister seeks a declaration that the person has obtained, retained, renounced or resumed his or her citizenship by false representation or fraud or by knowingly concealing material circumstances, with respect to a fact described in section 34, 35 or 37 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Minister need prove only that the person has obtained, retained, renounced or resumed his or her citizenship by false representation or fraud or by knowingly concealing material circumstances.";

by deleting subsection 10.1(5);

proposes that amendment 6(a) be amended by replacing clause 19.1 with the following "19.1(1) Any decision that is made under subsection 10(1) of the Citizenship Act as it read immediately before the day on which subsection 3(2) comes into force and that is set aside by the Federal Court and sent back for a redetermination on or after that day is to be determined in accordance with that Act as it reads on that day. (2) A proceeding that is pending before the Federal Court before the day on which subsection 3(2) comes into force as a result of an action commenced under subsection 10.1(1) of the Citizenship Act is to be dealt with and disposed of in accordance with that Act as it read immediately before that day.";

proposes that amendment 6(b) be amended by replacing clause 20.1 with the following "20.1 If, before the day on which subsection 3(2) comes into force, a notice has been given to a person under subsection 10(3) of the Citizenship Act and a decision has not been made by the Minister before that day, the person may, within 30 days after that day, request to have the matter dealt with and disposed of as if the notice had been given under subsection 10(3) of that Act as it reads on that day.";

respectfully disagrees with amendment 7 because it would give permanent resident status to those who acquired that status fraudulently;

proposes that amendment 8 be amended by replacing all the words after "(3.1) Subsections" with the following words "3(2) and (3) and 4(1) and (3) and section 5.1 come into force on a day to be fixed by order of the Governor in Council.".

He said: Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on the amendments to Bill C-6, an act to amend the Citizenship Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act.

[English]

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the senators for all of the work they put into Bill C-6 and the amendments that we are considering today. Our government feels that the collaborative work of the senators has made Bill C-6 stronger. In that spirit, our government agrees with the principles behind two of the amendments. I will now detail in my remarks how we also propose some further adjustments.

I would like to emphasize that Bill C-6 reflects the government's commitment to fostering a diverse, fair, and inclusive country. We know from decades of experience that immigrants who become Canadian citizens are more likely to achieve greater economic success in this country, and to make greater contributions to Canadian society, thereby contributing to our common prosperity.

Furthermore, we know that a significant predictor of successful integration outcomes is the attainment of Canadian citizenship. Historically, a very high proportion of newcomers to Canada have become Canadian citizens. It goes without saying that this integration not only benefits the lives of those newcomers who end up becoming new Canadians but makes our country more diverse, inclusive, and fair.

I am sure that all of my colleagues would agree that Canada is strong because of the diversity of Canadians, and that we are diverse because of our country's long-standing embrace, and kind and

welcoming nature for newcomers. It is in that spirit that Bill C-6 proposes changes that will remove barriers to citizenship for eligible immigrants. This will encourage their sense of belonging and attachment to this country. We want to ensure that the citizenship process is fair, robust, and flexible, because we place the highest value on Canadian citizenship.

Following third reading of Bill C-6, the Senate has returned three amendments to the House of Commons. These include changing the upper age for citizenship language and knowledge requirements to 59 years; allowing minors to obtain citizenship, as of right, without having a Canadian parent, and without the necessity of applying to the minister for a waiver; and changing the citizenship revocation model so that the Federal Court will be the decision-maker in most cases where citizenship was acquired fraudulently.

I will use the remainder of my time to discuss the government's response to these Senate amendments.

The government does not support raising the upper age limit for language and knowledge requirements to 59. This amendment is not in line with the intent of Bill C-6 to facilitate citizenship to eligible immigrants. Reducing the age range for language and knowledge requirements to 18 to 54 years of age does not weaken Canadian citizenship and its value. In fact, the acquisition of Canadian citizenship contributes to a greater sense of belonging and attachment to our great country. We believe in the importance of having adequate knowledge of Canada's official languages, and a knowledge and understanding of the privileges and responsibilities associated with Canadian citizenship. That is why adults aged 18 to 54 years of age will still be required to show evidence of proficiency in English or French, to demonstrate knowledge of Canada, and to pass a citizenship test.

However, the government understands that for younger and older applicants, this can be a barrier to citizenship. Therefore, Bill C-6 returns the age for language and knowledge requirements back to 18 to 54 years of age. By doing so, Bill C-6 will reduce barriers to citizenship by allowing applicants to achieve citizenship faster and contribute to Canada's economic, social, and cultural growth. Older applicants aged 55 years or older will still be able to access services that will enable them to become more integrated into Canadian society.

The second Senate amendment would make it easier for minors to obtain citizenship, as of right, without a Canadian parent. Overall, we support this amendment. This is consistent with the government's intent to facilitate citizenship for eligible immigrants and with our commitment to remove barriers to citizenship, especially for the most vulnerable.

● (1840)

The government supports this amendment with a technical modification to ensure greater clarity around who can apply and of this concept. The concept of a de facto guardian is unclear in the Senate amendment. Therefore, the government is proposing alternative language to clarify and provide greater clarity to this. This amendment would come into force upon royal assent.

Government Orders

The government also supports, with amendment, the third Senate amendment to enhance the citizenship revocation model. The Senate's amendment provides that all individuals would have the option to request that their case be referred to the Federal Court for a decision. The minister would only decide on revocation cases if individuals do not request that their case be referred to the Federal Court or if the individuals do not respond.

The government's amendments include, first, further narrowing the minister's authority to revoke citizenship to only those cases in which the individual expressly requests a decision by the minister; second, ensuring individuals are able to seek leave to the Federal Court for judicial review of the minister's decision; third, rejecting the part of the amendment that would allow individuals to retain permanent resident status despite having acquired citizenship fraudulently; and fourth, rejecting the part of the amendment that would allow actions taking place after the obtainment of citizenship to be considered in revocation decisions.

For context, since the current revocation decision-making model was introduced in 2015, the minister has been the decision-maker on most cases involving fraud or misrepresentation, especially involving residence, criminality, and identity issues. The Federal Court has been the decision-maker on more serious cases involving fraud or misrepresentation involving human rights violations and organized criminality. Prior to the current model, the Governor in Council made all the decisions in these kinds of cases.

I would also like to point out that individuals who had their citizenship revoked due to fraud or misrepresentation will revert back to permanent resident status if the fraud or misrepresentation occurred during the citizenship process, and will revert to being a foreign national if the fraud or misrepresentation occurred during the immigration process. For those who revert to permanent resident status, which is more than 70% of cases, these people would still be eligible to reapply for Canadian citizenship after 10 years, provided that they continue to meet the requirements.

The amendment to the decision-making model would ensure that there is still judicial oversight of revocation decisions as well as enhancing greater procedural protections. Our government has said in the past that we were open to considering how we can further enhance the citizenship revocation process. My hon. colleagues in the Senate have proposed a model that, with some modifications, will achieve just that.

In terms of timelines, the amendments to the citizenship revocation model would come into force at a later date to be determined by the Governor in Council. This will allow time for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada as well as the Federal Court to put in place the necessary procedures.

To reiterate, the government is committed to building a Canada that is both diverse and inclusive. The story of immigration and the story of citizenship is the story of Canada and we want to continue to make sure that those two stories remain intertwined. Whether newcomers arrive as refugees, family members, or economic immigrants, the contributions that they make to this country, and the generations that follow them, will be important.

We want to encourage our diversity and take steps to ensure that the path to citizenship remains flexible and fair, but also robust, because we want to encourage all Canadians to take pride in being Canadian. That is the guiding principle behind the government's position with respect to the Senate's amendments. We firmly believe that by removing barriers to citizenship and helping newcomers achieve citizenship, our government is contributing to such a future, and by doing that we will be fostering a greater attachment to Canada.

Canadians are proud of our country and of our tradition of welcoming immigrants. We help them settle, integrate, and succeed in Canada. This has been our past, our present, and our future. The importance of diversity can sometimes be taken for granted, but there is no doubt that we are a better country because of it. Our government is committed to building on that success.

• (1845)

We are committed to encouraging all immigrants to take the path to full membership in Canadian society. One of the strongest pillars, one of the strongest indicators of the successful integration outcome is obtaining Canadian citizenship. Bill C-6 would help us ensure that Canada remains the strong, inclusive, and diverse country that it is.

In closing, the government's position is as follows. We do not support changing the upper age for citizenship language and knowledge requirements to 59 years of age. We support, with modification, the amendment that would make it easier for children to apply, as of right, for citizenship without a Canadian parent, and we support, with modification, the amendment to change the citizenship revocation model so that the Federal Court becomes the decision-maker in most revocation cases related to fraud or misrepresentation.

We remain committed to the timely passage of Bill C-6, and as Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, I encourage all members of the House to support the government's position with respect to the Senate's amendments.

[*Translation*]

I appreciated the opportunity to speak to the Senate amendments today.

A Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian.

[*English*]

In the words of our Prime Minister, our government firmly believes that a Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, my question for the minister is about the concern with respect to backlogs in the appeal mechanisms that may exist. The changes being proposed by the government may result in backlogging an already inundated Federal Court system, which is ultimately going to cost Canadian taxpayers. We have heard of many instances where cases are being thrown out, and I understand that we are talking about immigration.

Is there no concern at all among the government that the bill would create a backlog? It would create greater costs to Canadians, because there just are not enough judges to deal with the appeal system that the minister is talking about.

Government Orders

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Madam Speaker, we are absolutely committed to providing adequate resources to make sure that we have a well-functioning and fair judicial system.

Under the proposed changes to the citizenship revocation model, we commit, as a government, to make sure that there are adequate resources to the Federal Court of Canada to ensure that it can do its work when it comes to hearing these cases. We do not anticipate that there will be difficulties with respect to this issue.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have a couple of specific questions for the minister relating to the amendments.

First, is the government at this point in time still sending out revocation letters to individuals? Also, for those who are caught in a transitional period, which is to say those who right now have had their citizenship revoked and are still in that process, would the changes of the bill when it comes into force be open to them? Would they be able to apply to the Federal Court for a hearing and have due process afforded to them?

Alternatively, if they choose to make an application to request that the minister review their case, would they have the opportunity to do that? Can the minister clarify the transitional provisions as they apply to the people who are in the system at this moment?

• (1850)

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Madam Speaker, I will take this opportunity to thank the hon. member for her question and for her work on issues regarding immigration, refugees, and citizenship.

If an individual has received a notice to revoke their citizenship where a final decision has not been made by the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, they can opt to take part in the proposed citizenship revocation model. Therefore, they will have the opportunity to avail themselves of this greater and enhanced procedural fairness system.

The previous system was charter compliant. However, we have consistently stated, as has the previous minister, that as a government we are open to listening to others and having them contribute to our efforts to ensure greater and enhanced procedural fairness in the citizenship revocation model.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would first like to congratulate the minister on his excellent speech and the wonderful job he has been doing since he was appointed Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. Every day I am impressed by how hard he works and, as parliamentary secretary, I am learning a lot from him. I also congratulate him on taking the time to learn a few sentences in French to open and close his speech.

The minister talked about our collaboration with the Senate on Bill C-6, which was very important to our party during the election campaign. Could the minister expand on that?

[*English*]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Madam Speaker, the hon. member has been very helpful as we have worked on this issue. I really appreciate his work on the file.

With respect to the collaboration with the Senate on this issue, as a government, we value the work that senators have put into Bill C-6. They have collaborated with us in making the bill stronger with the amendments they have proposed. The conversations we have had about the bill have resulted in a much better and stronger bill. The proposed bill will enable us to continue to remove barriers to citizenship for eligible immigrants. We will continue to have more permanent residents than ever become Canadian citizens and become more attached to our great country, to contribute greatly to our economy, our common prosperity, and to the social cultural mosaic of Canada. I am proud of the work the Senate has done on this file.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of the strengths of our immigration system through numerous governments, not just under Conservative governments but under previous Liberal governments, has been the consistency of our immigration system. People who want to come to Canada know that the system and the process are reliable. The Liberals' proposed changes will be massive and will create uncertainty for people who want to come to Canada.

One area that the Liberals are not addressing by refusing to appeal the recent Federal Court decision is the issue of people who lie on their application forms. The government had a responsibility to appeal this decision. There are reasonable and legal grounds to appeal. By not appealing, they are incentivizing people to mislead on their applications. How can the government propose to be responsible, not only to future applicants but all the people currently in the process who have followed the rules and given accurate information, when it is now incentivizing people to be misleading on their immigration applications?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Madam Speaker, I disagree strongly with the hon. member's contention that the bill would make dramatic changes to the immigration system. In fact, what made dramatic changes to the immigration system was Bill C-24. Bill C-24 introduced barriers to citizenship when the barriers did not exist. Bill C-24 made two-tier citizenship possible in our country, something that is completely unacceptable to the vast majority of Canadians. They feel that two-tier citizenship is the wrong thing to do. Bill C-24 created a system in which people would have to wait longer and jump through so many hoops to become citizens.

Bill C-6 would address those issues and contribute to more integrity within the citizenship system. For the first time, it would empower immigration officers to seize fraudulent documents. I encourage the member opposite to support our amendments.

• (1855)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, one thing the government chose not to take up was indefinite suspensions in the revocation process. Why did the government chose to do that? Imagine being in a situation where someone is under suspicion for a very long time, with no deadline in sight. In criminal cases, there are statutory limitations, but not for immigration. Why?

Government Orders

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Madam Speaker, the changes we are proposing to make to the citizenship revocation model will enhance procedural fairness. It will result in a vast majority of cases going to the Federal Court by default, unless the person expressly desires that the minister make the decision.

We feel very strongly that this will contribute to more procedural fairness, not less. In fact, by availing themselves of the Federal Court to make the decision with respect to citizenship revocation, they will enjoy the same rights and procedural fairness that every Canadian or foreign national enjoys when they go before the Federal Court of Canada.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I was certainly very happy to see Bill C-6 tabled for first reading, and am happier now to see it with amendments.

There is another area where the previous government did damage, not for citizens but for people who were on the verge of being deported. The past practice was to deport as soon as was practical. The previous government changed it to deport as soon as is possible. Does the minister plan to turn his attention to protecting people from rapid deportation.

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Madam Speaker, we have numerous and robust appeal mechanisms to safeguard individuals who are at risk of removal to ensure the process is done fairly. We have a pre-risk removal assessment process that is done for each and every individual who is at risk of removal for Canada. We are confident those measures protect individuals against harm should they be removed from Canada by the Government of Canada.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise tonight to debate the amendments to Bill C-6.

I think a lot of Canadians in the last year have realized how important the issue of immigration is to the country, not so much as an if immigration is important conversation but how we do it well. Bill C-6 is the Liberal government's first legislation to deal with immigration. In the ensuing time since Bill C-6 was originally put in front of the House, many issues related to how we do immigration in Canada have come up which the government has not addressed.

To provide context for the Senate amendments, it is first important to paint a picture of how we got here.

There are several components to Bill C-6, including issues which I will speak to at length, issues such as language proficiency for people who seek to become citizens, at what age they become exempt from those requirements and why, the situations and circumstances under which people can have their citizenship revoked and why, and how they are addressed in the bill.

There are other very important components to Bill C-6, but I want to start with restating the position I and my party have on the components of Bill C-6 in its original form.

New Canadians enrich and strengthen our country. Their experiences and perspectives make us stronger. Immigration is an important part of who we are as a nation and the strength of our nation's future. We want newcomers to Canada to have every opportunity to succeed, opportunities for economic success, the

experience of our many freedoms, and the experience of safe communities.

We are concerned that the Liberals' first priority, when it came to tabling legislation and public safety legislation, was to effectively give back the citizenship and protect the rights of a committed member of the Toronto 18, Zakaria Amara.

Under the bill, a dual national citizenship cannot be revoked for committing a terrorist act, but can be for fraud. Revocation for obtaining citizenship under fraudulent circumstances is still allowed under the bill, but the amendments would materially impact this component.

The bill would also lower the language requirements for citizenship, but we believe adequate knowledge of either French or English is a key factor in successful integration into our communities and the labour force. Canadian citizenship bestows rights and protections that many foreign nationals do not have. As Canadians, they can vote and seek an elected office. Proficiency in our official languages helps enrich both their experience and our country's future. This again speaks to the residency requirement that has been changed in Bill C-6. These are material changes that Bill C-6 would make to how we would allow immigration in Canada.

The parliamentary committee review on Bill C-6, after it progressed from second reading, gives me cause for alarm on a few things. When we asked for quantitative justification on why some of these changes were made, both the minister and the officials were not able to answer. That is concerning. I do not think we should provide arbitrary justification for changing things such as the age of the language requirement. There should be some justification or rationale given that language is a unifier, for example.

The same thing goes for the residency requirement that has been changed in Bill C-6. I do not know why no justification was given by the minister, officials, etc., on how this would impact the ability of newcomers to Canada to spend time to connect with our country, promoting successful integration, both for the newcomers of Canada, as well as Canadian society as a whole. A lot of testimony was lacking on Bill C-6.

• (1900)

I have followed the progress of this bill through the Senate. I think that the Senate was wise to look through the form and substance and make some changes to it, some that I accept and some that I do not. I also notice that the Liberal government has made changes to some of the amendments that have come forward, and I want to speak to those as well.

Again, the bill was tabled well over a year ago now. In the ensuing time, a lot of things have happened in Canada with regard to immigration. The migrant crisis in the Middle East has escalated. It is now, I would say, a top policy concern, not just for European nations that are being impacted by it but as a humanitarian crisis that impacts every country around the world.

We are having very serious conversations about how many people we allow into the country and under what circumstances. I just feel that as a country, we have not completed the sentence that started with “We are bringing 30,000 Syrian refugees to Canada”, or whatever the number was.

We, in our parliamentary committee, had a very in-depth study on the Syrian refugee initiative, and one of the most moving moments for me in the last year of my parliamentary career was listening to a Syrian refugee talk about not being able to access language training services because of issues such as child care and lack of funding for some of these programs. I was very disheartened when the Calgary Board of Education appeared before that same committee in that same study to talk about how the Calgary Board of Education gladly and with open hearts welcomed several hundred Syrian refugee students—the equivalent, as they said, of an entire new elementary school in the Calgary school system—yet had had no conversation with the minister or with the provincial government on how to address the funding needs that were precipitated by having to address the unique and worthy needs of these students coming into the school system.

We have to understand that many of these children that we welcome into Canada have had very difficult lives. They have grown up in refugee camps. They have fled from their homes. Their education has been interrupted.

I notice that the government's talking points have changed since the campaign, just recently. Until now it has always been about numbers. There is a flip side to that coin, which is how to support these people into success.

The result of that committee study was some very damning testimony on the state of our government's plan to provide support for these refugees. The minister has only appeared before our committee once since he has been appointed. I find that very odd, but when he did appear, we asked a very pointed question about how many government-sponsored Syrian refugees had found employment, and he was not able or willing to answer the question until he was repeatedly put under the gun. It was to the point of my frustration and everyone else's to admit that the government does not have a plan to help refugees integrate with employment or to have an honest conversation to ask, “Should we as a country be expecting Syrian refugees who have lived through this situation to find employment, and if so, what is the cost of that to the Canadian public and how will we pay for it?”

That is not a sexy conversation. It is not one that will sell a campaign slogan very well, but it is one that is worthy. As a legislator I feel a level of responsibility to the people we brought to this country. If their success is not guaranteed or seen through, not only have we failed them, but we have also failed to develop social licence within the Canadian public, writ large, for sustained high levels of refugee admissions, and that is my concern.

When I look at the rhetoric that happened around Brexit, the rhetoric that happened in the American election, I am greatly concerned that unless we have a very difficult and worthy conversation on how we deal with the issues of integration of newcomers to Canada, we will continue to see this type of us-versus-

Government Orders

them rhetoric, when in fact there is no “them” anymore. We are a globally integrated community.

• (1905)

We need to have government policy, with honesty in that policy, in order to see success in the long term, and I am not seeing it there.

To go back to Bill C-6, this bill was introduced in the House of Commons and has gone through successive stages of passage without dealing with some of the most pressing issues of our time. Speaking further to the Syrian refugee initiative, I found it very disheartening to spend nearly six months working with members of my caucus to raise attention on the Yazidi genocide. While I realize there are many people in need in the Middle East, surely when a genocide occurs, there are people who require immediate and out-of-the-box-thinking help. The fact that it took us so long to acknowledge the genocide and then to include Yazidi genocide victims as part of our commitment to bringing high levels of refugees to Canada was very disheartening.

I am going to be very blunt. I strongly feel that our process for selecting and prioritizing refugees and internally displaced people for resettlement is flawed. I met with one of the representatives from the United Nations who deals with referrals to Canada through the government-assisted refugee program, and I asked very bluntly, “Why were there zero Yazidi genocide victims referred to Canada as part of the government-assisted refugee program?” I had my staffer in the office, so there were two people there who witnessed this. The answer that came back was essentially that they were under a very severe time crunch from the government to fulfill a quota, and it was easier to refer the people they did. In that moment I wondered, “Are we seeking to do what is easy, or are we seeking to do what is right?”

A process that cannot refer genocide victims to our country for resettlement is flawed. I am not saying it is necessarily the government's fault. It becomes the government's fault when we fail to discuss these issues in a way that seeks justice and beauty in our immigration processes, and there is none of this in any of the government's approach or forward motion on the immigration file.

