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Friday, October 27, 2017

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

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The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

many headlines about these tragic incidents. There is no excuse for this type of conduct in our society, yet by some estimates, more than 1,000 people lose their lives every year to this entirely preventable crime. Countless more are injured.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.) moved that Bill C-46, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (offences relating to conveyances) and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed.

She said: Madam Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to speak to Bill C-46, an act to amend the Criminal Code, offences relating to conveyances. At the outset, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights for their thorough review in consideration of this bill. Committee members heard over 45 witnesses and reviewed a significant amount of material on a highly complex topic, and I am grateful to them for their diligence and believe that the bill is stronger because of their efforts.

As I have indicated on previous occasions, the primary objective of this legislation is to save lives, lives that continue to be tragically cut short by irresponsible and reckless decisions to drive after consuming alcohol or drugs. I am continually frustrated and deeply saddened by the stories of families who have lost loved ones as a result of impaired driving. Mothers and fathers should no longer have to endure the anguish and heartache of burying their children following an alcohol- or drug-related traffic collision. Children should no longer be orphaned by a driver's careless decision to drive after consuming alcohol or drugs. This bill aims to reduce deaths resulting from impaired driving.

This bill also aims to reduce the impact of impaired driving on those who suffer traumatic, lifelong injuries caused by another person's irresponsible decision to drive drunk or high. No one should have to endure months or years of painful and costly physical rehabilitation. People should not have to give up their jobs or the pastimes they love due to injuries caused by an impaired driver.

Despite great efforts by governments and advocacy groups to raise awareness of the dangers of impaired driving, we still see far too

In my view, it is my responsibility as the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada to take any and all reasonable measures to increase deterrence and the detection of impaired drivers.

Bill C-46 aims to strengthen the criminal law response to both drug- and alcohol-impaired driving. The elements related to drug-impaired driving will come into force on royal assent to ensure that a robust drug-impaired driving regime is in place well in advance of Canada's legalization. Although it is difficult to predict the impact of cannabis legalization on the rate of impaired driving, information from other jurisdictions that have legalized cannabis suggests that there could be a slight increase. Canada needs to be prepared.

The measures proposed in Bill C-46 would increase the deterrence, detection, and conviction of those who engage in reckless and irresponsible conduct. Specifically, Bill C-46 would authorize police officers to use roadside oral-fluid drug-screening devices to help them determine whether a driver had drugs in his or her body. These are minimally invasive hand-held devices that expediently analyze a sample of oral fluid. If police officers had a reasonable suspicion that a driver had a drug in his or her body, they would be authorized to demand a sample of oral fluid for analysis at the roadside. A positive result on the drug screener would be highly indicative of recent drug consumption and could lead to further investigation, either by a drug recognition evaluation officer or through a blood sample taken by a qualified technician.

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In addition to authorizing roadside drug screeners, Bill C-46 would also create three new driving offences of being over the legal limit within two hours of driving. This type of offence is similar to the offence that prohibits driving over the legal limit for alcohol, otherwise known as the over-80 offence. These offences would be proven through a blood sample, which provides the best, most reliable evidence that the drug is active in a person's body. The bill would provide that police officers could demand that a blood sample be provided by a driver when they had reasonable grounds to believe that either a drug-impaired or legal-limit offence had occurred.

• (1005)

These offences would facilitate the prosecution of drug-impaired drivers by setting strict limits for the amount of drugs one could have in one's body while behind the wheel. As I have previously indicated, the actual legal limits would be set by regulation. The proposed drug levels were recently published in part I of the *Canada Gazette* for public comment.

On that note, three legal drug-limit offences are proposed. There would be a straight summary conviction offence, which reflects our government's precautionary and public safety approach to THC consumption and driving. The draft regulations propose that only cannabis, in particular THC, would fall under this offence at this time. This offence would apply if a driver had between two and five nanograms of THC per millilitre of blood within two hours of driving.

Bill C-46 also proposes two hybrid offences. One of these offences would apply to drivers found with impairing illicit drugs. For example, it would not be permitted for drivers to have any detectable level of cocaine or LSD in their bodies. This same hybrid offence would apply to drivers with levels of legal drugs that are expected to cause some driving impairment. For example, the offence would apply to drivers with five nanograms or more of THC per millilitre of blood. Finally, the third hybrid offence would apply to drivers with a combination of an impairing drug and alcohol, recognizing that combining drugs and alcohol can increase the impairing effects of both substances.

At this time, the draft regulation only proposes levels for alcohol and THC in combination, but in future, other drugs could be added. It is proposed that 2.5 nanograms of THC per millilitre of blood in combination with five millilitres of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood would constitute this offence.

Some witnesses who appeared before the standing committee did not support this proposed approach. They expressed concern that the science with respect to THC, in particular, was not clear enough to justify setting legal limits. However, let me be perfectly clear. One thing that all witnesses agreed on was that THC is an impairing drug.

Our government is aware that unlike alcohol, it is difficult to correlate the blood concentration of THC with impairment. That is why a summary conviction offence was proposed for the two to five nanogram range.

As indicated by the drugs and driving committee in its final report to the government on this issue, setting the legal limit at two nanograms of THC per millilitre of blood would reflect a precautionary and public safety approach, one that would strike

the right balance between the science of measuring THC impairment with the real risks associated with driving after consuming THC. By adopting this lower THC level through Bill C-46 and the regulations, our government would be signalling that Canada will not tolerate driving after consuming impairing drugs.

I would like to add that the new per se offences for drug-impaired driving would contain several inherent protections to avoid charging drivers who were not actually impaired. These protections would include the requirement that the officer in question develop reasonable suspicion of drugs in the body of the driver before administering the roadside drug screeners or other roadside sobriety tests. Where the driver failed the drug screening test, this itself would be highly indicative of recent consumption. Ultimately, the officer would have to have reasonable grounds to believe that an impaired driving offence had been committed before arresting the individual and carrying out further testing at the station.

To sum up, the drug levels that are proposed for these new offences are consistent with the approach taken in other jurisdictions, and I am confident that they reflect the best available scientific evidence while at the same time ensuring that we are proceeding in a manner that protects the safety of the public.

• (1010)

I would like to spend my remaining time addressing other