Since that discussion, it has been interesting to watch the international reaction, because I think that there has been some acknowledgement that the process by which Canada selects refugees to come to our country deserves the scrutiny of Parliament. That has not happened at all, but internationally people are starting to realize that it is a topic worthy of debate.

Right now, we know that there are gay men in Chechnya who have been rounded up and are being placed in concentration camps simply because of their sexual orientation and who they are, and they are being persecuted and tortured. That is wrong. That is a place for Canada to use our refugee resettlement policy as a way to send a strong diplomatic message to states that sanction this activity, yet we have a failure to be able to act. Every single time a situation of urgency like this happens, we should have some sort of mechanism as parliamentarians or within the government to respond to these crises without having to spend opposition day motions and go through political chicanery for months in order to do what is right.

Government Orders

I do not think there is a single person in this place who would disagree with me that we need to be bringing Yazidi genocide victims to Canada under resettlement or that we need to be addressing the issue of gay men being tortured and persecuted in Chechnya or that we need to be addressing the issue of the South Sudanese, which I am sure will be declared a genocide in very short order.

• (1910)

The point is that we do not have a mechanism to deal with this situation. The government comes forward with talking points, saying it relies on the UN to provide lists of refugees to come to Canada. In that case, we should be able to audit those processes. None of that has been discussed in any of the amendments or this bill. It is a glaring gap for me.

I realize we cannot change the bureaucracy of Canada overnight, like the United Nations, so the trick becomes how Canada can exert pressure. There are many worthy things the UN does, but on this issue, it cannot respond quickly enough. The United Nations does not have a nimble way of dealing with the resettlement of internally displaced persons. It does not have a nimble way of referring genocide survivors or people living with the situation in Chechnya to us. That is something we should be asking the United Nations to change.

Where is the government on this issue? It is silent. For a government that purports to be compassionate on refugee resettlement, not using its leadership position to ask these questions, which are not partisan but humanitarian, is a glaring gap. I do not know why we do not have a subcommittee to our parliamentary committee to deal with the issue of internally displaced persons in emergent situations, such as ones in Chechnya or South Sudan.

I have to give credit to the chair of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration across the aisle, who I felt put partisanship aside and went to bat in his caucus to have a hearing on the Yazidi genocide, which led to action going forward. We should not have to argue over whether we will study something and then study it to death while people are dying when we could have intervened. It is a great frustration and sadness for me. Members of the government have privately talked to me and said it is a frustration for them too, yet the government has refused to act.

My request to the government on this issue is that it put partisanship and the rhetoric of the United Nations aside and say that this needs to change, that we cannot act this way anymore.

The second thing I would like the government to do with regard to refugee resettlement is be honest about the fact that what was said in the campaign was not the reality. I remember television talk show panels and debates on the question of the Syrian refugee crisis, and two things came up. The first was a game of one-upmanship on who was going to bring more people here, which I found deplorable.

I remember being on a panel with former minister McCallum and listening to some of the things he said. He said the initiative was going to cost no more than \$250 million within the context of a fully costed platform, and he also made a very clear statement that refugees add to the Canadian economy. They might, but we have seen that many government-assisted refugees who came to Canada

under this initiative—I believe the minister said 90%—have not found jobs 13 months after they came to Canada. That number is important because that is when their refugee resettlement funds run out.

The fact that the numbers are so high is at odds with what the then minister said during the campaign. We should have a conversation on whether we expect government-assisted refugees to become employed. Many Canadians would say yes, some Canadians would say no, but regardless of what the government chooses or feels on that question, it needs to be honest with the Canadian public about the cost of integration and support over the long term, and it has not done that. It has not done that to date.

I asked the minister in committee about there being no planning for the cost of social assistance payments for refugees who do not find jobs. That might seem very callous, but the government made a statement during the campaign about the economic impact of refugees. It should have said it was going to be charitable and would support refugees, told us how much it was going to cost, and asked Canada to give it a mandate to do that, but it chose not to.

• (1915)

In doing so, the Liberals off-loaded the cost to provincial governments, including my provincial government, which is having some very tough times right now. Who is left in the lurch on all of this? It is the refugees themselves.

We heard testimony from one Syrian refugee at our committee who said that they were living in a bug-infested apartment. This is not the experience that Canada should be offering to newcomers. We should be talking about things like the cost of affordable housing, the cost of social assistance, and special education for children who have had their education disrupted, yet we are not. This allows the rhetoric of not helping: What about me? What about us?

To be honest, it is the right of Canadian taxpayers to ask how much this is going to cost and why we are doing this. However, we have not had a space to have a public debate on this topic in this place, which is why I am very pleased to stand tonight to finally be able to put this on the record in the House of Commons.

It is very, very frustrating. As the years go by and we follow Syrian refugees, my prayer and hope is that they are going to be successful. However, when I hear numbers like 90% not finding employment after one year, what is the plan? What is the government doing to move them to a place of employment? What about the lack of language training services? What about the fact that there might not be the best alignment in terms of educational systems? The government has not completed the sentence on this project. Moreover, the Liberals have not completed the sentence on this project where they are failing some of the world's most vulnerable, like genocide survivors, or LGBTQ who have been persecuted.

Government Orders

We just underwent a study in committee on how Canada can support LGBTQ refugees. However, there is nothing in the bill or any of the amendments that have dealt with this. The reality is that LGBTQ members of this community are some of the world's most vulnerable and persecuted people. We know there are countries that have state-sanctioned persecution of members of this community.

Our former government started a pilot project that provided assistance to an NGO to prioritize and assist in bringing persecuted members of the LGBTQ community to Canada through our refugee program. However, the current government has not committed to making that an ongoing program to date. Where is that in how we do immigration in Canada? It is nowhere in the bill or in the amendments. Again, the testimony we heard in committee on that issue was heart wrenching. It is one thing to stand and march in a Pride parade in Canada and to acknowledge that we still have work to do at home, but it is another thing entirely to be silent on how Canada is assisting members of this community through formal government policy, including refugee resettlement.

It is not just about refugee resettlement. Whenever we look at international policy related to displaced persons or migrant crises, there is more than just the resettlement component of the policy stool. There is also the question of military intervention, and long-term aid and development, to build civil society and processes by which people can stay in their indigenous homelands, which is certainly something that is a question around genocides. Is resettlement the only option? The government, especially on this issue, has been largely silent. As we said—

• (1920)

Mr. David Tilson: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the hon. member is giving an outstanding speech, but I do not think there is a quorum here to hear it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have quorum now.

The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his intervention. I also want to take this opportunity to thank him for his service as vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. I have greatly benefited from his long experience as chair of that committee in previous Parliaments, and I have learned a lot from him.

Continuing on the issue of the legislation's silence on how Canada is supporting LGBTQ refugees, I firmly believe that many positive recommendations were put forward by members of civil society who appeared in front of our committee that could have been adopted into some sort of program. It is shame that this omnibus legislation that the government has tabled does not address the needs of that particular group. It is something that I hope the government will address. We will continue to put pressure on the government to see the pilot program that was established under our government become a regular program, and that it be done with the help and advice of members of the community in Canada who have been doing excellent work.

Another good point is that we have not addressed the issue of how best to support private sponsorship groups. Some of the testimony that we heard during the study on Syrian refugees earlier this year, or

late last year, indicated that many improvements could be made to harness the generosity of Canadian philanthropists and people who choose to bring refugees into their homes through private sponsorship.

One frustration facing many of my colleagues across political lines is the wait times for applications to be processed to bring these refugees to Canada. There are many reports of people losing their deposits on apartments that they secured, or not being able to connect the refugee family they have identified with the support here in Canada because of processing times. This continues to be an issue.

It always behooves us to be thankful, as well, in this place. On behalf of all parliamentarians, I want to thank the many Canadian private sponsorship groups who have worked not only through the Syrian refugee initiative, but who have helped to bring persecuted ethnic and religious minorities to Canada as well. I am speaking of groups such as Rainbow Railroad, and groups related to and working within the LGBTQ community. They have assisted in bringing persecuted people from those communities into Canada through the private sponsorship program. Again, the recommendations relating to those improvements are nowhere in these amendments.

I do not understand what priorities are in the bill, as opposed to some of the most urgent issues we have seen come before our country with regard to immigration.

I would be remiss if I did not talk about the bill's silence on one particular issue of great interest to all parliamentarians and many Canadians, and that is the issue of those coming across our land borders illegally, irregularly, whatever words one wants to use. A great tragedy that has not been acknowledged in this place adequately was the recent news that we received last week of a woman who tried to cross into Canada from the United States to presumably seek asylum, which is my understanding from media reports, and perished in her journey. That is deeply tragic, and yet the government has been silent on it. This is a problem.

The government has been silent on the problem of border crossers. We have seen a sharp rise in the number of people who are making the journey across the border to seek asylum. Community resources are strained. The resources of CBSA, the RCMP, and local municipal governments have all been greatly strained, and yet the Liberal government has not come out and said anything. It took the government months to even allude to the fact that this is not a safe activity.

• (1925)

I grew up in southern Manitoba, and I know what a -30° winter evening looks like. It is not a safe activity to cross the border in this regard. When the Prime Minister tweeted a welcome to Canada in that context, I was just so dismayed. I was not dismayed to share the sentiment that Canada is an open and welcoming place. That is not in political dispute. The dispute is that the manner in which people enter our country should be done through proper procedures. Where there are gaps that enable the activity that is happening here, that is why we have the opportunity to debate legislation such as Bill C-6. Bill C-6 has been completely silent, in the amendment process and everything, given that it is an omnibus bill, on the issue of the safe third country agreement and the process by which people can seek asylum in Canada if they have already entered the United States.

Government Orders

For those who are listening who might not be aware of this issue, Canada has an agreement with the United States. It essentially functions such that if somebody makes an asylum claim, we acknowledge that our asylum systems are both very robust, arm's length, operate on principles of generosity and compassion and due process. If someone makes an asylum claim in the United States, they cannot automatically also claim asylum in Canada. The safe third country agreement essentially was designed, among other things, to ensure that our asylum system is open and transparent and fluid for the most vulnerable people in the world, and that it is not being gummed up by people making claims in both of our countries. The safe third country agreement speaks very specifically that if individuals cross the border through proper border channels, they are not allowed to make asylum claims. However, it is silent on the issue of individuals who cross a land border or a border that is not controlled. This allows people to cross the border illegally into the country and then make an asylum claim.

I do not think that this is sustainable. My colleague from the NDP, whose riding name I cannot think of, has been very eloquent in raising the concerns of the legal community, in saying that maybe the safe third country agreement should not exist and we should abandon it. I feel that this is a loophole that we perhaps should close. That is my position. There are other people saying well, what about those positions in the context of treaties that Canada has signed onto with regard to refugees? The point is that we have not had a debate on this issue at all. The government has not even acknowledged that this has been an issue. It is absolutely absent from this bill, and that is a huge problem.

As we go into the summer season, experts are anticipating a very high number of people who will be coming to Canada in this fashion. I visited communities in my former province of Manitoba which have been experiencing this. There have been some members of the Canadian community who have been trying to paint the raising of concerns such as this as a xenophobic activity. I remember having a conversation with three women on the street in Gretna, in front of a facility that was designed to house senior citizens and had been used to house and process people who were crossing the border illegally. Members of this community are saying that their community is very small, and they are now seeing the equivalent of roughly a third of their population being processed through the centre on a daily basis. That is not sustainable, not only for the community, but for the people who are crossing into this country. I have had conversations with the provincial government in Manitoba, and it is saying that the province needs more financial support from the federal government. My question and my push-back to them is on whether we need more financial support, or does the government need to make a call on how it is managing these asylum seekers writ large?

● (1930)

I have great concern that without the government providing some direction or some notice to the international community on where it stands on this issue, we are never going to come to a resolution on either a process fix or a legislative fix, or even on an awareness or education campaign, that is going to prevent trafficking groups from ramping up activities. These are all legitimate policy concerns the government has been entirely silent on in the context of Bill C-6.

The problems along the Manitoba border show a failure of our ability as parliamentarians to address a critical issue. We had a tragic and insightful moment during the federal election campaign of 2015 when we saw the body of a small child washed up on a beach because his family was trying to migrate away from an area of crisis. We should be equally outraged about the fact that a woman died under the processes we have in place for trying to seek asylum in Canada. We need to have a hard conversation about how many refugees we allow into the country and under what circumstances. That includes the components I raised earlier in my speech with respect to long-term support.

There is a cost. We need to have a plan. The government needs to be transparent to Canadians about that and not just say it is the responsibility of the provincial governments. My colleagues in the Manitoba legislature have a point in saying that we are abdicating responsibility to the provincial government in not addressing this issue.

The Minister of Public Safety has said in the House that they are monitoring the situation, etc., etc. However, monitoring the situation is not cutting it, because someone has died, and we cannot continue to allow that to happen. The bill is silent on this issue, and the Minister of Immigration has also been silent on this issue.

My colleague from Vancouver who sits on the immigration committee with me has raised a salient motion at the committee to study this issue, yet every time she has brought it forward and made impassioned arguments to have the study completed, she has had the issue curtailed and debate cut off. We have not even voted on the motion.

We are here today looking at Bill C-6, one of the most pertinent public policy issues of our time, and the bill is completely silent on the topic of the safe third country agreement or long-term support for refugees. I find that atrocious.

How can government members continue to get up and say that Canada is a place where we welcome refugees, or go to international forums and say that Canada is the best model for how to deal with refugees, and realize that we are not exceptional? Canada is exceptional in our naïveté and our arrogance to think that our process cannot be fixed.

I look at the failures of our country when the going got tough in dealing with the question of refugee admissions, such as the *MS. St. Louis*, when the federal government had a policy of none is too many. When we say never again, we have to mean it, but we also need to ensure that there are adequate processes in place to ensure that never again does not happen and that we have long-term support and social licence for Canada to continue to be a welcoming country.

Where are we in this? We are at talking points. That is all the government has offered. I have colleagues in the Liberal caucus who feel strongly about this and want to be compassionate, but we cannot be compassionate without having a conversation about how. I might not have all the answers, and they might not have all the answers, but surely we can use our time for debate and our time for bill study for issues like this. The government has tabled a piece of legislation, and the Senate has sent back amendments, that are silent on these most pertinent issues. That is an abdication of responsibility.

Government Orders

● (1935)

I would like to know how the government plans to deal with fixing the issue of the long-term prioritization of refugees. I would like to know how it plans to support them, but there is nothing in the bill.

I will transition to the bill's requirement for language proficiency. I do not even know where to start, because we have seen so many iterations of this. To become a citizen, there is a language proficiency requirement. At present, I believe the age is 65. Someone under the age of 65 has to be proficient in one of our official languages, either French or English. I remember in the first debate I gave a lot of evidence and testimony that language proficiency is a unifier. People coming to our country need to have proficiency in one of our official languages to obtain employment and participate in the economic fabric of our country but also to ensure that they are not isolated.

I worry, especially in the context of a Syrian refugee study done by the parliamentary committee, that many women come to Canada and do not have the opportunity to obtain language-training services and then become isolated in ghettoized communities because they have not been able to learn English. The whole rationale behind the age requirement of 65 is that many people are expected to work, and do work, well into their sixties. People in this place are in their sixties and work very hard, but to participate in Canadian society and in the workplace, they need to be proficient in one of our languages. The bill originally purported to reduce the age at which refugees needed to demonstrate proficiency in one of our official languages before they could obtain citizenship.

Some of the points I have been emphasizing is that language proficiency binds us together in Canadian pluralism for the long term and that rather than reducing the age limit we should talk about how to ensure that new Canadians integrate into Canada. If age is a barrier to learning the language, how do we overcome the barrier? These were the questions I asked the minister at committee. I asked what evidence the minister had to show that this was somehow going to be beneficial, rather than talking about access to language training services. This is material to the Senate amendments, because the Senate amendments are directly pertinent to the age by which language proficiency training happens.

Mr. Paul Attia, a spokesperson for Immigrants for Canada, stated:

...we at Immigrants for Canada view citizenship like being a member of a team. Everyone has the opportunity and the chance to try out for that team, but you have to meet certain requirements. You have to show up to practice—that's residency. You have to be able to communicate with your teammates—that's the language issue.

Former Minister McCallum stated:

I think it's a question of balance. I accept totally the evidence suggesting that mastery of one of the two official languages is a good thing, that it promotes and enhances an individual's ability to do well in Canada, to get good jobs, to integrate. On the one hand, we do favour language requirements. On the other hand, I think for older newcomers it's less important.

I think one has to take into account cultural issues...

I don't regard 55 to 64 as super-old, but those above the average age will not necessarily be required to do this, even though as a general principle we believe that the mastery of English or French is important for the success of newcomers.

In his statement, the minister did not provide any evidence or rationale as to why the reduction of the language proficiency requirement at a certain age was a good thing.

● (1940)

I remember asking both the IRCC officials and the minister about whether there was an economic analysis of the impact on the Canadian economy this language proficiency requirement would have. Ms. Catrina Tapley, an IRCC official, said, "to continue on with the previous questions, a full economic analysis of changes on language is not something the department has undertaken". That is important. She pointed to other countries in terms of the language proficiency age for citizenship, but there was no justification for why this was happening in the Canadian context, especially given that Canada is a pluralistic country.

We welcome people from around the world under different streams of immigration processing. If we are going to lower the age of language proficiency to obtain citizenship, what will that mean for the Canadian economy? We are going to have people who likely self-deselect from the economy, because they are not able to communicate in one of our official languages in the employment sector. That would have been an opportunity to prove me wrong.

A witness from the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Sheryl Saperia, said,

I would just add, though, that language is the key to success in a new country, so I would never want to impose unduly high standards, but you do want to encourage new citizens to learn so they can succeed and make the best possible life here.

I introduced on the front end of my speech evidence and commentary on the Syrian refugee initiative. One of the things we heard over and over again in witness testimony was that to see success for people who entered Canada through the Syrian refugee initiative, language training and language proficiency would have to be top of mind in government planning. This is a quote from Sandy Berman, from the Or Shalom Syrian Refugee Initiative, said:

We are very frustrated. We are ready to support, but we are also trying to be innovative. We have approached people who would donate apartments in the interim as a way of addressing the housing issue. All our refugees who are privately sponsored, even the family of six, are not going to get their housing needs met, because we cannot afford to support them in the apartments they need to be living in, which are three- or four-bedroom apartments. We recognize that they are going to have to make a compromise about where they live.

In terms of English language training access, I really support your concern. Getting access to English or French is of critical importance in getting employment. There are refugees, for example, who are working for Arabic-speaking construction companies here, but many people do not and cannot rely on Arabic-speaking people within an employment situation to help them through the process. Access to English and French is of critical importance.

Government Orders

It is very clear that at the heart of any policy or legislative change we make, we need to ensure that language training is an issue. When the former minister, Minister McCallum, was in front of committee, I remember asking him point blank about this. Why are we focusing on lowering the age of proficiency when we are not focusing on having a stronger, more robust national framework for language-training services for newcomers to Canada and also seeking a mandate from Canadians to spend money on it? Again, going back to the campaign platform, the government said the Syrian refugee initiative would cost \$250 million. We all know that this is very low. I want to make sure that the government acknowledges that by waving its magic wand with this bill, it cannot erase the need to have language-training services.

Ms. Leslie Emory, the board director for the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, said:

The Syrian refugee resettlement initiative highlighted the need for affordable and appropriate child care, more language classes for different levels of learners, and different service times outside of the usual daytime classes in many more locations.

Ms. Leslie Emory also said:

I can't speak to the costing that is happening on the government side.

None of us can. That is very clear. She continued:

I can certainly say that, with the large number of refugees in the community needing language instruction, child care, and all those things, there isn't the full capacity to support them at this point in time.

• (1945)

She also said:

I think that in the case of Syrian refugees, women without the language and often with large families, with those factors together, tend to be isolated. What we need to do is introduce programs that work for them and work with their lifestyle to bring them into the community, and offer, for example, alternative language instruction models with child care.

That is really at the heart of why we need to oppose this particular component of Bill C-6. The point that Ms. Emory makes here is that without talking about that other side of the coin, the long-term support for integration, we actually are not getting the question of how we integrate right. Again, I do not understand why the government has provided no compelling arguments, no evidence, and no research to show that the reduction in age of language proficiency to obtain citizenship is something that is positive.

This is a very blunt quote, and it was from a Syrian refugee. This is taken from interpretation in Arabic. He said:

No, I am not working. How can I work if I don't know the English to communicate?

Again, I am trying to build an argument on the front end of my speech talking about how the government's position on Bill C-6 on the reduction of age of proficiency for language for citizenship, because it has not addressed the issue of language training, is the wrong policy approach. We should be keeping that high, and then looking at and examining the systemic barriers that people encounter to learning a language to ensure that they have long-term employment prospects. To me, that is how we continue to build the case for immigration in Canada.

Here is another quote from a refugee:

In my case, I went to a different centre, and again they told me that it was full, that I had to wait. When I told them that I am a newcomer and that I wanted to

register for ESL classes, they told me: "That's good, but again, we don't have any vacancy now. We don't have any seat for you. Can you go and come back?"

Why? It's because, they tell me, there is a very big number of Syrians, the newcomers, and that's why all the classes are full. Apart from that, there are some immigrants who had been living there before the coming of the Syrian refugees, and now these immigrants also have started going back to ESL classes. This has created a different situation to ours.

To me, there is a complete lack of evidence. To all of my colleagues in this place, this is very serious. I know I am going on at length, but there is a lack of evidence to show that the reduction in the age of proficiency is the correct policy vehicle. Rather, the evidence that has been before us in committee testimony, as well as writ large, is that we should instead be looking at the systemic barriers to integration when it comes to language and addressing those.

On that, my understanding is that Senator Griffin, in the other place, proposed an amendment to Bill C-6 that would come up with, for lack of a better term, a happy medium. Rather than having, as Bill C-6 originally prescribed, the age of language proficiency for citizenship be 55, that it be 60. She has provided some excellent rationale for that.

This is my summary of it. The previous Conservative government was the first to define the age cut-off in statute at 65. Prior to that, in the early 1980s, the criteria for a routine waiver, this is the proficiency requirement, was set at 65 and over. By 1994, the waiver was lowered to 60. At some point between 1994 and 2014, the waiver was again lowered, this time to 55. My colleague in the other place argues that these were never political decisions but rather mid-level management decisions that stem from the bureaucracy.

Taking from her speech in the Senate:

According to the Library of Parliament, the age of 55 for an exemption from the requirements is a more recent trend that was not decided at either the political or the senior departmental levels.

Therefore, age 55 seems to be an arbitrary number without any evidence for this decision. Senator Griffin continued:

As well, the Library of Parliament analyst cannot find any record of age 55 being transmitted through ministerial instruction. The age of 55 appears to have been decided at a middle management level via an instrument of delegation.

• (1950)

She has based her argument on a June 1994 committee report and this was under the majority Liberal government of the time. The report was entitled "Canadian Citizenship: A Sense of Belonging". To paraphrase the findings of that committee report, it argued that lowering the voting age would arbitrarily lead to misplaced compassion that could isolate new Canadians and hinder participation in Canadian society. Lowering the age for routine waivers from 65 to 60 led to a 10% to 15% drop off in attendance at language and citizenship classes, according to a judge who testified at committee. The witnesses all stressed in that report the importance of language to the integration process and to the sense of belonging that is the essence of citizenship.

Government Orders

I know that people might say that 1994 was a long time ago. It does not feel like a long time ago to me. It has gone quite quickly, but that said, what I find interesting is that whenever the government is talking about justification or examples of integration of previous refugee cohorts into the country, it references refugee cohorts who have come to this country in a much different context than we see today.

The reality is that language proficiency is even more important today than it was in 1994, given the fact that our modes of communication have greatly changed. We are expected to be able to use a wide variety of electronic communication devices in order to be proficient or work in many jobs. If people do not have that language proficiency, that precludes them from being able to fully participate in the workforce or to have any sense of being able to move upward in their career progression.

The report is an interesting read and I encourage my colleagues to look at the report. There were two recommendations that I want to highlight. First, it says:

The Minister should retain the discretion to waive on compassionate grounds the requirements of knowledge...and/or an official language; this discretion should, however, be exercised on a case-by-case basis and only following a genuine effort on the part of the applicant to comply.

It continues:

The power of the Governor in Council to enable citizenship to be granted to alleviate cases of special and unusual hardship or to reward services of an exception value to Canada should be continued.

The point is that even back in 1994 the case that was being made was that language is a unifier and helps people participate in the Canadian economy; *ergo*, we should not be lowering the age of the proficiency requirement. I do not understand why the government is doing this here today. I would rather have my colleagues support the amendment that has come from the other place, from Senator Griffin, because it acknowledges the need to encourage people and to provide the services to have people become proficient in the language.

I understand the government is not supporting this. I took that from the minister's speech. I would urge my colleagues to think about that. It is not in our best interests. I will address some of the pushback and rationale that could be used. There were some witnesses who talked about people who did not have access to becoming citizens because they had circumstances in their lives that precluded them from learning the language. We heard many witnesses at committee talking about circumstances in which people cannot learn the language, but again, the recommendation that I just read from the 1994 report shows the minister already has discretion to be able to waive the requirement. He can do that on a case-by-case basis under situations of compassion.

To reiterate my point, we should be undertaking a study to look at why people experience barriers to learning language in Canada. Instead of seeking to change the age, we should be seeking to overcome the barriers to programming, and then relying on civil society and the communication of expectations to people coming to Canada that this is very important.

● (1955)

By lowering the age, we are sending a value statement to the world that at 55 years old we no longer expect people to be productive and employed members of society, and that somehow we are passing people by. Perhaps that is not the intent of the government. However, that is how it feels to me without that justification, that case the minister could have convened a committee but did not, from the quote that I read. Therefore, I really feel strongly that this particular Senate amendment should be supported.

● (2000)

The large amendment is with respect to the appeals process for people who are about to have their citizenship revoked because of fraud or misrepresentation. It was an amendment that was put forward by the Senate and it came up at the committee stage. Therefore, I will provide some context as well as a position on it. We have not even touched on this issue at committee or in the House at all.

All of us here maintain constituency services. We have immigration processing and casework as part of our responsibilities. This has a huge impact on the immigration system in Canada, both in terms of the integrity and the capacity of our immigration system to manage this change.

Bill C-6, in its original form, removes the requirement from Bill C-24 for people convicted of terrorism to have their citizenship revoked. As I mentioned at the outset of my speech, this would affect somebody like Zakaria Amara. However, throughout the debate on Bill C-6, in its original format, and at committee, my understanding was that the government would always retain the ability to remove citizenship from people who had obtained their citizenship through fraud.

I would argue, and I hope no one would disagree with me, that if people lie on their citizenship application or provided fraudulent information they should not be entitled to keep their citizenship because they lied to get it and were not entitled to it in the first place. It is a different argument than revocation of citizenship for terrorism or other acts. We could have an entire other debate on that, and we have had debates on that. However, in this instance, the revocation of citizenship for fraud or misrepresentation is right and just because people were never entitled to it in the first place. The decision by the government to grant them citizenship was predicated on the provision of false information. Nobody wants that to happen, yet we know that it does happen.

Citizenship fraud is a very serious issue. We started to look at citizenship fraud in the previous government. It was early in the last Parliament. I believe it was in Toronto, in 2013, that there were thousands of instances where people had been found to have cheated the system.

Citizenship fraud is a matter of great concern. This was highlighted in the Auditor General's report of 2016, in which the Auditor General found significant instances of citizenship fraud.

This was an article written by Stephanie Levitz in early 2016, which stated:

Government Orders

People with serious criminal records and others using potentially phoney addresses are among those who managed to secure Canadian citizenship, thanks to a system that doesn't do enough to root out fraud, the auditor general has found.

Michael Ferguson's audit of citizenship applications between July 2014 and last fall found the Immigration Department has granted citizenships based on incomplete information or without all the necessary checks because it's not applying its own methods to combat fraud.

The issue isn't the department's alone—the auditor general found they weren't getting timely or enough information from border officials or the RCMP either to help flag suspect cases.

"This finding matters because ineligible individuals may obtain Canadian citizenship and receive benefits to which they are not entitled," Ferguson wrote in his spring report, tabled Tuesday in the House of Commons.

"Revoking citizenship that should not have been granted takes significant time and money."

The problems range from immigration officials not routinely checking travel documents against a database of known fake papers to a failure by officers or their computers to flag problematic addresses that could point to residency fraud.

This blew my mind when I read this.

In one instance, it took seven years for an official to realize that a single address had been used by at least 50 different applicants during overlapping time periods. Of the 50, seven became Canadian citizens.

A review of 49 cases where an individual's address had been flagged as problematic concluded that in 18 instances, citizenship officials didn't follow up to see if the applicant actually met residency requirements.

In four cases, the RCMP failed to tell the Immigration Department about criminal charges laid against people who'd already passed the criminal records check step of the citizenship process. Two eventually became citizens; a third failed the knowledge test while the fourth abandoned their application.

The auditor general also found four people who should have been ineligible because of their criminal records, but were granted citizenship even though the officers had access to the information.

It was not immediately clear Tuesday whether any of the red flags raised by the auditor general's office have resulted in new fraud investigations.

In response to the audit, the Immigration Department, Canada Border Services Agency and the RCMP all say they are working to improve their efforts and a better system should be in place by the end of this year.

Tuesday's collection of audits also flagged problems at the start of many people's path to citizenship — the Immigration and Refugee Board, which handles asylum claims

As part of a review of appointments to government tribunals, the auditor general found ongoing and lengthy vacancies at the IRB, as well as at the so-called specific claims tribunal, which handles decisions on First Nations claims against the Crown.

In both cases, the vacancies are contributing to delays in tribunal decisions—at the IRB, 21 positions are vacant, leading to wait times of an average of 18 months, up from the last study of the appointments process in 2009

When it comes to filling vacancies, the auditor general flagged the fact that for part-time positions, there was no evidence of a selection process or an assessment of candidates against required qualifications.

In 2016, early last year, the Auditor General, and I would love to read the whole report, but I am not quite sure if there is the appetite for that, found significant failures within departments. I do not want to make this political. There is a huge bureaucracy here. Where it becomes political is what political oversight will do to rectify the problem.

I have had some colleagues ask me if citizenship fraud really is that much of a problem. This was an article which I wanted to find. It is what precipitate us to make some changes in the citizenship, the revocation appeals process.

● (2005)

It is a CBC News article written September 10, 2012. It states that 3,100 citizenships were ordered revoked for immigration fraud. Then the lead was that 19 individuals were stripped so far as Jason

Kenney's department investigated some 11,000 cases. The federal government had started the process of revoking the citizenship of 3,100 people suspected of lying to become Canadians. It said:

Speaking at a news conference on Ottawa Monday, Immigration Minister Jason Kenney said the federal government is "applying the full strength of Canadian law" to crack down on individuals suspected of obtaining citizenship fraudulently or falsifying information required for permanent residency.

Canadian citizenship is not for sale," Kenney told reporters. "We are taking action to strip citizenship and permanent residence status from people who don't play by the rules and who lie or cheat to become a Canadian citizen."

There are a few other quotes in this article I want to highlight, which state:

This crackdown on fraudulent citizenships is part of an investigation into some 11,000 people who may be lying to apply for citizenship or maintain permanent resident status....Of these, nearly 5,000 people with permanent resident status have been flagged for additional scrutiny should they attempt to enter Canada or obtain citizenship, a departmental release said Monday. The majority of these individuals suspected of residence fraud are believed to be outside the country.

Clearly, fraudulent applications and misrepresentation are not an anomaly in Canada.

There is also a famous case that the *National Post* wrote about in 2014. The article is titled, "Blatant lying loses family its citizenship—but earns them a \$63K bill from Canadian government" details how a Lebanese family was stripped of its Canadian citizenship, "after they were caught blatantly lying about living in Canada, part of a government crackdown on bogus citizens that could extend to thousands of cases."

In this case, the family, a father, mother, and their two daughters, signed citizenship forms, claiming they had lived in Canada for almost all of the previous four years when they really lived in United Emirates, a fact posted online in the daughters' public resumés on LinkedIn.

The point I am trying to make is that the amendment brought forward by the Senate, which was debated in the House committee, has significant implications because both the incidence of fraud is high and the Auditor General has found serious deficiencies in the government's ability to detect citizenship fraud.

We have these two issues. We know citizenship fraud happens. We know there are deficiencies in the government's ability to detect it. The government has been silent on what it is doing to address this to date. Why is this important? The amendment would ensure that a court hearing would given to people facing citizenship revocation on the grounds of false representation or fraud. That is from a *Globe and Mail* article on May 3, 2017.

Government Orders

The next is from a *Nation Post* article on March 9, 2017, which states, “the amendment requires the immigration minister to inform them of their right to appeal that decision in Federal Court.”

After the government's Bill C-24, revocation processes were streamlined such that people were not automatically granted a right to defend themselves if their citizenship was about to be taken away. That content is from a senate motion aims to restore due process to Liberal citizenship bill.

I will start laying out my argument on why I believe we have a problem here.

Our priority should not be to increase appeal mechanisms for those who have cheated the system to obtain citizenship. This will lead to further backlogs to the already inundated Federal Court and will cost Canadian taxpayers significantly in order of magnitude to both process and to maintain the benefits of people who are here under fraudulent circumstances.

Already applicants have the right to appeal an IRCC decision in Federal Court if the immigration department erred in the interpretation and application of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. The process of stripping citizenship should be left to officials, not to an arbitrary appeal board.

This is the problem I have, and for all of us who do casework in our office. This could incent someone to lie on his or her application when the focus should be on educating people about the consequences of fraud and how to properly obtain citizenship.

● (2010)

All of us, regardless of party affiliation, have had casework in our offices where people have come and said that their citizenships are being revoked because they lied on their applications. Usually it is a variation on these stories, such as they have received bad information from an immigration consultant to put fraudulent information on the application. In that situation, it is very difficult for members of Parliament to intervene because they lied on their citizenship applications.

The second thing we sometimes hear is that there are extenuating circumstances. For example, people felt they were convicted of crimes in countries where they were fleeing persecution and they felt the courts were corrupt or they were unduly found guilty of crimes that they chose to hide those convictions on their application. After they have been found out about this and their citizenships are at risk of being taken away, they say that their citizenships should not be taken away because of the circumstances in their previous country. In those situations, many of us would say there is a generous and fair process to evaluate their situations, including criminal records if they are truthful on their applications to begin with.

The original amendment from the Senate and the reason why it was not brought forward by the government as an amendment during the House of Commons review at parliamentary committee was that if we put the emphasis on the appeals process and gave people who were cheating the system an additional layer of complexity around appeal, not only were we potentially gumming up our Federal Court system, but we were telling people not to worry, that if they lied, they had a second chance.

That should not be the message. Many people are coming to Canada. They play by the rules and will be amazing contributors to the Canadian fabric, either our economy or our social fabric. However, the finite resources we have to review applications or the finite resources we have for benefit provisions will be provided to people who have made a conscious choice to provide false information on their citizenship applications.

I understand there are going to be circumstances by which people might hesitate to put something on their applications, but the consequences of lying on their applications are their citizenships could be revoked. That is where we should be spending our time. That is where the government should be focusing its resources, in educating, promoting and saying that if people lie, there are serious consequences and citizenship will be taken away. Not that we are going to have a long appeals process. I think there is cross-party agreement on this.

It was a harrowing committee study on the issue of immigration consultants and some of the fraudulent activity. Some of the testimony was mind-blowing. Many members who listened to it were convinced they had to do something to fix this. While there are many positive, strong immigration consultants, people who give advice for a fee to navigate Canada's immigration system and citizenship process, there are also people who abuse the system. I do not want to send any sort of message to those people that it is somehow okay to provide false information on a citizenship application.

We should think about this. We now have started to say that with this amendment, we will put the focus on the appeals process on the back-end. We know there is a high degree of immigration fraud. We also know the government does not have the capacity or the processes in place to detect fraud. This is a material change to the integrity of our immigration process and the government has been completely silent. To a large extent, the media has also been silent on this. This is a fundamental change to how we operate and what values we place on the process by which we obtain citizenship in Canada.

This amendment and the government's response have unfortunately made further complex and that is because there was a Federal Court ruling that came out about a month ago related to this situation.

● (2015)

There was a Federal Court ruling that states there is a need for an appeals process in instances of citizenship revocation. However, there are a variety of problems that this ruling could pose, which includes that it could increase backlogs, as I have said, incentivize lying on one's application, and bringing into question whether fraudulent recipients have a right to Canadian citizenship.

Government Orders

In regard to the Federal Court ruling and what it does, the government has now allowed the period of appeal on this Federal Court ruling to expire. The ruling itself essentially said that what was in Bill C-24 was not applicable. It argued that everyone has the right to appeal citizenship revocation. In its 62-page ruling, Justice Jocelyne Gagné found that new provisions, I believe in Bill C-24, violated the Canadian Bill of Rights.

This is interesting. It is violating the Canadian Bill of Rights, not the charter, which is a quasi-constitutional document. The decision affects more than 200 individuals who have lost their Canadian citizenship since May 2015 under this shortened administrative process. Many will now be entitled to full hearings and may be able to get back their revoked citizenship.

The decision addresses eight test cases that challenged the constitutionality of the changes made in May 2015...over alleged lies on their residency or citizenship applications. The changes also barred them from reapplying for Canadian citizenship for 10 years after revocation.

The government had 30 days to appeal this ruling, and the clock ran out late last week. To date, the minister has not appeared before committee or answered in the House as to why the government let the clock run out on this. I believe there is a very strong argument that could be made to appeal this decision. Again, and I have talked to a couple of constitutional lawyers on this, it is really the definition of citizenship. I believe this ruling, and I would love to have a debate with someone on it, is predicated on the notion of the right of Canadian citizenship.

If this decision is predicated upon that understanding, an argument could be made that a citizenship that has been obtained fraudulently was not someone's right to begin with because they obtained it under false circumstances. To apply the logic and notion to making a court ruling that somehow we should be extending rights of a citizen to someone who has obtained their citizenship fraudulently and therefore is having it revoked, I think is grounds for appeal. However, the government has not actually talked about this.

Some people have said that we need to talk about this on compassionate grounds. I think there is a myth out there that there is not already a form of appeal. I am going to quote the current Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. He was at the Senate committee on March 1 of this year. He said, "In fact, the whole point of sending the revocation notice—

• (2020)

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order or a point of clarification, in discussions with some of the senior members of the chamber, we were looking for clarification. If the member decides to speak for five hours, does that in fact yield an hour of questions and comments at the end of that five hours?

The Speaker: I am glad to see the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill has a sense of humour about this. I think that was a rather frivolous intervention. In fact, the time for questions and comments will be 10 minutes when it occurs.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, I feel somewhat obligated at this point to put on the record my great degree of affection for the member who just rose on his intervention. While I indeed accept your ruling that it may have been frivolous, he is not. He is actually kind of okay. If the member opposite would like to ask me an hour of

questions, I would be more than happy to entertain that, of course, at your great discretion, Mr. Speaker. I will acquiesce to your ruling.

I have a quote from the Prime Minister, which is relevant to this point. On November 10, 2016, the Prime Minister said the following of the member who just intervened, "[The member]...has been doing extraordinarily adequate work...in his riding..." It is a rare day that I agree with the Prime Minister, but, on this, I strongly and firmly agree.

The immigration minister, before a Senate committee in March 2017, basically trying to overcome the myth that somehow the appeals process was not adequate or that it did not exist, said, "In fact, the whole point of sending the revocation notice—"

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is so important and material.

The Speaker: Order. I know hon. members will want to hear the speech, and I hope we will be able to hear it without any difficulty.

The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your extraordinarily adequate intervention in the House.

This quote is just so earth-shattering, I want to put it on the record. The revocation notice is essentially how people are notified that their citizenship is going to be revoked for fraud. The minister said the following:

In fact, the whole point of sending the revocation notice to the affected party is to allow the party to gather information and provide any personal circumstances to the decision maker so that the decision maker takes those personal circumstances into consideration, which would include humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

When asked about whether the person has the right to counsel, the minister noted, "Absolute right to counsel. The written submissions and the case, you're allowed to use counsel. There's no prohibition against having counsel." He further stated, "You have a right to a judicial review with leave."

At the same Senate committee meeting, Ms. Hubers, the director for citizenship program delivery at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, explained the process. This is the process by which this happens, so I want to put this on the record for my colleagues. She said the following:

First, one division in the department initially investigates cases to see if there is sufficient evidence that may warrant consideration of revocation. Where there is belief that there is sufficient evidence, the file then gets transferred to a different division that will then make the decision whether to proceed with a notice of intent to revoke. The notice of intent provides all of the evidence upon which the decision maker would be relying at that point in time to make their decision and invites individuals to submit all factors related to that which they should take into account when making the decision, including personal circumstances, such as the length of their time in Canada, the age they were when they acquired citizenship, their ties to Canada and those sorts of things. At that point, when that material comes in, the decision maker will decide whether to proceed with the decision.

What the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and the department official I just quoted laid out at the Senate committee is that there is in fact a process. This is not just done arbitrarily. It is very wrong to present the fact that people who are undergoing this have no due process. That is not the case. It is also important to note that there is a difference between what the Federal Court ruling said with regard to this issue and what the Senate amendment that has been proposed suggests. They interact with each other, but they are not exactly alike, as the amendment specifically lists the Federal Court as the appropriate appeals body. Further study needs to be done to assess whether this would even be the most appropriate body. For instance, the Canadian Bar Association has stated that the immigration appeals division of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada would be more appropriate.

Therefore, here is what I suggest. Given the Federal Court ruling, given the Auditor General's findings on the lack of ability for our government to detect citizenship fraud, and given the acknowledgement that citizenship fraud is an issue, my understanding is that the government and the minister have put forward a very wordy and convoluted amendment into the record. However, rather than deal with that, because the minister has been silent on this, because we have not had any study in committee on this issue, we have not had any debate on this, we have not heard from expert witnesses on how to reconcile all of these issues with regard to the Auditor General's findings, and because the government has not talked about what the Auditor General's findings were or how to address that, first we should not entertain the Senate amendment. Rather than trying to amend it with words here, we should reject the amendment, have further study, and then the government should come back to Parliament, be it to a parliamentary committee, or with some sort of announcement stating what it is going to do to address the Auditor General's findings, and how it is going to educate people that lying on their citizenship application is a bad thing to do. I also believe that the minister has an onus and a responsibility to tell Canadians why he chose not to appeal that ruling.

● (2025)

The government is running out of time. Not only did it let the clock run out on the time in which it could appeal the ruling, as I pointed out at committee last week—and I would have to pull it from the ruling, but I am also happy to read the entire ruling—but I believe it only has another 30 days to respond before the current situation times out, and I do not think the government has addressed some of the key process issues on immigration in Canada.

In speaking to one of my Liberal colleagues today with respect to our parliamentary committee, I made the point that immigration in and of itself is a very process-heavy department and topic for the Canadian government, because when we accept immigration as something that should happen in Canada, it becomes a question of how and under what circumstances. As a result, a lot of what we are tasked with as legislators is providing direction to the department on how to do things.

One of the great frustrations I have had at parliamentary committee this year—and I kind of understand where they are coming from—was when questioning department officials on process. One of my Liberal colleagues had asked department officials what they thought we should do and how we could improve.

Government Orders

The response was that they need parliamentary direction, that as the public service they need political direction, because they cannot just change things.

I believe we need to provide direct and clear guidance to the department on how to ensure people are not incented to lie on their applications. I do not understand what incentive people have to be truthful on their applications under this change. The government has to come up with either some sort of awareness campaign or punitive measure. I do not know what that would be and I would very much welcome an expert study that would address the issue of citizenship fraud.

The Auditor General's findings have to be addressed. To underscore this point, this is an article that was published on May 3, 2016, on the Auditor General's findings. It states:

Despite the former...government's anti-fraud efforts, ineligible immigrants have continued to beat the system and secure Canadian citizenship, the auditor general says.

"People were granted citizenship based on incomplete information or without all of the necessary checks being done," Michael Ferguson wrote in an audit of the citizenship program tabled Tuesday in the House of Commons. "Since revoking citizenship after it has been granted is costly, while the cost to grant it is far less, it is important to ensure that only eligible applicants receive it in the first place."

That statement goes to the heart of it and exceptionally and adequately summarizes the point I am trying to make, which is that we do not have an adequate response from the government on this particular issue. It is extraordinarily inadequate.

It continues:

The auditor general investigated citizenship applications between July 2014 and last fall and found Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada did not have a systematic method of identifying and documenting fraud risks and that existing guidelines were not followed consistently by staff.

In response to the report, Immigration Minister John McCallum said he is working with the Canada Border Services Agency and the RCMP to improve information sharing and to put in place a new integrity system by December.

December has passed. Where is the new integrity system? What has happened? I would love to hear the response from the minister in the context of both this amendment and the Federal Court ruling.

It continues:

"We have thoroughly reviewed all cases flagged by the Office of the Auditor General to determine if citizenship fraud may have occurred. As a result, we've opened investigations toward possible citizenship revocation from about a dozen individuals..."

In this article the minister is talking about the fact that the government is acknowledging that this is a problem, yet we have not heard anything about what is being done in the context of this particular amendment.

It continues:

"We are continuously looking for ways to improve fraud detection and prevention processes in all of our programs."

To become a citizen, permanent residents must have lived a minimum amount of time in Canada, pass a language and knowledge test, and obtain criminal clearances from the RCMP.

The most common fraud involves pretending to have lived in Canada to maintain permanent resident status and meet residency requirements for citizenship, the report said.

Government Orders

● (2030)

Another article from May 3, 2016, underscores this point. It was a busy day for citizenship fraud.

Immigration Minister John McCallum says the government will investigate dozens of new Canadians that the federal auditor general found may have obtained their citizenship through fraud, and pass new laws to catch such cheats in the future.

Where are those laws? I do not see them in Bill C-6. As well, the minister has not gone to committee.

I am going to pause reading this article for one moment. I have really tried to make this point in Parliament over the last two weeks. I spoke at great length in the parliamentary committee last week on the need for the minister come to committee to talk about what the government is doing to address this issue. Unfortunately, debate was adjourned on my motion. It was a very sad moment in time for democracy in Canada, because I believe if the minister had gone to committee, there could have been a much more constructive and productive debate on this particular bill.

The article further stated:

The promises came in response to a damning auditor general's report released Tuesday that criticized the immigration department for failing to catch dozens if not hundreds of fraudsters and suspected criminals before they were sworn in as Canadian citizens.

Auditor General Michael Ferguson said serious holes in the immigration department's screening failed to weed out prospective citizens who were obviously trying to cheat the system or who otherwise should have been ineligible to become Canadians.

Reviewing only a small sample of the more than 260,000 people who became citizens in 2014, Ferguson and his staff were able to find nearly 50 cases where immigration officials failed to catch what in hindsight should have been fairly obvious cases of fraud.

The terminology that is used is "obvious cases of fraud". Why is the department incapable of catching this? As for what the minister said earlier in this article, where is the plan that was promised?

The article continued:

"The steps we took to try to identify these cases of citizenship fraud were not complicated.... It was fairly simple for us to find these 50 cases, and so I think it's 50 cases too many."

Because they were able to avoid detection, the citizenship cheats were sworn in and able to enjoy all the benefits of being Canadian, including access to health care and other social services as well as the right to vote and obtain a passport, without having met the government's requirements to become citizens.

That leads me to my next argument on why the government needs to have a think. We should very strongly not support the Senate amendment. There is a term about polishing fecal matter that I could use in this case, but I believe that would be unparliamentary, so I will not. Rather than undertaking that particular process, the government should take some time, certainly the next 30 days, and be very transparent with Canadians about what it is doing in response to the Auditor General's findings.

There is something I have not made the point on yet. When people become Canadian citizens, they have access to the benefits of being Canadian, including access to health care, social services, voting, and obtaining passports. I saw a study that ranked the value of Canadian passports as very high. I think it is one of the top 10 most valuable passports in the world. We do not want to send a message to our major trading partners and allies that there are holes in the process by which people can obtain Canadian passports. A Canadian

passport is one of the most treasured documents on the face of the earth, yet this *Ottawa Citizen* article on the Auditor General's findings clearly lays out that we might have a problem in terms of long-term benefits being given to people who are not entitled to them.

Rather than the government massaging the wording of the Senate amendment and taking some time to come up with a process, as alluded to earlier, the other reason that members in the House should not accept the Senate amendment is that the parliamentary committee has not yet produced its report on—

● (2035)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands is rising on a point of order.

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for the opportunity to address an issue that I think a number of people are having a problem with.

As we move from spring into summer in this building, one of the realities is that this building has not been modernized, unlike some of the other buildings, and the temperature in here gets to the point where people seem to have a difficult time working. I can see from the malaise on the other side that it is affecting those members even more than it is the opposition. Some of them have already perhaps moved to the place that I am going to ask about.

There is a dress code in this place for men in particular. The wearing of ties and jackets is required. I am wondering if there is a point at which we can remove our jackets and make ourselves a bit more comfortable. I am wondering if you could review that policy and let us know what that point would be, and if there is a place for that, could we also participate in the debate and the discussion later on in the evening if the temperature stays as warm as it is?

We have heard a number of members talking about the temperature in the House tonight. I do not know if there is anything you could do about it, Mr. Speaker, or that staff may be able to do to make it a little more bearable for members.

I notice that a couple of my colleagues seem to be putting their jackets back on, so I do not know if they have been caught at something they should not have been doing or if it is appropriate to remove our jackets. Perhaps the next thing that will come off will be our ties. We certainly do not want to see this place descend into chaos, but I wonder if you could give us some direction as to what we might be able to do with regard to the heat in the building.

I do not know how the member has been able to do this. She has been speaking and educating the House on this issue for almost two hours now, and it has to be wearing on her. The temperature certainly is a big challenge for the rest of us as well.

Could you give us some direction, Mr. Speaker, on how the dress code may impact the men in the House? The women have a different standard. Could you let us know if we can remove our jackets, or are we required to leave them and our ties on, even with the incredible heat that is in here tonight?

● (2040)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

Government Orders

First, I can assure him that this outfit is particularly warm, but I do not intend to discard any of it. I would encourage members to wear their jackets.

Members should know, and the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands will have noticed perhaps on various occasions, that male members are not required to wear ties at all times. I am looking at a member behind him and some others who are not wearing ties. However, if a male member is going to speak, he is required to have on a tie and a jacket. I would encourage members to wear their jackets.

At the same time, on a day when it has been 32° outside and it is very warm in here, I am looking forward to a cooler temperature tomorrow. I have previously spoken to the administration about the need to make sure that the air conditioning is working as well as possible in this large chamber, which in the daytime of course is heated in part by sunlight, as my colleague knows.

We should try to be reasonable in here in our approach, but in general I would encourage male members to follow the rule in relation to wearing jackets, and if they are going to speak, they are required to wear ties.

The rules of the House are those that have been adopted by the House and I am simply the servant of the House.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, what an extraordinarily adequate servant you are.

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I owe you an apology. When I was thinking about the members of the House in here, I actually did not consider your comfort and I apologize to you for that.

We have had a long relationship, and it has been extraordinarily adequate as well. That seems to be the rule of the House tonight. I just wanted to let you know that we think of you often. I apologize for not having thought of you this evening in this contribution that I have been able to make.

I look forward to the member continuing her speech.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands for his kindness. I have certainly enjoyed the relationship with him. We worked together very well in committee. In fact, I have often been entertained by him, particularly when he was sitting closer than he is these days. I miss his closeness. On occasion I might have had to encourage him about certain things, but as a rule, I can assure members that we did have lots of great fun conversations and great camaraderie back and forth.

I should not go on so long. This sounds like debate. The hon. member for Calgary—Nose Hill.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Dufferin—Caledon, during your intervention, and my colleague from Cypress Hills—Grasslands made a comment about women's attire, and I would like to say that in the American tradition, we should all have the right to bare arms, especially at this particular juncture. That is a position I support.

The other reason I think it behooves the government to take a little extra time for a study, rather than supporting the Senate amendment, is that our parliamentary committee has been charged with reviewing

the issue of how immigration consultants are governed in Canada and the impact they have on both citizenship fraud and defrauding people who might be using them.

I want to say why this is important. I am going to start by saying that there are many excellent immigration consultants to legitimately help people navigate Canada's immigration system and become citizens. They are good, hard-working people who have the best intentions and play by the rules. However, there are those who do not. Many people in this place who have had experience doing casework on immigration in their ridings have had a constituent who has suffered the consequences of an immigration consultant who has provided people with illegitimate advice, has advised them to lie on a citizenship application, or has defrauded them of money.

There was a very weighty, in-depth study at committee. We have not yet issued a report, but I want to highlight some of the testimony. We heard over and over again concerns about the ability of the current oversight body, the ICCRC, to regulate this sector. My colleagues from Dufferin—Caledon and Markham—Unionville and I all heard serious testimony from witnesses who were essentially left destitute because of this. To the relevancy of the amendment at hand, more often we heard about people who were advised to lie on their citizenship applications and hence had their applications revoked.

After going through the exercise at committee, I am of the belief that the current oversight process is inadequate and is not working. The status quo cannot be maintained. There are serious governance challenges within the ICCRC board itself, bordering on dysfunction. I am just going to put it out there. This is not just my opinion. This was highlighted in witness testimony. We have to think about the end user.

One of my colleagues from the NDP has made the point that this is about compassion. We need to have compassion for people who are being defrauded in these situations. The oversight situation we have is not adequate. The testimony was very clear and very damning in that regard. It is not working, and there needs to be change.

I know that all members of the committee are going to be considering this testimony and considering recommendations for the government. I would like the government to consider those recommendations in the context of how we deal with both the Federal Court ruling and the response to the Senate amendment. I do not understand why the government has not appealed the Federal Court ruling.

If we are indeed risking sending a message to the international community to not worry, because there is a lengthy appeals process if people lie on their citizenship applications, that is congruent with some of the issues we have been dealing with in terms of how to reform the system for immigration consultant governance.

Government Orders

● (2045)

There was an article, published in January 2016, that spoke to the issue of ghost consultants. This was something we heard about in the course of the study I just mentioned. Ghost consultants are people who are essentially not regulated by our current oversight board, and often that is where many of the instances of fraud occur. The article said:

On the federal government's website, in no fewer than 21 languages ranging from Arabic to Vietnamese, people looking to immigrate to Canada are warned to be on the lookout for fraud and to stay away from unauthorized consultants.

Don't be the victim of a scam, the site warns.

And don't be tempted into using false documents.

Despite the government's efforts to regulate the industry, however, large numbers of unlicensed consultants continue to operate under the radar, sometimes going to great lengths to dupe the system—or their clients—and making loads of money doing it.

Last fall, Xun Wang, an unlicensed consultant in Richmond, B.C., was handed a stiff seven-year sentence for carrying out one of the biggest immigration frauds authorities say they'd ever seen involving doctored passports and other forged documents.

While that prosecution was successful, critics say so-called "ghost consultants" continue to operate largely in an enforcement vacuum.

This article continues:

Internal records show the border agency fielded more than 400 complaints about alleged unauthorized immigration consultants from June 2011 through September 2015. It opened 71 cases and laid 12 charges.

"Little attention is given to rogue agents, the ghost agents. The public is being taken for a ride," said Cobus Kriek, a licensed immigration consultant in Calgary, who obtained the CBSA records through an access-to-information request.

A CBSA spokeswoman said the agency reviews all complaints and tips. Investigations are opened if officers believe consultants have misrepresented themselves or the information they've put in applications, or if they have counselled others to do so....

If anyone dialed the Halifax phone number Mohd Morelley wrote in his application for citizenship as proof he was integrating in Canada, it would ring out in an office on the outskirts of Halifax. Someone might answer, but it wouldn't be Morelley or his wife or three children, who all wanted to be Canadians.

They were all living in Kuwait.

Along with the bogus phone number, Morelley and his family bought a full-service bogus citizenship package from an immigration consultant, including a Halifax address for a home he never lived in, tax returns and employment records for a job he never held, payment of utility bills he never used, ATM withdrawals to show local transactions he didn't make and a letter from a local Islamic society saying he was deeply involved in the activities at a mosque he didn't attend.... Morelley's phantom phone—and fake life—were far from unique: more than 140 cell phones, labeled with the number and name of a client, were organized in the Bedford Highway office of the Canadian Commercial Group, run by immigration consultant Hassan Al-Awaid....

"The CBSA sets priorities and focuses criminal investigations on cases that are likely to have the greatest impact, for example large-scale fraudulent operations," the statement said. As of late November, the agency said 16 investigations had closed, resulting in 15 convictions.

Critics say it's not enough, that unsuspecting customers are falling victim to crooked consultants who lack qualifications, fail to file paperwork, or simply take their money and run.

This is what is important:

....not all clients are victims. Some clients are willing participants in the fraud, paying consultants to create documents that make it seem like they're living in Canada when they're not.

I do not want to politicize the issue, because this has been an issue that has crossed different governments, but something needs to be done.

We are sending a message to people. I can just imagine how a conversation would go in a situation like this if someone had any qualms about perhaps not being truthful on the application. What I do not want to happen is a ghost consultant or someone who is not regulated saying, "Don't worry. You can appeal the decision. You would have a long period of time. If you are found out, the penalty has been reduced."

● (2050)

What is the government doing to ensure this situation does not happen?

I will continue, because there are some other excellent points. It says:

Before foreign nationals can apply for Canadian citizenship, they must spend 1,095 days in Canada in a four-year period.

Bill C-6 would change that. It continues:

The Federal Court of Canada has said this residency requirement protects "precious Canadian citizenship," and ensures would-be citizens have "the everyday opportunity to become 'Canadianized.'"

"This happens by 'rubbing elbows' with Canadians in shopping malls, corner stores, libraries, concert halls,..."

Many, however, are paying to skirt these rules.

"We do not have to be Pollyannas here," Phil Mooney, past president of the Canadian Association of Professional Immigration Consultants told a parliamentary committee in 2011.

Again, this issue has been ongoing for a while. This is the second time, and probably more, that the citizenship and immigration committee has looked at this issue. It goes on:

"A large number of individuals participate willingly in attempts to defraud the system ... and there are hundreds of thousands of people who will do anything, sign anything, pay anything to come here."

That said, many prospective immigrants are falling victim to ghost consultants, who also "take money away from legitimate consultants who follow the rules and pay a high price to be regulated," Mooney said.

"Further, we suffer added indignities because the public cannot easily distinguish between the good guys and the bad guys."

The problem is the CBSA doesn't have enough resources to investigate the bad ones, said Dory Jade, current president of the industry group.

The public cannot easily distinguish between the good guys and the bad guy.

We heard at length over numerous meetings that preventing ghost consultants from defrauding people was a problem. However, what we hear in this article, and what we heard in testimony, is that some people choose to defraud the system and willingly put false information on their citizenship applications. How is the government going to address this problem given what is proposed in the Senate amendment? It is a huge mess and we should reject it outright.

There is one recommendation that I support, and I want to speak to it. It was made out of a spirit of compassion and would improve the immigration system in Canada. I will at least provide the House with some positive things. This was an amendment supported by Senator Victor Oh. I will read a statement that was put out by Senator Oh on June 12. It states:

Government Orders

Senator Victor Oh commends the government for its decision to support an amendment to Bill C-6, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act and make consequential amendments to another Act, which would provide equitable access to citizenship to children and youth under the age of 18 who meet all the requirements.

Bill C-6 is a government bill that seeks to make changes to the legislative provisions regarding grants of citizenship by naturalization, grounds for citizenship revocation, and the authority of the Minister with regard to fraudulent documents. However, it did not address barriers that prevented certain minors, including children in the care of child welfare authorities, from obtaining citizenship in Canada.

Under the current laws minors submitting an application with a parent or guardian or who have a parent or guardian who is a citizen face no significant barriers. However, those without parents or guardians and those whose parents or guardians are unwilling or unable to apply have virtually no option but to wait until they are 18 years of age to apply on their own. The only exception is to request a waiver for a grant of citizenship on compassionate grounds from the Minister — a highly discretionary process that is simply ineffective...

The amendment, which was passed by the Senate on April 11, 2017 with 47 votes in favour, 27 votes against, and 3 abstentions, would allow children and youth with a permanent resident status to submit an application for citizenship separately from a parent or guardian. “This change would not only ensure that these minors can have a permanent and secure status in Canada, but also provide them with increased opportunities to succeed and thrive” said Senator Victor Oh.

● (2055)

“It is my sincere hope that now that the bill will return for further consideration my colleagues in the House of Commons and the Senate will vote in favour of the amendment with the changes made by the government to clarify who can apply for citizenship on behalf of the child” added Senator Oh. “This would be a landmark moment in the history of advancing the rights of children and youth in Canada, and I am proud to have played a role in it.”

I actually agree with the sentiment presented here by the Senator. I actually think this is a common sense, compassionate amendment that will give us all, regardless of political stripe, great pride in the Canadian citizenship process. I commend Senator Oh for his work. I certainly support it. It is my understanding that the government will slightly amend his amendment. This is where it gets complicated for the viewers at home, but with that, when I read what is being proposed by the government in terms of amending Senator Oh's amendment, it looks fine to me.

For once, on a very hot and muggy June day in the House of Commons we can agree between the government party and my party that this is something that is worthwhile, so we will be supporting that particular change. As it is implemented, it will certainly support better immigration processing in Canada.

Just for people who might be asking me, I often find after I give these speeches, people write to my office and say, “Why are you supporting this? What is going on?” Just to be very clear on what this amendment does, the issue is that permanent residents that apply for citizenship in Canada must be either 18 years of age or apply concurrently with a permanent resident parent or guardian. For minors whose application is attached to that of their parents or guardians or whose parents or guardians are Canadian citizens, the current process presents no serious issues. However, minors without parents or guardians, or whose parents or guardians are unable or unwilling to apply, have virtually no option but to wait until they are 18 years old, as Senator Oh said.

The objective of this amendment is to provide a direct pathway to citizenship for minors under the age of 18 that meet all the requirements, but do not have a parent or guardian to make an application on their behalf or whose parents are either unable or unwilling to apply.

Right now, subsection 2(1) of the Citizenship Act defines both “minor” and “child”. A child “includes a child adopted or legitimized in accordance with the laws of the place where the adoption or legitimation took place”. A minor “means a person who has not attained the age of eighteen years”.

The proposed amendment does not affect the processes for minors who would have entered Canada and qualified for permanent residence. Minors who make an application will still have to meet the eligibility requirements for citizenship, including the physical presence requirement.

Just to be perfectly clear, to anyone who might be watching or to my colleagues who might not have read the substance of the amendment, there is no need to worry that this amendment somehow changes the process by which a minor might be looked at for admissibility. Essentially what this does is it changes the eligibility, but it does not change the review process itself.

To remain consistent with the proposed changes under Bill C-6, the children would not need to meet the language or knowledge requirements. Under the proposed amendment, minors whose parents or guardians are submitting an application concurrently or whose parents or guardians are citizens of Canada will continue to apply under subsection 5(2) of the Citizenship Act.

In contrast, minors without a parent or guardian, or whose parents are unable or unwilling to make an application, will be able to directly apply under subsection 5(1) of the Citizenship Act, because it will no longer be necessary to be the age of majority. A main outcome of the proposed amendment is that the applications for citizenship of minors will no longer be dependent on their parents' citizenship and the parents' willingness or ability to apply for citizenship. However, a child will still need assistance from a legal guardian to make his or her application.

The child will also be required to countersign his application after the age of 14. This process is consistent with Citizenship Regulation No. 2, paragraphs 4(a) and (b), which apply to the applications under subsection 5(2) of the Citizenship Act. My understanding is that the reason this safeguard is in there is to ensure that children are not being abducted or forced away from a family unit against their will.

● (2100)

I read through the Senate testimony and I talked to Senator Oh. He has done a good job in terms of laying out the case for this. What I am not certain about is how this relates to other countries that might have best practices in this regard, but certainly going forward if we implement this and do it well, we would have some best practices to share with the world.

Government Orders

There is a point that I forgot to make that was very important. I am going to jump back to the amendment I was addressing prior to Senator Oh's and that is the amendment around the appeals process for citizenship revocation in cases of fraud. I would be remiss not to mention that one of the reasons the government and all members need to reject this amendment is the strain on the backlogs that we see in the Federal Court. We have had rigorous debates about the appointment of judges and the fact that the government has not been on the ball in appointing judges, as there are many vacancies. In Calgary, there are courtrooms that are empty. It is a shame and I know there are many qualified applicants in Canada. I do not understand why the delay is happening.

Prior to adopting this amendment, the government needs to deal with this issue. When we think about how many people have had their citizenships revoked that this would apply to, it is going to create delays and backlogs. In terms of the current processes in place, the Federal Court will examine appeals if the department errs in interpretation or application of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. A quote from the IRCC website, which details the current process of citizenship revocation, reads:

The Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act (SCCA) introduces new grounds for revocation of citizenship and provides for a streamlined revocation process. Previously, the citizenship revocation process generally involved three steps: the Minister, the Federal Court, and the Governor in Council. Under the new revocation process, the Governor in Council will no longer have a role except for some transitional cases.

The new process has two decision-making streams:

the vast majority of revocation cases will be decided by the Minister;
certain complex cases will be decided by the Federal Court.

Note: The Case Management Branch handles all cases considered for revocation of citizenship. Local office staff are not involved with these types of cases, other than to alert the Case Management Branch should information come to their attention regarding a case that should be investigated for possible revocation.

As the IRCC website makes clear, under the current process, some special cases are sent to the Federal Court. The cases that currently go to the Federal Court are examined if IRCC erred in interpretation or application of IRPA. This is a particularly important caveat as it ensures that errors of the department do not lead to revocation; however, it also maintains that people are not incentivized to lie on their applications.

It is important to consider that the courts are facing serious challenges in terms of existing backlogs and hearings. These backlogs exist largely due to the fact that under the government there is a growing number of judicial vacancies, which have contributed to a large number of serious criminal cases being thrown out of court. We have not heard from the minister if he has actually worked with the Minister of Justice to figure how the volume, if the government decides to accept this amendment, is going to impact the backlog further or if she is going to somehow take action in appointing or expediting some judicial vacancies that are currently unfilled. This appeals process will likely put an excess strain on the courts, which are already strained by judicial vacancies.

● (2105)

To illustrate how problematic the issue of judicial vacancies are and for one to understand what the Federal Court ruling could impact, I want to read from an article in the *Toronto Star*, on August 11, 2016, which states:

...Supreme Court of Canada Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin linked the number of empty seats on federally appointed court benches across the country—44 at the moment—to unacceptable trial delays, especially in the criminal courts.

McLachlin said she has no argument with the Liberal government's effort to overhaul judicial appointment processes across the country, but said "I hope we can find a way to bridge the gap while we're perfecting the processes—but that's in the government's hands, properly, under our Constitution."

Asked what options might bridge that gap, McLachlin emphasized "it's not for me to tell the government how to appoint judges. That's not my business. But there are names, I understand, that are in the system from the previous (judicial advisory) committees."

She said it is the current government's "prerogative to appoint in accordance with their processes" but added there is a pressing need for vacancies "be filled in a prompt manner."

McLachlin made clear there is a lot at stake for the justice system, saying the vacancies are "a huge difficulty. It's more than a challenge. It makes it very, very difficult to comply with the constitutional requirement that people be tried within a reasonable time," she said in an interview at her office west of Parliament Hill.

McLachlin pointed to the Supreme Court's July ruling in a case called *R. vs. Jordan*, a split 5-4 decision in which she dissented.

In the interview, she said the court addressed the "lamentable delays" in criminal trials. She said the decision was clear that "we have to have strict compliance with the constitutional right of people to be tried within a reasonable time," adding that "this is going to be a challenge for the justice system in the years to come."

The majority ruling warned past approaches to how the courts considered delays—based in part on the high court's own rulings on issues of procedural fairness—have created a "culture of delay and complacency."

It set out a new framework that set limits on how long the justice system should reasonably take from the laying of a criminal charge to the actual or anticipated end of a trial.

I just want to leave members with one quote from this article, which states:

[Justice] McLachlin said she first started expressing concern about empty seats on Canada's courts in 2006 when "I think there were 35 vacancies and I said that was unacceptable at the time, and today there are—how many?—41?"

The issue of judicial vacancies is not something that is a partisan political construct. It is something coming out of a concern raised from groups such as police associations across the country and victims advocacy groups. The reason this is material to why I think the Senate amendment on the appeals process should be rejected by this place is that we have not addressed the issue of vacancies in the courts, and this will add a significant burden to the Federal Court process. We have not had the minister come in and talk about that important procedural component on how we will do this.

We have also had some discussion at committee on this. I believe my colleague moved a motion to study the issue of the resourcing of the Immigration and Refugee Board. We know that there are significant amounts of delays happening in that particular body. Why has the government not addressed this?

Government Orders

The point I am trying to make is that we have not had any material debate on these issues, either at parliamentary committee or in the House. The minister has not been out in the media on these issues. The ramifications of the Federal Court ruling and the Senate amendment that we are debating tonight, which I do not think the government has done a particularly adequate job of shaping, have huge impacts on the integrity of our immigration system in that it could incent people to lie on citizenship applications.

The integrity of our immigration system is currently threatened according to the findings of the Auditor General's report, for which the minister has not yet responded to the House or committee with respect to what the government is going to do to address that. There are also issues with respect to backlogs at the Immigration and Refugee Board.

● (2110)

There are issues with regard to resourcing in the Federal Court process. There are issues around the processing of ghost consultants. There are issues related to awareness campaigns on how people should be accessing immigration consultant support services. There are issues around the provision of benefits, and other rights and privileges afforded to Canadian citizens who may have obtained this through fraud.

The point I am trying to make is that there is so much to study here. This is not immaterial, yet the government has treated it as immaterial.

I have spoken for almost two and a half hours on this. There is more than two and a half hours' worth of study that is needed on this issue. We have not had this debate. The government cannot continue to come forward, say "Welcome to Canada", and expect Canadians to say that everything is great when it is not putting material scrutiny or any sort of effort into addressing these challenges.

Ofentimes, one is arguing for or against immigration. I am arguing for an adequate process, with integrity. There are serious problems with it right now, as I have outlined in detail, that the government has not addressed.

What are we doing tonight? With the minister coming forward and saying that this is how he is going to alter this amendment and support it, he is saying, "I don't care about the rest of this stuff. We're just going to proceed." I would like to tell him, let us put partisanship aside for a minute. Everyone here on this side is saying to take a bit more time. Get this right. If you do not get this right, there are serious implications not only for Canadians, but for people who are seeking to enter the country.

There are so many people who are trying to enter the country legally. We hear of spousal sponsorship, inland sponsorship, people who are waiting for years to come to this country, and they are doing it the right way. What we are debating tonight is something that incents people to do it the wrong way, without addressing some serious concerns. It is not the Conservative Party of Canada that is raising the issue—certainly we are shining a light on it tonight—but people like the Auditor General and Justice Beverley McLachlin. These are not partisan people. These are people whose job it is to raise issues. The minister has not responded to this.

Every once in a while, we have to take a bit more time in this place. That is why I had the right to speak as long as I did tonight. I feel it is very important to put on the record the fact that this particular amendment is so wholly inadequate. It has not been studied. Send this to a parliamentary committee. I would love to do a summer study on this. Let us have experts come in to talk about the implications of this ruling.

I would like to move an amendment. I believe my colleague, the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka, would be amenable to this.

I thank my colleagues for their indulgence. In closing, with an impassioned plea to my colleagues—I know I have spoken for a long time tonight—from the bottom of my heart, and I know it is June, we have to get our immigration system right. We cannot just keep saying "welcome to Canada" and not deal with these process gaps. That is the form and substance of my intervention.

Based on everything I have laid out tonight, I am very happy to sit here—adequately happy—and look at my colleague who is passing me a note, and implore the House to not support this amendment around the revocation of citizenship in cases of fraud. I think we all want to incent people to come to Canada the right way. I want to, from the bottom of my heart, encourage the minister to take the time to get this right, rely on parliamentarians to help him with the scrutiny of this—it would be great if he could come to committee once in a while—and to actually care about how we process citizenship in Canada.

● (2115)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Calgary Nose Hill touched on many subjects this evening, but I would like to get to the heart of the matter, which is Bill C-6. I am going to read the questions I have prepared because I would really like some good answers from her.

[*English*]

Let us talk about fraud. When the Auditor General issued a report on fraud in the citizenship program in 2016, the findings were a damaging report card for the Conservative government's lack of action on this front. It turned out that while the Harper Conservatives enjoyed touting themselves as tough on fraud, their actions failed to match their words, and that was after having an entire decade to address this problem. In fact, it is our government, as members know, that has taken concrete steps to address citizenship fraud and ensure the integrity of the program. We are doing this through concrete actions to achieve that objective, unlike the member opposite's party, which put up arbitrary barriers to citizenship for newcomers. My colleague will perhaps be able to offer some comment on this regarding citizenship fraud.

Government Orders

• (2120)

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, I went through the steps we took at length, including the measures in Bill C-24, which are effectively being revoked by the current government, to prevent citizenship fraud. One of the measures we put in place was the streamlining of the process for revocation in cases of fraud, as a way to make sure that people are not incenting that. I read quote after quote, actually a quote from a news article, that said we were taking steps in the right direction.

Here is the thing for my colleague. The Liberals have been in government for nearly two years. The Auditor General's report came out under their government. They are the ones who are saying welcome to Canada. They are the ones who are moving this amendment. I have made a very compelling business argument tonight, but it is their responsibility to act. In 2019, the current government cannot come forward and conjure up the ghost of Stephen Harper. The Liberals have to take responsibility for their own actions. If they are not doing that tonight, and if they are simply supporting this amendment because they do not have the wherewithal or the plan to address some of these issues, they are failing Canadians in their mandate.

I cannot stand here and accept the politicized argument my colleague just made that somehow this is Stephen Harper's fault. Our former minister, Jason Kenney, spent a great majority of his career trying to correct the mistakes that had compiled over decades of Liberal governments. At some point, the current government has to take responsibility for the fact that it has materially changed the immigration process, our levels in Canada, and it is now setting the tone for how these processes work.

My colleague could have asked me any number of questions about how we could study this or what our party is willing to do in terms of further study or support, but he instead chose to make a partisan dig at the former prime minister. I would answer his question with one to him: When is he going to take responsibility for the failures of the Liberal government?

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague made many interesting points, some of which I agree with and some not. There are, of course, items where she raises issues which require studying, and clarification, and leadership from the government, although I suspect that the perspective of the Conservatives on what trajectory that should take differs from that of the NDP. That being said, I do have one important question to ask of my colleague. She touched on the issues around refugees and the implication for refugees on many fronts, around resettlement, the need for resources to learn the languages, and so on. There is no question that all of that is absolutely necessary, and I call on the government to invest in that. It should continue to do so in order that people can be successful in their resettlement here in Canada.

One issue that is impacting refugees in a big way is what the former government did put in place, and that is called "cessation provisions". That is under Bill C-31. If refugees who have come to Canada then travel back to their country of origin, they could all of sudden find their status revoked. This is costing the system something like \$15 million in looking into that. That law was brought back into place, and it has impacted individuals who have travelled to their country of origin at the time when the law did not

exist and when the threat that caused them to seek refuge in Canada no longer existed. One case was with an individual who was being persecuted under the Saddam Hussein regime. That regime fell, the individual travelled back to his country of origin, and then cessation provisions were brought against him.

I wonder whether the member could comment about that, and whether the cessation provision is an absurd law that we should have included in this bill. I am disappointed that it is not there.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, I have not had the chance to say this in a while, but I want to put on the record my respect for the member for Vancouver East. Even though we do not agree on policy positions, she genuinely understands the immigration file, has often brought forward very reasonable suggestions for study, and comes to our parliamentary committee prepared and ready to debate.

I am just going to answer the hon. member by saying that I would love to talk about what she is talking about. I actually think it would be a great area of study in the context of all the other things I laid out in terms of how the Federal Court ruling and the amendment we are debating tonight actually affect the process by which our citizenship-granting process in Canada happens.

The problem is that we cannot have that debate at our committee, because the government has been scheduling endless meetings on one topic, which is very important, but we have not had the opportunity to actually debate or study some of these issues that have huge import for the integrity and success of our immigration and integration processes in Canada.

While we might not agree on form and substance, it behooves all of us to take the time to study these issues and not just accept the talking points of a minister or a PMO staffer who is writing out some amendments on a recommendation or a ruling that should have been debated and put forward in the House. I wish we could do that.

I have hope that the Liberal members on the immigration committee will understand that at some point, it will behoove the government to use that vehicle to study this. Hopefully at that point, my colleague and I can have a longer exchange.

• (2125)

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to congratulate the member for speaking for almost two and a half hours on, quite frankly, very informative issues involving the immigration system. She is very knowledgeable. I happen to sit on the immigration committee with her, and it is a great honour and a privilege to sit with her and listen to her words of wisdom on many topics involving immigration. I only wish the government would listen to what she has to say.

Telling the truth in this country is very important. If people lie in court and are found guilty of lying, they are in contempt of court and could go to jail. If students lie in school, they could be expelled. If journalists plagiarize, they could lose their jobs. If people lie to the Canada Revenue Agency, they can pay a very high penalty.

Government Orders

What do we do with people who lie when applying for citizenship or residency or a visa? That is the question I would ask my hon. colleague. What does she feel our society should do with them, when we penalize all kinds of people for issues that may not be severe? Lying when they are applying to get citizenship or lying to the authorities is a disgrace. What should we do?

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, the point I was trying to make is that this needs more study to answer that very question.

I really want to reinforce for the House that I believe there were grounds for appeal of the Federal Court ruling, which now has us in this predicament.

To my colleague's point, if people have obtained citizenship through fraudulent means, are they entitled to it to begin with? That is a question I do not think has been adequately answered. At some point, if the Supreme Court ever looks at this and is looking to Parliament for debate and the spirit of what our will is, I would want my will on the record saying that I do not believe that if someone has lied and cheated on the application, he or she is entitled to Canadian citizenship, and ergo, is entitled to a lengthy appeals process.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise to speak in this important debate.

It has been almost a year and half since Bill C-6 was introduced in the House of Commons. The bill was sent to the Senate on June 17, 2016, and it has now finally made its way back to the House from the Senate, where it was held up for more than a year. Many people in our communities have been waiting anxiously for this legislation to be passed and to come into effect.

Members may recall that when he was on the campaign trail, the Prime Minister promised Canadians, particularly those in the ethnic community, that he would repeal the Conservatives' Bill C-24. Like so many Liberal promises, that did not happen. Instead, the government introduced Bill C-6, an act to amend the Citizenship Act and to make consequential amendments to another act.

On February 25, 2016, Bill C-6 was first introduced in the House. About a month later, on March 21, 2016, it passed second reading and was referred to committee. Bill C-6 was then sent back to the House for third reading. It passed third reading and was sent to the Senate on June 17, 2016.

I should note that no amendments were made during second reading or at committee stage at the Senate, but three amendments were made during third reading.

The first amendment included providing a pathway to citizenship for minors. This was similar to the amendment that I proposed at committee, and I am glad to hear that the Conservative member and the government members now support it. At committee, though, government members certainly did not support it.

Another amendment proposed providing judicial appeal for citizenship revocation for fraud and misrepresentation. This amendment is similar in principle to my amendment to provide due process for these cases, but differs in the procedure. I support this amendment. Due process being restored has been a long time coming for those who face citizenship revocation.

The third amendment has to do with increasing the age of individuals who must pass a language test to 60. This Senate amendment I do not support.

In reviewing the process that we have embarked on with Bill C-6 to arrive at where we are today, let me point out that at committee I tabled 24 amendments on a range of topics. Two out of those 24 amendments were passed at committee. They included changes in two areas.

First, a statelessness provision would provide the minister with the authority to intervene in cases that would cause a person to become stateless and provide him or her with status based on humanitarian and compassionate factors. I was pleased that amendment passed.

The second amendment that also passed was with respect to disability rights. My amendment would ensure that the Citizenship Act adhered to Canadian human rights laws and regulations around reasonable accommodation for those with disabilities. I am pleased that this amendment also passed.

While I am happy that these amendments were supported at committee, there were many that were not. One set of amendments that I had hoped would be adopted at committee would have ensured that there would be judicial fairness and due process again for those faced with citizenship revocation. As members may be aware, the Conservatives' Bill C-24 fundamentally altered the process for revoking citizenship.

The process in place before Bill C-24 involved three steps. The first was a report under Section 10 of the Citizenship Act that the minister was satisfied a person obtained citizenship fraudulently. Second, once notified of the report, the person could request that the matter be referred to the Federal Court for a hearing. Third, if the Federal Court made the finding requested by the minister, citizenship could be revoked by the Governor in Council, which could consider equitable factors.

The Conservatives' Bill C-24 eliminated the Federal Court hearing process. The minister now decides on revocation with no requirement for a hearing, and this is wrong.

As pointed out by the Canadian Bar Association:

Bill C-24 also eliminated consideration of equitable factors that could prevent a legal, but unjust, outcome. Before then, the Governor in Council could consider equitable factors when deciding whether to revoke citizenship. This is no longer possible.

• (2130)

The BC Civil Liberties Association also challenged this, and stated:

In our submission, the government should repeal the procedural changes made to the Citizenship Act by Bill C-24 and restore individuals' right to a fair hearing before an independent judicial decision-maker who can take humanitarian and compassionate considerations into account in making their decision.

There is no question that this needs to be rectified.

Perhaps the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers put it best when it said:

A permanent resident subject to deportation for misrepresentation has a right to both a hearing and an equitable appeal. Yet a Canadian citizen whose citizenship is to be revoked has no such rights. These provisions are currently being subject to a legal challenge—

Government Orders

I will diverge from the quote to say that a decision has been made by the courts, and the BC Civil Liberties Association, which took this matter to court, won.

These provisions are currently being subject to a legal challenge in the Federal Court as being inconsistent with the Charter of Rights. There is no reason why the new government should support these reforms which deny citizens a fair hearing. Indeed, while in opposition Liberal Members of Parliament opposed these very provisions.

The amendments that I proposed at committee were based on a system put forward by the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers, known as the CARL system, supported by experts and stakeholders that use the IRB. Prior to Bill C-24, individuals could appeal to the Federal Court. Because of the cost, duration, and lack of availability of the courts, this has been called an inefficient system by some experts.

The Immigration Appeal Division currently undertakes similar appeals and reviews of decisions for statuses such as permanent residence. For that reason, this board is adequately situated to handle citizenship cases as well, and can handle them more efficiently than the Federal Court system. My amendments would have instituted this policy as well, which is what I proposed. The aim was to restore the consideration of humanitarian and compassionate grounds as well as put forward a system of appeal that is more efficient and cheaper for taxpayers. Sadly, these amendments were not supported at committee, as they were deemed to be out of scope.

Former minister of immigration John McCallum acknowledged that this needed to be fixed. Many of us in the community were led to believe that this would be done. However, no action was taken. When the government failed to address the issue, the BC Civil Liberties Association challenged the government in court on this fundamental violation of people's right to due process and won. There is no question that this needs to be fixed, and finally, here we are.

The matter was then pushed over to the Senate. That is exactly what happened. The government did not introduce a bill in the House to fix the problem, so it was pushed over to the Senate for the Senate to deal with. I lobbied a number of different senators on the need to address this issue and I am glad to see that Senator Omidvar agreed to champion the cause. Now, after more than a year, I am happy to see that the Senate has attempted to rectify this huge gap in our Citizenship Act with its amendment, and today the government motion before us indicates that this amendment will essentially be accepted.

With this Senate amendment, individuals will have the right to a judicial hearing, and humanitarian and compassionate considerations related to the person, particularly in situations where the best interests of a child are directly affected, will be considered, although the government's motion uses different terminology. Instead of humanitarian and compassionate considerations, the government's motion uses "any consideration respecting his or her personal circumstances". At the end, the effect, I believe, is the same. Therefore, the NDP supports this amendment.

I would like to point out that there seems to be some suggestion from my friends on the Conservative side that having an appeal process in place would incite people to somehow defraud the system and misrepresent their applications. I will take a moment to respond

to that, because that is simply absurd. People do not think that because there is an appeal process, they will think about how to defraud the system or misrepresent their cases. That is absolutely not how people operate.

● (2135)

We need to have due process in place to ensure we do not presume people are guilty before they make a final decision. By the way, there are situations where a case could well have gone awry from the officials, that they might have received misinformation about a particular application. It is absolutely essential in a democratic society for an individual to be able to challenge the alleged misrepresentation against them. Allowing the appeal process to be restored will do exactly that.

In addition, the government motion also added the provision whereby an individual could request that his or her case be heard by the minister. That is to say that an individual would have the option of having the matter referred to Federal Court or be heard by the minister.

As the government motion allows for this to be a choice, the NDP will support this change as well. If it said that it would be up to the minister to make that decision, we would not have supported it. People should have the right to choose an independent judiciary to make that decision. However, since this is not what the government has proposed, I will support the option to allow for the individual to make that choice.

The truth is that the Harper government should never have taken away someone's rights to a judicial hearing in cases of citizenship revocation.

Tied to the process of citizenship revocation, another issue I hope the government will rectify is the notion of indefinite suspension. As it stands right now, the minister has the right to suspend the citizenship process indefinitely. Instead of putting in a system of accountable and extendable deadlines, the government is continuing the indefinite suspension provisions. This is wrong.

Under this system, a person could be under investigation indefinitely without ever knowing when it might come to an end. Imagine what that would be like. In criminal cases there is a statutory limitation, but not in immigration. Does the government not think it is wrong to indefinitely investigate someone? Do the Liberals really think it is an appropriate thing to do in the case of citizenship and immigration? While I moved an amendment on this during committee, unfortunately the committee did not accept it, and that is too bad.

Let me turn to another amendment before us today. The Senate proposed an amendment to provide unaccompanied youth or those under state care pathways to citizenship. I called for this at committee. At issue, as explained by justice for children and youth, is:

Section 5(3)(b)(i) allows for an applicant to make a request to the minister on humanitarian grounds for a waiver of the age requirement...this humanitarian exemption poses a generally insurmountable barrier for children wishing to access citizenship and is not a reasonable limitation or a satisfactory solution to issues raised by the age requirement provision.

The provision in effect restricts access to Canadian citizenship for children—solely on the basis of age—who otherwise meet all the requirements.

It restricts access to citizenship for the most marginalized children, i.e. unaccompanied minors, children without parents or lawful guardians, and children with parents who do not have the capacity to meet the citizenship requirements or do not wish to apply.

Unfortunately, my amendment was rejected by the committee. I am so glad now that the Senate, particularly Senator Oh, picked up this amendment, advanced it and has now referred it back to the House.

The NDP will wholeheartedly support this amendment. I had wanted to see this adopted at the committee stage.

Let me turn to the last amendment before us.

The Senate saw fit to bring forward an amendment to increase the upper age requirement for passing a language test from 54 to 60. This is where I diverge from the Senate. The NDP does not support this change and I am pleased to see the government also disagrees with it. The government motion has changed the upper age requirement for passing a language test from 60 back to 55.

• (2140)

It is my view that we should go further than this. I moved an amendment at committee to reinstate the allowance for an interpreter to be used during the knowledge test in the citizenship process. The current system amounts to a second language test, which is harder than the actual language test, due to non-standard terms and events contained in the knowledge test for those who do not speak English or French as their first language. I was saddened that my amendment did not pass at committee.

I learned English as a second language. I immigrated here when I was young, and I did not speak a word of English. I spoke Cantonese. I have my Cantonese language. I speak the Cantonese language fairly fluently. I can understand, communicate, and I can do interviews in that language without any trouble. However, when technical terms come up, it is very difficult to know what the technical term is and how to articulate it well. This is the same thing for those who are subject to this citizenship test. The issue around technical terms is that they differ in the first language, and often it is difficult for the person to pass the knowledge test if they do not have the technical language. That does not mean that they do not speak English well enough—they speak it very well—but some technical terms are very difficult to master.

There was a time, prior to Bill C-24, that the interpreters would be allowed to attend these tests so that those technical terms could be explained in the person's first language. However, that has now been done away with, and I am saddened by that.

There are other amendments that I wish were before us. At committee I called for the expansion of the definition of “statelessness”, to better capture how people can fall through the cracks. In particular, I called for the provision to prevent any official from being able to engage in a decision that would contravene any international or human rights agreements that Canada is a signatory to, especially those on statelessness. Unfortunately, those amendments were not supported, as they were deemed to be out of scope.

On a related matter, I would like to see changes made to address the issue of lost Canadians. For decades, Canadians have found themselves to be stateless due to a number of arcane laws. We heard

Government Orders

from a number of people who lost their citizenship out of the blue one day because of these arcane laws. There are situations of second-generation Canadians who had been born abroad not being recognized as Canadians.

This year we are heading into the 150th anniversary of this country. When we celebrate this nation's 150th birthday, would it not be something to know that there are Canadians who have been Canadians all their lives, have somehow become lost in the system, and we have done nothing to fix that? That was something I wanted to advance at committee, yet once again the committee did not accept my amendments. I am concerned that the government did not bring legislation to address this issue before July 1 of this year. That should have been done.

The other issue I want to raise is with respect to cessation provisions. We talked about this issue with respect to refugees. These are people who, unbeknownst to them, find their status affected for no other reason than that they travelled back to their country of origin at a time when the cessation provisions were not in place and when the threat that had forced them to flee their country no longer existed. Even then, the status of these people had been affected by cessation provisions. In most cases, cessation proceedings are brought against them when they apply for their citizenship. That is outrageous. I hope that all members of this House would agree with me that those provisions need to be done away with. We need to bring in legislation to repeal the cessation provisions that were brought forward by the Harper government.

With that, I know my time is running out. I am glad to see that this bill is finally before us. I hope to see a speedy passage of it, so Canadians can ensure that their rights are protected. I hope that those who have been waiting for this bill to pass will finally see it go through all stages of the House and come into force and effect.

• (2145)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech and her great work in committee. I gather from what she said that the NDP will probably support our bill.

[*English*]

I was just wondering if the member could elaborate a little on the benefit of the Senate amendments to the bill, and maybe also comment on the good work that the Senate is doing when it comes to bills like this coming back to the House of Commons.

• (2150)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, these amendments should have been in Bill C-6 to begin with. They were not.

These amendments were amendments that I brought to committee. Then they failed at committee. Then I had to go and lobby the senators to make these changes. I am glad that worked, and that they brought these changes back. I am glad that the government is going to accept what the senators are bringing forward.

Government Orders

I support Senator Omidvar and her work, because I met with her about it and urged her to take action. She did, and I am delighted to know that. I am delighted that Senator Oh took up my amendment on the issue around minors.

I wish there were senators who would have taken up more of the amendments I tabled at committee that failed. I know they did not, but given that this is where it is, I will accept what is here before us and will support the bill. This has been our position right from the beginning, that we needed to repeal Bill C-24. I wish the government had done that. If the government had done that, we would not even be here having this debate right now.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise to thank the hon. member for Vancouver East for her work on this. I could spend a lot of time going into all of the points, because I certainly agree that we should have been dealing with the issue of lost Canadians.

Given the speeches we have heard tonight from the Conservative ranks, with the demonization of people who would be so vile as to lie as they apply for citizenship, I just want to ask the hon. member a question. She and I deal with real-life situations. People who are disempowered and disadvantaged do not think they are necessarily lying but they are in desperate circumstances.

I will give one specific example and ask the member to comment. I will not say what country this person was from, but culturally and religiously, she was stigmatized by the fact that she was an unwed mother. She received lots of bad advice that when she applied to come to Canada to join relatives, she should not disclose that she had a child. She was assured that she would be able to apply later to bring her child with her. She is now forever barred from bringing her child to Canada, because she did not disclose she had a child when she came.

These are heartbreaking, real-life situations, and no harm comes to Canada by being willing to accept that someone made a mistake when they falsified an application. Does the hon. member for Vancouver East have any comments?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, of course there are extenuating circumstances. That is exactly the point. What we need to ensure is that we take into consideration the situation. Every single situation is different. If members are not moved by the story that the member just offered to us, then there is something wrong with that approach.

We have to have some flexibility in our understanding. The whole issue of humanitarian and compassionate consideration needs to be part of this process, and not just in the appeal process but in the application process as well, as the member has so adequately illustrated with the important story she shared with us today.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I cannot thank my colleague enough. I have so much respect for her. Her passion clearly shows. She is an exemplary parliamentarian. She works incredibly hard on the file that she has. She has brought an education to us this evening on what we are actually talking about and in terms of what we are doing here, serving as MPs. This work should have been done at the committee level. This is what the committee structure is for. The amendments that the member brought forward, as she said, would have already passed through.

As a new parliamentarian, I have come to learn how important immigration is to all of our ridings, and how many immigration cases are heard in every single one of our ridings across this country. The member spoke numerous times, certainly to our New Democrat caucus, about the need for an overhaul of the refugee system. The Liberals promised an overhaul of the entire refugee system. The promise has been postponed indefinitely. Currently, due to a significant number of vacancies and chronic underfunding, the Immigration and Refugee Board has a backlog of 24,000 cases. This is growing by 1,000 per month.

Unless the Liberal government puts some serious funding and some serious change and reform into the way these cases are brought forward, we will never get ahead of this curve. We will never be able to serve people who are coming to our country. The designated country of origin system remains in place, despite the Liberal promises to change this.

Could the member for Vancouver East elaborate on this serious problem that affects all of our ridings?

• (2155)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, I would think that each of us has a significant number of constituents who come to us asking for help with immigration cases. I know I do in Vancouver East. I would say that around 60%, 70%, maybe even 80% of my caseload is about immigration. As the critic, I often get cases from all over the place. In fact, just now my constituency assistant sent me another email to say that 13 people came into the office asking for help on an LGBTQ issue for someone who is being persecuted. The application is in process but is being delayed and delayed. Each moment the application is delayed, that person's life is further at risk. This is happening a lot.

We all know that this is a non-partisan thing. We need to make sure that the integrity of our immigration system is intact. The government refuses to acknowledge the chair of the IRB coming forward to the minister to say that we need resources so we do not have backlogs occurring in our system. Right now we have a backlog of 24,000 cases and are adding another 1,000 cases each month. If the Liberals do not think that is a problem, they have another thing coming. The minister said we would deal with it with efficiency. The IRB is trying to deal with it with efficiency, but it will not be enough, and the chair said explicitly that it will not be enough. The IRB needs resources to deal with it. When the government chooses to ignore the situation and stick its head in the sand and say that there is no problem, it undermines the integrity of the entire system. That is not good for anyone. That is not what we want here in Canada.

For those who are in dire situations, their lives in limbo and at risk, it is life or death for them. We can do better. Canada and the Prime Minister say that we want to welcome refugees, "welcome to Canada." They should match those words to action. That is all I ask for.

Government Orders

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that today is World Day Against Child Labour. I wonder if the member can expand on our support for minors applying for citizenship without Canadian parents and how profound that support is.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, in fact, I recognize that, and not just on a world day in recognition of children and child labour. That was something I recognized when we went to committee. The amendment, as I was saying, that has been brought forward by the senator is effectively the amendment I brought forward to committee. If that had passed, I would not have had to lobby senators to bring it forward. Absolutely, I support it. I think the rights of youth and minors should be respected. There are circumstances when young people cannot make an application for a whole host of reasons. We should not discriminate against them because of age. That is the reason I tabled that amendment at committee. That is why I am supporting this amendment before us today.

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would advise the House that I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam.

It brings me great joy to rise again before the House to discuss Bill C-6, an act to amend the Citizenship Act. Bill C-6 represents not only the realization of a fundamental Liberal campaign promise and a signature achievement of our government, but also serves as a powerful articulation of Canadian identity and a reaffirmation of the various benefits of diversity.

Before I continue, I would be remiss if I did not thank both the former minister of immigration, refugees, and citizenship, the Hon. and, I might add, tireless John McCallum, for his hard work on this file, as well as the steady leadership of his successor as minister, my hon. friend and colleague from York South—Weston.

I would also like to commence by thanking my former colleagues on the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration for their work on the legislation, as well as the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology for providing sober second thought to the bill. Having had the honour of being involved in the committee study of the bill as it was originally conceived in the House before it was sent to the Senate in June last year, I am deeply aware of how important the bill is to Canadians from coast to coast.

In fact, since being elected in October of 2015, few, if any, issues have resonated with my constituents in Willowdale as powerfully as the need to modernize our immigration system and to repeal and repudiate the most odious changes to our immigration system brought in by the previous government. Whether knocking on doors or in ongoing conversations with constituents, my staff and I have consistently heard the same refrain. Bill C-6 represents a welcome change in policy and tone for Canadians and their families. If any concerns have been expressed, it is the delay that people have experienced in seeing the enactment of Bill C-6.

As an immigrant to this country, I am profoundly sympathetic to this inclination. I understand what Canadian citizenship means, both here and abroad, to generations of families who have come to this great country seeking a better future. As someone who had the great

privilege to arrive in this country in my teens, I certainly fully appreciate and would never take for granted the significance of immigration as a lifeline to our future well-being and prosperity.

I can also confidently say that the love of country one has for a place where we were not born but which has nonetheless given us all the opportunities in the world is very different than the affinity one feels for the nation of one's birth. Naturalization occupies a cherished place in one's heart that is neither blinded by history nor blood, but instead by one of deep gratitude. I have both admired Canada from afar and also lived to enjoy its greatest blessings: its educational system, its esteemed place in the world, its deep respect for all persons, its quiet dignity, and of course our spirited people. I recognize the noble value in Canadian citizenship and I am proud of our government's assiduous efforts to restore and reaffirm the bedrock values upon which Canadian citizenship is based.

In its original form, Bill C-6 aimed to accomplish four key objectives: first, to remove the grounds for the revocation of Canadian citizenship that relate to national security; second, to remove the requirement that an applicant intend, if granted citizenship, to continue to reside in Canada; third, to reduce the number of days during which a person must be physically present in Canada before applying for citizenship; and fourth, to return the requirement to demonstrate knowledge of Canada and of one of its official languages to applicants between the ages of 18 and 54.

In doing so, Bill C-6 repeals or amends the most misguided elements of the Conservative Party's Bill C-24 and establishes a more effective, robust, modern, and just pathway to citizenship. This is not, in other words, a radical departure from established laws and customs, but rather a return to sensible policies following the excesses of Bill C-24.

I would like to briefly examine these four key objectives before examining the amendments before us. First is that it removes the grounds for the revocation of Canadian citizenship that relate to national security.

● (2200)

The most crucial element of Bill C-6, I believe, is that it revokes the unprecedented ability, granted through Bill C-24, of the Canadian government to strip its own citizens of fundamental rights, namely the rights to inalienable citizenship and equal protection under the law.

In rejecting a two-tiered approach to Canadian citizenship, Bill C-6 would bring government policy in line with the recommendations of a litany of stakeholders who condemned the arbitrary, unconstitutional, and undue nature of Bill C-24. This includes the Canadian Bar Association, the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers, the Canadian Council for Refugees, Amnesty International, and many leading academics, journalists, and civic leaders.

The second question relates to removing the requirement that an applicant intend, if granted citizenship, to continue to reside in Canada.

Government Orders

Further among its many ill-conceived statutes, Bill C-24 also stated that adult applicants had to declare on their citizenship applications that they intended to continue to reside in Canada if granted citizenship. The provisions created concern among new Canadians, who feared their citizenship could be revoked in the future if they moved outside of Canada.

By way of example, Canadians whose work required them to live abroad for extended periods felt that their declaration of an intent to reside could negatively affect their international mobility and, by extension, their ability to work abroad.

Within the current context of our open and global economy, this would place Canada at a serious competitive disadvantage. Rather than disincentivizing engaged global citizens from seeking Canadian citizenship, Bill C-6 instead supports the government's goal of making it easier for immigrants to build successful lives within Canada, reunite with their families, and contribute to the economic success and well-being of our country.

I will now move to the various amendments that were suggested. The legislation before us today has, of course, been further modified by several amendments put forth at the Senate committee stage. I would like to use my remaining time to briefly address these amendments.

There are three proposed amendments before us today. One is an amendment to change the citizenship revocation model. The second is an amendment allowing minors to obtain citizenship without a Canadian parent. The third would change the upper age for citizenship language and knowledge requirements to 59 years.

After careful assessment and consideration, our government agrees with two of the three amendments adopted in the Senate, as they support our commitment to remove unnecessary barriers to citizenship, make citizenship more accessible to the more vulnerable, and enhance procedural fairness in the citizenship revocation process.

With respect to the proposed model to have the Federal Court act as a decision-maker on most citizenship revocation cases in which citizenship was acquired fraudulently, allow me to reiterate that ever since the current decision-making model came into effect in 2015, the minister has been the decision-maker on most cases involving fraud and misrepresentation, while the Federal Court has been the decision-maker on more serious cases involving fraud related to security, human or international rights violations, and organized criminality.

Under the Senate's proposed model, all individuals facing revocation of citizenship would have the right to request that their case be referred to the Federal Court for a decision regarding revocation on grounds of fraud or misrepresentation.

In cases in which an individual refers their case to the court, the minister's role would be to bring an action in the court to seek a declaration that the person obtained citizenship by false representation, by fraud, or by knowingly concealing material circumstances. It would then be up to the court to make the final decision.

The government has considered this amendment carefully and is supporting this new decision-making model, but with some key

changes. The government believes that the minister's authority should be limited to revocation cases that the individual does not wish to have referred to the Federal Court.

Our government also supports, with modifications, the Senate amendment allowing minors to apply for citizenship without a Canadian parent.

Our government must respectfully disagree with the proposed Senate amendment to change the upper limit for language and knowledge requirements.

• (2205)

As mentioned previously, the language and knowledge requirements brought about via Bill C-24 were seemingly imposed at random, and this side has yet to see a compelling argument for this amendment.

The government has considered these proposed amendments very seriously and has accepted some key proposals regarding a new decision-making process for the revocation of citizenship.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, could the member offer his thoughts on the issue of cessation provisions, which I talked about earlier today? As the member knows, the cessation provisions were brought in by the Harper government. These provisions penalized refugees who travelled back to their country of origin. Even though they did nothing wrong, even though they might not have known the law existed at the time of their travel, but because they travelled, often when they applied for their citizenships, cessation provisions were triggered. Refugees then are investigated and in some cases are deported.

In my view, the bill needs to be repealed. It should be gone. It should not exist. Would the member would agree with that? Would he work with me and with all members of the House on the cessation provisions? Former minister John McCallum agreed with me on that front. I was really hoping that in the fall, before he departed, there would be a bill in the House to address this pertinent issue.

• (2210)

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: Mr. Speaker, as the member is well aware, after the House adopted Bill C-6, it went to the Senate. Numerous people had an opportunity to speak to the senators who were examining the bill. As we are all well aware, they put a lot of hard work into this. The various revisions and amendments they made are reflected in the bill as it has come back to us.

Obviously we have a government that is very much concerned with ensuring our immigration system is accessible and it is not arbitrary like the previous bill brought to the House several years ago by the Conservatives. I am certain, with the energetic leadership of our minister, we would consider bringing more changes in the future.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased the member for Willowdale says the government is open to certain additional changes, but I agree with my friend from Vancouver East. We had every reason to hope that there would be more in Bill C-6 to undo the damage of Bill C-24.

I certainly will support the bill. I am grateful the amendments were made by the Senate. It improved the bill over what left this place to go to the other place.

Government Orders

As we continue to try to repair the damage done by the previous government, can we do more to address the issue for refugees, particularly those who are facing deportation? I asked the hon. minister this question and he said that there were adequate means for people to protest and to appeal. I have not found them adequate. People who pose no threat to Canada are being deported and do not have an adequate opportunity to defend themselves or stay in our country.

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: Mr. Speaker, as I stated previously, under both ministers of this government, we have seen energetic leadership. It would be fair to say that on a monthly basis we see concerted efforts to improve our immigration system.

As Bill C-6 was being contemplated, I recall that the question of revocation of citizenship did arise. On numerous occasions, the then minister of immigration stated that he was open to considering procedural safeguards that could be brought in to strengthen the integrity of our immigration system.

This is a government that recognizes full well the merits of immigration and how it enriches our country. Going forward, I have no doubt there will be more changes to come.

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Willowdale for sharing his time with me.

I welcome the opportunity to speak today about Bill C-6. The legislation would send a clear message to Canadians and indeed anyone who aspires to become a Canadian citizen that Canada is a country of inclusiveness and fairness. Many of my constituents in Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam spoke to me about the need for Bill C-6. The aim of the bill is to provide greater flexibility for applicants to meet citizenship requirements. In doing so, our goal is to help foster an even greater sense of belonging and connection to Canada among all newcomers.

In my time here today, I wish to address proposed changes to Bill C-6. It would amend the age range of those required to meet language and knowledge requirements for citizenship. Under changes implemented in 2015, the age range for citizenship applicants who must now meet language and knowledge requirements was expanded from those aged 18 to 54, to those between 14 and 64 years old.

Older newcomers, in particular, may have greater difficulty in learning a new language and taking tests. For that reason, we believe these changes unnecessarily introduce barriers for applicants in the expanded age group. Bill C-6 would make citizenship more accessible to both older and younger applicants. Under the legislation, the age range of people who must demonstrate knowledge and language competency would be reduced once again to those aged 18 to 54.

Proficiency in either French or English and knowledge of Canada are important aspects of citizenship and this will still be required for a majority of citizenship applicants. However, we also believe that acquiring citizenship is an important step in the integration prospects for immigrants. It is also important for all Canadians as they benefit from newcomers' full participation in our society.

Reducing the age range to meet language and knowledge requirements would make it easier for immigrants to build successful lives in Canada. Through citizenship, newcomers gain a deeper sense of belonging in our society. They become more engaged and they become more active members of our communities.

These changes under Bill C-6 would ensure newcomers, when they apply for citizenship, are not at a disadvantage due to their age, whether they are younger or older. Older adults would continue to find support to speak our official languages and gain more knowledge about Canada through a wide variety of services. Just as all other Canadian children learn about our country and master our official languages, younger applicants will acquire knowledge of Canada and official languages at school.

Once again, it is our objective to make it easier for newcomers to succeed in Canada and gain a deeper sense of belonging. Therefore, we do not support the proposed Senate amendment that would change the upper age range from 54 to 59 years old. It is our aim to require only applicants aged 18 to 54 to meet the knowledge and language requirements and we continue to support the intent behind this important change. We wish to remove barriers to citizenship. We believe that expanding the age range to applicants who are 59 years of age would create a potential barrier for older applicants.

Our reasons for these changes to the Citizenship Act are quite simple and reasonable. We are committed to a Canada that is both diverse and inclusive. One of the strongest pillars for successful integration into Canadian life is achieving citizenship. That is because the acquisition of citizenship contributes to a greater sense of belonging. By removing these barriers to citizenship for younger and older applicants, we will facilitate the integration of these newcomers and foster their full participation in our society.

• (2215)

In summary, our proposed change in Bill C-6 would help both younger and older applicants achieve Canadian citizenship faster, it would help them to build successful lives in Canada sooner, and it would help them to contribute to the country's economic, social, and cultural success.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask this question of this member as well. As I indicated earlier, what were known as “cessation provisions” in Bill C-31, which was brought in by the Harper government, stipulated that refugees who travelled back to their country of origin for any reason at all could have their status ceased as a result.

I have come across cases of individuals who travelled back to their country of origin at a time that law did not exist. I have come across individuals who received officials' approval to say that they were free to travel back to their country of origin because they had their permanent resident status and they were free to do so. I have had cases of people travelling back to their country of origin where the risk and the threat that existed at the time when they fled were now gone, and now, because they were applying for their citizenship, cessation provisions were brought against them.

Government Orders

The government has invested somewhere around \$15 million in going after people like this; that is \$15 million that I would argue could be put into the system to address delays in processing claims. We all have constituents who have claims that are not processed in a timely fashion. Would the member agree that it would be a better investment of taxpayers' money to take those dollars spent on going after cessation cases and invest them into the processing delays in the system for immigration and refugee applications?

• (2220)

Mr. Ron McKinnon: Mr. Speaker, the very first immigration or refugee case that came to my attention as a brand-new member of Parliament was such a case. A woman had received refugee status because her husband was a refugee, but she herself was not persecuted or in fear for her life in her home country. She, at some later time, went back to her country of origin for a visit, and this triggered cessation proceedings against her. These proceedings were eventually overturned by the court as being unjust and unreasonable, but they do certainly underscore the need for work on that part of the refugee system. There are circumstances in which we do need to process cessation cases, but we must define them much more carefully than we now do.

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member can expand further on the ability for minors to apply for citizenship without a Canadian parent. We know that children, particularly girls, are particularly vulnerable and are disproportionately affected by conflict, and they have increased susceptibility to poverty. I am going to bring it back to today, which is World Day Against Child Labour. We are reminded of the increased vulnerability of children through forced labour. I wonder if the member can expand further on supporting this amendment and how it would positively impact children globally.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree that this is a beneficial amendment. Particularly in this world where so many children are affected by conflict and may have lost one or more parents or may have been separated from their parents, it is all the more urgent that we be able to accept them as potential citizens and that they be able to apply for citizenship in an orderly manner. I certainly welcome the provisions in this bill that would expand their ability to do that.

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address important Senate amendments to Bill C-6, an act to amend the Citizenship Act and to make consequential amendments to another act. It is critical that the House give thorough consideration to the amendments to Bill C-6 to ensure public safety, to ensure fair treatment of all citizenship applicants, and to ensure that the greatest possible opportunities for success are given to newcomers.

Conservatives are pleased to recognize how immigrants have contributed greatly to Canada, strengthening and enriching our nation. Immigrants offer unique experiences and perspectives that add to Canada's diverse culture and strengthen the nation's future. It is important to ensure that Bill C-6 in fact enables newcomers to have every opportunity for economic success and to enjoy fulfilling and safe lives here in Canada.

The Senate revisions to Bill C-6 address three areas. First, Bill C-6 would be amended to ensure a court hearing for people facing citizenship revocation on the basis of fraud or false representation. Second, it would be amended to change the requirements regarding age and knowledge of an official language to 60 years of age. Third, it would seek to minimize red tape so that minors applying for citizenship could have their applications processed in a manner that was fairer, less complex, and more efficient than the existing process.

The first revision I will address is the amendment that would ensure that a court hearing is given to people who face having their citizenship revoked for fraud or false representation. If the amendment were passed, the immigration minister would be required to inform people who are having their citizenship revoked of their right to appeal their citizen revocation in Federal Court. The inefficiency of this proposed system is unacceptable. It would lead to further backlogs in the already inundated Federal Court, which is already strained due to the Liberals' inability to fill judicial vacancies. It would also cost Canadian taxpayers thousands of dollars to process. The process of stripping citizenship should be left to officials rather than an arbitrary appeal board, which is now stacked with Liberals. Not only that, but applicants already have the right to appeal decisions made by the IRCC in Federal Court if the immigration department made an error in the interpretation and application of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

At this point, if the appeal mechanisms for those who obtained their citizenship through fraud are increased, it could provide an incentive for people to lie on their applications. The government should not focus on increasing appeal mechanisms for those who obtain their citizenship by cheating the system. The focus should be on educating people about the consequences of fraud and how to properly obtain citizenship.

The Federal Court recently ruled that there should be an appeals process, but this ruling and the Senate's amendments are at odds. For example, there is inconsistency between the Federal Court ruling and the Senate amendments with regard to which body people should be appealing their citizenship revocation to. We expect the Liberals to make it immediately clear whether they plan to appeal the Federal Court ruling. This information is necessary for parliamentarians to consider before voting on these amendments. In light of this, we call on the federal government to appeal this ruling to protect the integrity of our immigration system.

• (2225)

At this time, we also call on the government to address the holes in the immigration fraud detection process that were identified by the Auditor General in 2016. Although Canada is compassionate, we must maintain that Canadian citizenship obtained by fraud and deceit is not a right, because that person was never entitled to it in the first place.

Government Orders

Second, the Senate's amendments to Bill C-6 raise the age requirement for knowledge of an official language from 55 to 60. Although we would have liked to see the age remain at 64, we are relieved to accept this new age requirement over the original age of 55 that was proposed by the Liberals. Language proficiency is an integral component of Canadian citizenship. In Canadian society, we see evidence every day of how language binds us together and knits together Canada's incredible pluralism.

On a practical level, knowledge of one of Canada's official languages eases the transition for immigrants into a new workplace, school, or community. Immigrants who cannot communicate in Canadian society struggle with ordinary tasks such as grocery shopping, hospital visits, and driving. In fact, access to language services is a serious problem for refugees and immigrants.

Over and over again, the Liberals have heard how serious this issue is for newcomers to Canada, and how the existing system is failing immigrants. While refugees and immigrants are anxious to begin working, they are unable to access language training and thus are unable to secure a job. Rather than reducing the age requirement for knowledge of an official language, the Liberals should be talking about how to ensure that immigrants will have a smooth transition into Canadian society.

Third, the Senate amendments to Bill C-6 would eliminate the red tape that currently complicates the application process for many minors. Specifically, it affects minors who are permanent residents, but who are applying for citizenship without a permanent resident parent or guardian.

As it stands, permanent residents who wish to apply for Canadian citizenship must either be over 18 years of age, or must apply concurrently with their permanent resident parent or guardian. This means that even if a minor fulfills all other citizenship requirements, if he or she does not have a permanent resident parent or guardian, the minor has virtually no choice but to wait until the age of 18 before applying.

I say "virtually" because it is technically possible to prove that it is necessary for the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to waive these requirements, but actually getting this waiver is inconceivable for most permanent resident minors. Apart from taking years for IRCC to process, it requires a great deal of financial resources and specialized legal assistance. Additionally, minors who may benefit from this discretionary decision likely do not know of its existence, since it is hidden in the statute. In short, the waiver mechanism is not a solution.

The existing system effectively penalizes some of Canada's most marginalized people based on their age, which is not a factor that they can control. The category of "permanent resident minors" includes minors without a parent or guardian in Canada, minors whose families cannot afford the fees for citizenship applications, and minors whose parents do not meet the citizenship requirements. It also includes minors whose parents or guardians cannot or will not help them apply, and minors who no longer have family relationships due to abuse or neglect. In fact, numerous witnesses testified before the House of Commons and Senate committees, highlighting the consequences of such restricted access to citizenship.

● (2230)

We now know that highly marginalized minors with a less secure status risk deportation in their adult lives. This is extremely unfair. The Senate amendment would change the Citizenship Act by repealing the 18 years of age requirement and clarifying that the language and knowledge requirements do not apply to minors.

It also authorizes the minister to waive the requirement that a minor's application must be made by an adult. These changes will ensure that in almost all cases, a minor will be able to submit his or her own application. It is important that all members of the House lend their support regarding the amendment, since Bill C-6 does not currently address this unfair discrimination against minors.

Canadian citizenship is a crucial component of our national identity. It knits together our diverse country and comes with many rights and protections. Preserving its integrity is of the utmost importance.

I therefore ask my hon. colleagues to reject the amendment regarding the appeals process, at least until further information is given regarding the recent Federal Court ruling. I ask that all members of the House support the amendments regarding age and the knowledge of an official language.

● (2235)

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this debate reminds me of years ago when my grandmother came to Canada. She came, obviously, in her later years to look after my younger brother, me, and my older brother. She was educated, but not to the extent where she received post-secondary education, or possibly even secondary education. She would have found it difficult to learn a new language and really have to study up on the ways of Canada, but she integrated into Canadian society through church and through taking us to school, and she became a fully integrated citizen.

Would the member not agree that people could still integrate in later years, even without the formal education of learning the new language when they are new citizens of Canada through a test?

Mr. Bob Saroya: Madam Speaker, I came to this country with a grade 10 education, and I understand. In my first job I worked with other people. I have said this in the past in the House of Commons as well. In my early days, when I worked for a low minimum wage, I depended on somebody else to translate whatever the foreman said who was telling me what to do in the factory. Each and every day, I had to buy lunch for the guy who was translating on my behalf.

I know it is a pain, it is hard, and it is difficult, but this is the success story. We all have to learn one of Canada's languages to succeed in the future in our later days.

Government Orders

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his speech and his personal story. I think it is not dissimilar to that of a lot of immigrants who come to Canada and English is not their first language.

I can tell members a story of my mom. When we first came here, she did not speak a word of English. She went out first and worked as a farm worker. She made \$10 a day for two years. My dad went to Vancouver community college in our neighbourhood and learned English. He is a tailor by trade, although he is retired now. He became a cutter of fabric at a factory after he had enough English.

My mom then graduated from being a farm worker to a dishwasher until the day that she retired. Her English is not perfect, let me be clear, and she speaks, I would say, minimal English, but she got by and she worked her entire life to support us, a family of eight.

If that test was imposed today, I would suspect that she would fail it, but she passed the test back in the day and there was interpretation that allowed for her to deal with some of these issues. She voted in every election proudly. She contributed to our society, paid her taxes, bought a house, and raised a family of six children.

I would say that I think the member should understand and agree that the language requirement that is being imposed by ensuring that the language test would apply to people who are 60, who would have difficulties in learning the language because they are older, is something we should not do.

Mr. Bob Saroya: Madam Speaker, I understand those difficulties and I sympathize with the whole situation. All I am saying is that the government should have more funds available, more teachers, more ESL classes, and everything possible that can make life easier down the road for people. Most people do not mind learning the language. They know this is goes toward their success. If we go to certain ethnic areas, people are depending on each other rather than mixing with Canadian society. I understand that difficulty, but it can be and it will be done. This is a prime example sitting here.

• (2240)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am afraid I disagree with the hon. member. I particularly note his emphasis on citizenship obtained by fraud.

We have spoken earlier of specific cases, and I have had them in my riding, where it is for reasons that are completely understandable, including lack of information, lack of education, incorrect information, and misunderstandings. People make mistakes, sometimes deliberately, on their citizenship application, but for humanitarian and compassionate grounds, each case should be examined in its own right.

We should not see, as I mentioned earlier tonight, good Canadian citizens being forever barred from bringing their children to Canada. Would the hon. member not agree that good citizens and good, responsible, hard-working people should not be barred forever from having their children live with them for one mistake?

Mr. Bob Saroya: Madam Speaker, a good citizen is a good citizen. Nobody is disputing that. The only thing we are disputing is when purposely and knowingly citizenship is gained by deceit, whatever the reason is. For humanitarian reasons, they can always

appeal their case. All I am saying is if it is proved by the court or by the immigration minister that immigration was obtained by deceit. We are talking about those people. They should be sent back. For the good Canadians, we always have regard for them.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to follow up on the question about people who fraudulently obtain their citizenship. I believe, and I think my constituents believe, that it is important that we maintain the integrity of our system. This means that when individuals obtain their citizenship through fraud, we should not draw out the process unnecessarily, that we should recognize that is a problem for the integrity of citizenship and people should lose citizenship in that case.

In response to some of the other comments and how the Liberals seem intent on approaching this amendment, is it not fundamentally in the public interest to ensure we maximize the disincentive to citizenship fraud to ensure upfront that people know that if there is citizenship fraud, there will be a strong response? Is that not an imperative if we are to have a strong and effective immigration system that works for everybody?

Mr. Bob Saroya: Madam Speaker, absolutely, in most of the cases when agencies of crooked consultants or crooked lawyers are doing these things, they are charging a ton of money and making up stories. If we let this go, then there is no respect left for the Canadian passport. Thousands of people are waiting in the queue. We should keep the integrity to ensure nobody gets citizenship by deceiving the system.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his eloquent speech.

Since he is an immigrant like me, does he not believe that by allowing newcomers under 18 to obtain citizenship this bill makes it easier for them to integrate and helps them feel more at home, while it further enriches Canadian society? What does the hon. member think about this amendment to the legislation?

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Saroya: Madam Speaker, we believe in it. We are going to support this amendment for the age of 18 or less. We can thank Senator Victor Oh for bringing this amendment forward. We appreciate his hard work. We believe it will make the system easier for minor students, kids. It will affect their lives. In some of the old cases, for whatever reason, when the kids came, the parents did not care, or there were family issues or drug issues, or the kids did not get along. In many of these cases, we hear that 50 years later, 40 years later, those adults were deported.

We are going to support this amendment. We love this amendment. Once again, we want to thank Senator Victor Oh for this amendment.

Adjournment Proceedings

• (2245)

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 30, 2017, the recorded division stands deferred until Tuesday, June 13, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

The hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle on a point of order.

[*English*]

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: Madam Speaker, I believe you will find great pleasure in the House to see the clock at midnight at this time.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is there unanimous consent to see the clock at midnight?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise in this adjournment debate proudly as the member of Parliament for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, which includes Garrison Petawawa, Canada's largest army base. The over 5,000 soldiers at CFB Petawawa and their families know I have their backs when it comes to keeping the government accountable to provide the right tools at the right time to keep our soldiers safe in whatever task we call upon them to perform.

It is always in this context that I ask the Minister of National Defence to explain the discrepancy between the huge military budget cutbacks in every Liberal Party budget, and *The Wizard of Oz* response from the minister. In this case, the pot of gold is somewhere over the rainbow, which, according to this minister, will be after the next election.

It is time for the minister to ask the puppet master behind the curtain to give him some courage and confront the Prime Minister with the fact that funding is not needed 10, 20, or 50 years from now, but today. Based on the minister's actual response to a real question, there was no response.

The evidence for Canadians was the announcement of the Liberal defence policy, which was a bust for the soldiers serving today. The spending promises contained in the policy do not start until after the next election, and not surprising for me, the entire policy depends on the Conservative Party being elected after the next election. I urge all Canadians who believe that an independent Canada depends on a robust defence capability to vote for the Conservative Party, as we share that belief.

Military spending as a percentage of Canada's gross domestic product, or GDP, at .88% is at its lowest level since World War II. In the last federal budget, the Liberals dug an \$8.5-billion hole, cutting the defence budget by \$8.5 billion. They now state in their new defence policy that sometime after the next election, it will be up to a new Conservative government to take the defence of Canada seriously and actually implement the proposed defence increases. Meanwhile, the Liberals' deficit budgets are bankrupting the country. No wonder the Minister of National Defence was not prepared to answer my question in the House.

As the member of Parliament for Canadian Forces Base Petawawa, home to the Canadian Special Operations Forces Command, I am encouraged by any promise to increase special operations forces by 605 personnel. The concern of the soldiers and their families who serve in our special forces is that the promises come with no time frame of when these increases will occur. It is no state secret that the government favours clandestine military operations, the kind that stay out of the media, so that the loony left wing of the Liberal Party is kept in the dark. This is the same loony left wing that demanded and got an \$8.5 billion cut from today's defence budget.

CSOR is a battalion-sized, light infantry, high-readiness special operations unit, part of Canadian Special Operations Forces Command, which is headquartered in CFB Petawawa. CSOR is capable of conducting and enabling a broad range of missions: reconnaissance, counterterrorism, defence diplomacy, and military assistance. Along with CSOR is the 427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron, 427 SOAS, in Petawawa. Our special forces soldiers are overextended.

• (2250)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her question. I know that she cares a whole lot about our men and women in uniform, and I appreciate that.

Adjournment Proceedings

Our government committed to giving our soldiers the training, support, and equipment they need to successfully carry out the missions they are assigned, and we are keeping our promise.

Our new defence policy and budget 2017 will help us meet that objective. First, I would like to address the matter of the \$8.48 billion. It is true that budget 2017 strategically deferred an amount of \$8.48 billion to later years. Contrary to what the hon. member and others claim, the department's budget was not cut. The funds were simply deferred. This deferral of funds will not delay the execution of contracts and will not affect the timing of projects. The funding will be available when it is needed.

This strategic deferral is not a matter of funding but of accounting. This approach seeks to ensure that the funding for major projects is available at the point in the project schedule when it is needed. It takes into account the changes made to major government projects as they progress.

When funds have to be deferred, we make sure it is done in accordance with our procurement plan. We put money aside during good years to cover the acquisition and in-service support costs of these projects.

The deferral of \$8.48 billion balanced the books prior to the approval of our new defence policy by transferring 2017 funds to 2034-35, 2035-36, and beyond. We will allocate \$4.4 billion to fixed-wing search and rescue aircraft, \$2 billion to Canadian surface combatant in-service support, \$0.8 billion to Arctic and offshore patrol ships, \$0.3 billion to light armoured vehicles, and \$1 billion to various other projects.

Our new defence policy, which was released on June 7, outlines an increase in military spending of more than 70% over the next 10 years, a funding level that is affordable and realistic.

Costing was supported by external experts, and our methodology was verified by five external accounting firms. This long-term funding will provide the stability required to make major investments that meet today's needs while also enabling us to plan for the future.

Our armed forces need to know that the resources will be available when they are required. Among the investments announced in our new policy, we are acquiring 15 Canadian surface combatants, for which full funding is assured under our policy. We are procuring 88 fighter jets to replace the current fleet of CF-18s in order to strengthen our sovereignty and keep our commitments to NORAD and NATO. The fleet of light armoured vehicles will be fully modernized. We are also investing in land capabilities such as ground-based air defence and training simulators. Projects such as the Arctic and offshore patrol ships and tactical armoured patrol vehicles continue to move forward.

● (2255)

[English]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, the military is more than hardware. It is about people, our greatest asset. As I said, our special forces are overextended. It is taking a toll on their families. Long separations can lead to marital breakdown and a whole host of other problems.

One military family shared with me that the military spouse in that family was gone 265 days last year. That is almost nine months of the year. Our special soldiers take pride in being the best of the best. However, that pace is unsustainable.

Special forces soldiers maintain a high level of alertness. They must be ready to be deployed immediately. They know that as special forces, this level of dedication is part of the job. We owe it to these soldiers not to abuse that trust and dedication. I challenge the Minister of National Defence to announce the hiring of 605 special operations personnel starting immediately.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Rioux: Madam Speaker, the focus of our new defence policy is the men and women in the armed forces. We want to give them all the necessary resources and training and take care of their health and well-being.

We will ensure that the financial resources the armed forces need are available when they need it. The deferral of funds is not a cut in the defence budget. It is sound financial management. The new defence policy was carefully costed to ensure that the Canadian Armed Forces have adequate resources for the future. We are seeing our commitments through when it comes to major equipment acquisition and modernization projects for our armed forces, and that is what we will keep doing.

[English]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, by now everybody in the House and beyond are well aware of the crisis facing the planet with respect to the plague of plastic in our oceans. It is of concern to all of us. Soon we could see plastic outweigh fish.

I have risen in the House on numerous occasions to urge the government to act in response to a spill of 35 shipping containers from a Korean tanker off the coast of Vancouver Island last November. Seven months have now passed and although a small contribution has been made to reimburse the partial costs of the Pacific Rim chapter of Surfrider, one of the community organizations that mobilized its members to respond to this travesty, no other effective action has been taken.

The government tells us that it is doing all it can and is working with communities to recover the vast quantities of styrofoam used to line the containers, which have long since broken up into small pieces and have been carried with the tides and currents onto our precious beaches. However, those who are out on the beaches are telling us that the government has been invisible. In fact, the government's reaction has been neither rapid nor responsive. It collected \$72,000 from the bankrupt shipping company and waited six months before allocating less than a quarter of the total to one of the volunteer organizations that has been doing the work.

Adjournment Proceedings

Needless to say, the impact of this container spill has consequences for the local population and its food security. The Pacific Rim relies heavily on the pristine coast for its economy, jobs, the ecosystem, and species at risk. This region relies heavily on tourism, as the Prime Minister and many members of the House know well.

Increasingly, I am receiving images, photos and videos of the situation, along with the media reporting on both the damage and the courage and hard work of local first nations, Surfrider, the Wild Pacific Trail Society, the Clayoquot Cleanup, and other dedicated local groups and Canadians who have taken to the beaches. The message from these groups, my own voice, and the voices of others across the country and around the world seem to be falling on deaf ears.

First, we need a proper response plan to remove the tons of marine debris along the coastline of Vancouver Island. We need a plan that sets out the activities required to achieve common sense outcomes that provide for the safety of those doing the work and for the disposal of massive amounts of debris.

Second, we need a policy to address spills like this in the future. It needs to be clear about the roles of local people using local knowledge and community resources to remove marine debris. It needs to be developed with the lessons learned internationally from countries with best practices.

Third, we need a funding formula that accurately calculates the resources, the funds, and the source of funds that must be allocated to support the work of cleanup in an efficient and effective manner.

Fourth, we need a public education program that informs Canadians about what is happening to our oceans, the peril of single-use plastics, the consequences of using styrofoam in shipping containers, and multiple other risks to our oceans.

The government needs to tell the House about its plan of action for removing marine debris that is being deposited on the shores of Vancouver Island before it can cause further damage. We want to know what its plan of action is.

I also want to thank the government. I appreciate its response to my concerns about its omission of the west coast of Vancouver Island on the list of priorities identified in the minister's announcement of the coastal restoration fund last week. I very much appreciate the addition of our coast to this list. It is certainly better late than never.

As well, I would like to know if cleaning up and removing marine debris and plastics is eligible under this coastal restoration fund. If so, when will the resources required to support the work be available?

• (2300)

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was born just outside the member opposite's riding and caught my first fish, a rainbow trout, when I was five or six years old in his riding, so it is a pleasure to be here today to discuss a topic about which we are both passionate.

The Government of Canada is committed to protecting our coasts and oceans and keeping them healthy for future generations. We have recently announced a number of funding commitments, including \$123.7 million over five years to support marine conservation activities, \$197.1 million over five years to increase ocean and freshwater science, and a \$1.5-billion national oceans protection plan that improves marine safety and protects Canada's marine environment.

Marine litter poses a threat to marine ecosystems. With the longest coastline in the world and bordering three oceans, Canada recognizes the importance of preventing and reducing marine litter to keep our oceans healthy. While there is no overarching federal marine litter framework, some 10 federal acts and associated regulations, as well as guidance materials and programs for pollution prevention, are aimed at the sustainable use of Canadian waters and habitat.

In particular, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, the Canada Shipping Act, and the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement prohibit discharge or disposal of marine litter in Canadian waters. The Fisheries Act prohibits the deposit of harmful substances into domestic waters frequented by fish and prohibits serious harm to fish and fish habitat. The Species at Risk Act contains a provision for the protection of critical habitat for listed species, which can include the marine environment for aquatic species at risk.

We acknowledge that there is more to be done to address marine litter. International collaboration is needed to address hot spot areas, fill research gaps, and take action to prevent this global issue. Canada is an active participant in global efforts that contribute to the prevention and reduction of marine litter from land and sea-based sources.

Canada has made recent marine debris commitments, including among others: the G7 environment ministers' communique of 2016, and the United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions of 2016 and 2014. These commitments call for action to prevent and mitigate marine debris and to substantially reduce marine debris globally by 2025. In addition, Canada will continue to fulfill its obligations under international treaties that deal with waste and marine protection, particularly the Basel convention, the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, and the London convention and protocol.

The federal government also conducts extensive research and monitoring on issues related to water quality, sediment, chemicals, and issues of emerging concern. ECCC's Canadian wildlife service conducts research and administers guidance to help aid seabirds that are at risk of ingesting or getting entangled in marine debris. Internationally, Canada participates via DFO in international regional marine research and science programs, including the North Pacific Marine Science Organization and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea.

Adjournment Proceedings

In June 2016, the Government of Canada added microbeads to the list of toxic substances under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, and Canada is developing proposed regulations to prohibit the manufacture, import, and sale of toiletries that contain plastic microbeads, including non-prescription drugs and natural health products. We expect final regulations to be published by summer 2017.

The great Canadian shoreline cleanup, which is supported by Parks Canada, is one of Canada's largest environmental initiatives. In 2015 alone, almost 60,000 participants cleaned over 3,000 kilometres of shorelines across the country, removing an incredible 180,000 kilograms of litter.

• (2305)

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, I really appreciate the Government of Canada signing on to international treaties, but the problem is that it is missing in action. It is great to talk about an oceans protection plan and \$1.5 billion, but when a spill happens, a marine debris spill of the magnitude that we saw on Vancouver Island, and the government is invisible, it is really hard for people to have faith in the credibility of the Government of Canada and its oceans protection plan.

I will ask the member point blank: are ocean plastics and marine debris eligible under the coastal restoration fund?

People would like to know. I would like to get a commitment from the member that we are going to bring stakeholders together so that we can find a way forward. This is not just about signing treaties. It is about doing something about it and having real action.

Mr. Terry Beech: Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to protecting our coasts and oceans and keeping them healthy for future generations.

Canada is an active participant in global efforts that contribute to the prevention and reduction of marine litter from land and sea-based sources.

The first UN Ocean Conference concluded last week and Canada joined many countries in pledging to take action to protect our oceans. As part of the over 1,000 voluntary commitments by participants, Canada committed to join the UN clean seas campaign. This campaign will raise awareness and mobilize action to address marine pollution. Plastics are of a particular concern as they are now showing up in the most remote areas, including the Arctic Ocean.

Marine litter poses a threat to marine ecosystems. With the longest coastline in the world and bordering three oceans, Canada recognizes the importance of preventing and reducing marine litter to keep our oceans healthy for the benefit of future generations.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the government has a real issue when it comes to identifying vulnerable communities for refugee selection.

I asked a question earlier about the fact that we know there are certain communities around the world that face ethnic cleansing and genocide. It is important that our refugee policy be able to identify those communities and ensure that we are indeed taking the most vulnerable.

I note in this context that in many cases, there is a challenge for those most vulnerable communities to actually even access the refugee certification process. Very often they may not feel safe in refugee camps, where even in those situations, they may be vulnerable to persecution. This is something we have heard, in particular, about Yazidis and Assyrian Christians.

The government has accepted the principle of accepting the most vulnerable, at least when it comes to Yazidis. We are still waiting for it to even address the issues affecting Christian communities in the same region.

I want to share with the House a particular exchange from a technical briefing given by immigration officials to reporters at the end of 2015 on the refugee program.

The question was, "Last week at the briefing one of my colleagues asked about breakdown by religious minority. You said you didn't track that. I want to ask you again if you have that information because you had access to it under the previous government.

"Back in September we had numbers to that effect. Both you as the bureaucrats and the ministers keep saying Canada wants to help the most vulnerable. We all know those are the religious minorities. How are we to believe that you don't track that if you say you're there to help the most vulnerable?"

The official response was, "I can't comment about leaks of confidential documents under the previous government. Our standard processes and our standard systems do not track anyone's ethnicity or religion. We don't put it in the system, therefore we can't get it out."

In the follow-up question, the reporter said, "Two things off that. One, how did it exist before? You said you can't comment on leaks of documents but obviously it existed if it was leaked. Two, if you're not willing to track that you said you want to make helping LGBT get out of the area a priority. It seems odd you're willing to track that but not are you a persecuted Christian. What's the difference?"

The official response was, "With regards to your first question, information that may have been available for a small sample of cases does not reflect the standard processes of the government of Canada in our refugee resettlement cases. We do not ask people at interviews are you a Sunni, are you a Jew, are you a Christian of which denomination and record it in our systems in a systematic way.

We don't have data fields for it."

The government thinks it is standing on some kind of virtuous principle by saying that it does not track and it does not discriminate when it comes to different communities. The reality is that in the regions we are looking at, people are specifically vulnerable because, often, of their membership in a religious minority community. They are being targeted for that.

Adjournment Proceedings

I am sure the parliamentary secretary knows that the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951, to which Canada is a party, defines a refugee as someone who has fled his or her country owing to:

...well-founded fear of being persecuted because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

It is fundamentally relevant what someone's religious background is, because it likely informs their degree of vulnerability in the context from which they are escaping. It is also a good practice in terms of basic data collection. If the government is not even collecting data about which vulnerable communities people come from, then it may well be that they are unintentionally being completely excluded from the selection process, yet the government has no way of knowing it.

I challenged the government, and I challenge it again, to step up and provide a better and credible answer about how we ensure that we take the most vulnerable, those facing genocide, like Yazidis and Assyrian Christians, and how we ensure that those people are not being excluded or, at the very least, are being included in our refugee selection. What is the government doing for persecuted religious minorities, and has it finally fixed its data fields?

• (2310)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan for his important question tonight, and I also thank you for the opportunity to respond today.

As we know, there are over 60 million refugees and displaced people around the world. When making referrals for resettlement, the United Nations Refugee Agency uses assessments of protection needs and vulnerabilities. For example, it identifies refugees with legal, medical, or physical protection needs, survivors of torture or violence, women and girls at risk, and children and adolescents at risk.

In addition, Canada is helping meet the essential needs of people affected by conflicts in Syria and Iraq and is responding to other crises in the region with humanitarian aid funding.

The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship recently provided an update on our efforts to resettle 1,200 survivors of Daesh atrocities. This includes Yazidi refugees and other survivors of Daesh, such as Christians and other minorities.

The situation of ethnic and religious minorities in Myanmar, including that of the Rohingya, remains troubling. Our government has been proactive in advocating for change. In particular, it has encouraged the government of Myanmar to lift restrictions on freedom of movement and broaden access to education and health services.

Last week, the Prime Minister met with the Myanmar State Counsellor, and the two leaders spoke about Myanmar's transition to democracy and the support Canada could provide for the reforms that are under way in Myanmar. The Prime Minister encouraged

Myanmar to step up its efforts to protect human rights, particularly those of women, children, and religious and ethnic minorities, such as the Rohingya.

The humanitarian aid that we provide through the High Commissioner for Refugees has been pivotal in supporting advocacy with government officials on issues relating to displacement and statelessness.

Canada will continue to show leadership by welcoming refugees. However, we also need to continue to do more to support countries that are significant recipients of refugees and do what we can to counter the strife and conflict giving rise to so many refugees and displaced populations.

• (2315)

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the attestations of the parliamentary secretary, but they do not in any way answer the specific question, so let me keep this tied in and really clear.

For the parliamentary secretary, are they now tracking the numbers of religious minorities that are coming in? He said they are taking members of religious minorities. Are they tracking the numbers? If so, how many Yazidis and how many Assyrian Christians have been brought here through the refugee process? If they are not tracking the numbers, then how can they know that they are accepting the most vulnerable, especially recognizing the problems minorities have in accessing the UN certification system? How can they know that they are actually succeeding in doing it if they are not tracking the numbers?

I would like answers to those specific questions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Madam Speaker, once again, as I said earlier, in line with the internationally agreed upon approach to resettlement, Canada's resettlement program is designed to provide protection for refugees who are outside their country of origin.

The Government of Canada relies on its partners, such as the United Nations Refugee Agency, to identify refugees in need of resettlement, who will then come to Canada as government-supported refugees.

Once again, these determinations of vulnerability and protection needs are made regardless of religious or ethnic backgrounds, gender identity or sexual orientation, or other characteristics.

Canada will remain a leader and continue to show leadership as we welcome refugees.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 11:17 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Monday, June 12, 2017

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Public Safety and National Security

Bill S-233, Report stage	12437
Mr. Brown	12437
Motion for concurrence	12437
(Motion agreed to)	12437
Bill S-233: Third reading	12437
Mrs. McCrimmon	12438
Mr. Blaikie	12439
Mr. Brown	12439
(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed) ..	12439
Sitting Suspended	
(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:20 a.m.) ..	12439
Sitting Resumed	
(The House resumed at 12 p.m.)	12439

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Business of Supply

Opposition Motion—Canadian Economy

Mr. Bezan	12439
Motion	12439
Mr. Ferguson	12441
Mr. Blaikie	12441
Mr. Deltell	12441
Ms. Tassi	12443
Mr. Johns	12443
Mr. Blaikie	12443
Mr. Vaughan	12445
Mr. Duvall	12445
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	12446
Mr. Gerretsen	12447
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	12447
Mr. Chan	12448
Mr. O'Toole	12450
Mr. Rankin	12450
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	12450
Ms. Tassi	12451
Mr. O'Toole	12451
Mr. Sorbara	12452
Mr. Weir	12453
Mr. Maguire	12453

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Philippine Independence Day

Mr. Levitt	12454
------------------	-------

Philippine Independence Day

Mr. Saroya	12455
------------------	-------

Dorval

Ms. Dhillon	12455
-------------------	-------

Transcona Museum

Mr. Blaikie	12455
-------------------	-------

Japanese Community in Steveston

Mr. Peschisolido	12455
------------------------	-------

Local Officials in Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan

Mr. Genuis	12455
------------------	-------

LGBTQ2 Community

Mr. Boissonnault	12456
------------------------	-------

Summer in Rivière-des-Mille-Îles

Ms. Lapointe	12456
--------------------	-------

Facing the Music

Ms. Gladu	12456
-----------------	-------

Come From Away

Mr. Simms	12456
-----------------	-------

17th Gyalwang Karmapa

Mr. Maloney	12457
-------------------	-------

17th Gyalwang Karmapa

Mr. Sweet	12457
-----------------	-------

150th Anniversary of Confederation

Mr. McDonald	12457
--------------------	-------

International Paramedic Competition

Ms. Ramsey	12457
------------------	-------

World Day Against Child Labour

Mr. Viersen	12457
-------------------	-------

World Day Against Child Labour

Mrs. Caesar-Chavannes	12458
-----------------------------	-------

ORAL QUESTIONS

Taxation

Mr. Scheer	12458
Mr. Trudeau	12458

Foreign Investment

Mr. Scheer	12458
Mr. Trudeau	12458
Mr. Scheer	12458
Mr. Trudeau	12459

Government Appointments

Mr. Lebel	12459
Mr. Trudeau	12459
Mr. Lebel	12459
Mr. Trudeau	12459

The Environment

Mr. Mulcair	12459
Mr. Trudeau	12459
Mr. Mulcair	12459
Mr. Trudeau	12459

Indigenous Affairs

Mr. Mulcair	12459
Mr. Trudeau	12460

Mr. Mulcair.....	12460
Mr. Trudeau.....	12460
Taxation	
Mr. Deltell.....	12460
Mr. Morneau.....	12460
Mr. Deltell.....	12460
Mr. Morneau.....	12460
Infrastructure	
Ms. Watts.....	12460
Mr. Sohi.....	12460
Mr. Rayes.....	12460
Mr. Sohi.....	12461
Taxation	
Mrs. Stubbs.....	12461
Mr. Wilkinson.....	12461
Mr. Poilievre.....	12461
Mr. Morneau.....	12461
International Trade	
Ms. Ramsey.....	12461
Mr. Leslie.....	12461
Ms. Brosseau.....	12461
Mr. Leslie.....	12461
Foreign Investment	
Ms. Finley.....	12462
Mr. Bains.....	12462
Ms. Finley.....	12462
Mr. Bains.....	12462
Mr. Clement.....	12462
Mr. Bains.....	12462
Mr. Clement.....	12462
Mr. Bains.....	12462
Finance	
Mr. Dusseault.....	12462
Mr. Morneau.....	12462
Mr. Masse (Windsor West).....	12463
Mr. Morneau.....	12463
The Economy	
Ms. O'Connell.....	12463
Mr. Cuzner.....	12463
National Defence	
Mr. Bezan.....	12463
Mr. Rioux.....	12463
Mr. Paul-Hus.....	12463
Mr. Rioux.....	12463
International Development	
Mr. Kent.....	12464
Mrs. Caesar-Chavannes.....	12464
Ms. Gladu.....	12464
Mrs. Caesar-Chavannes.....	12464
Infrastructure	
Ms. Blaney (North Island—Powell River).....	12464
Mr. Sohi.....	12464

Public Services and Procurement	
Ms. Sansoucy.....	12464
Mr. MacKinnon.....	12464
Access to Information	
Mr. Brassard.....	12464
Mr. MacKinnon.....	12465
Mr. Brassard.....	12465
Mr. MacKinnon.....	12465
Mr. Gourde.....	12465
Mr. MacKinnon.....	12465
Status of Women	
Mrs. Fortier.....	12465
Ms. Monsef.....	12465
Public Safety	
Mr. Zimmer.....	12465
Mr. Goodale.....	12465
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship	
Mr. Stetski.....	12466
Mr. Hussen.....	12466
National Defence	
Mr. Spengemann.....	12466
Mr. Rioux.....	12466
Fisheries and Oceans	
Mr. Sopuck.....	12466
Mr. Beech.....	12466
Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission	
Mr. Barsalou-Duval.....	12466
Mr. Casey (Charlottetown).....	12466
Ms. Pauzé.....	12466
Mr. Casey (Charlottetown).....	12467
Securities	
Mr. Ste-Marie.....	12467
Mr. Morneau.....	12467
Presence in the Gallery	
The Speaker.....	12467

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Business of Supply	
Opposition Motion—Nuclear Disarmament	
Motion.....	12467
Motion negated.....	12468
Salaries Act	
Bill C-24. Second reading.....	12469
Amendment negated.....	12470
Motion agreed to.....	12471
(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee).....	12471
Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 1	
Bill C-44. Third reading.....	12471
Motion agreed to.....	12472
(Bill read the third time and passed).....	12472

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Committees of the House

Industry, Science and Technology

Mr. Ruimy 12472

Agriculture and Agri-Food

Mr. Finnigan 12473

Criminal Code

Mr. Chan 12473

Bill C-359. Introduction and first reading 12473

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) 12473

Petitions

Human Rights

Mr. Kmiec 12473

Palliative Care

Mr. Arnold 12473

Bee Population

Mr. MacGregor 12473

Status of Women

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) 12473

The Environment

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) 12473

Business of Supply

Mr. Brown 12474

Motion 12474

(Motion agreed to) 12474

Petitions

Physician-Assisted Dying

Mr. Hoback 12474

Syria

Mr. Hoback 12474

Palliative Care

Mr. Hoback 12474

Algoma Passenger Rail Service

Mrs. Hughes 12474

Palliative Care

Mr. Fraser (Central Nova) 12474

150th Anniversary of Confederation

Mr. Van Loan 12474

Telecommunications

Mr. Rota 12475

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Blair 12475

Petitions

Foreign Affairs

Mr. Bezan 12475

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Business of Supply

Opposition Motion—Canadian Economy

Motion 12475

Mr. Weir 12475

Mr. Maguire 12475

Mr. Johns 12476

Ms. Petipas Taylor 12476

Mr. Johns 12477

Mr. Cuzner 12477

Mr. Fraser (Central Nova) 12478

Mr. Strahl 12479

Mr. Johns 12480

Mr. Berthold 12480

Mr. Graham 12482

Mr. Stetski 12482

Mr. Strahl 12482

Mr. Strahl 12482

Mrs. Shanahan 12484

Mr. Weir 12484

Mr. Sohi 12484

Mr. Falk 12485

Mr. Duvall 12486

Ms. Lapointe 12486

Mr. Johns 12488

Mr. Bezan 12488

Mr. Zimmer 12488

Mr. Graham 12490

Mr. Stetski 12490

Mr. Sorenson 12490

Mr. Sorenson 12490

Mr. Casey (Cumberland—Colchester) 12492

Mr. Weir 12492

Ms. Rudd 12492

Mr. Johns 12494

Mr. Leslie 12494

Mr. Carrie 12496

Mr. Johns 12496

Mrs. Block 12497

Division on motion deferred 12498

Citizenship Act

Bill C-6. Consideration of Senate Amendments 12498

Mr. Hussen 12498

Motion 12498

Mr. Brassard 12500

Ms. Kwan 12501

Mr. Cormier 12501

Ms. Bergen 12501

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) 12502

Ms. Rempel 12502

Mr. Cormier 12519

Ms. Kwan 12520

Mr. Tilson 12520

Ms. Kwan 12521

Mr. Cormier 12523

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) 12524

Ms. Ramsey 12524

Mrs. Caesar-Chavannes 12525

Mr. Ehsassi 12525

Ms. Kwan 12526

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) 12526

Mr. McKinnon 12527

Ms. Kwan 12527

Mrs. Caesar-Chavannes 12528

Mr. Saroya	12528
Mrs. Caesar-Chavannes	12529
Ms. Kwan	12530
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	12530
Mr. Genuis	12530
Mrs. Nassif	12530
Division on motion deferred	12531

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

National Defence

Mrs. Gallant	12531
--------------------	-------

Mr. Rioux	12531
-----------------	-------

Fisheries and Oceans

Mr. Johns	12532
-----------------	-------

Mr. Beech	12533
-----------------	-------

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

Mr. Genuis	12534
------------------	-------

Mr. Cormier	12535
-------------------	-------

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <http://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.noscommunes.ca>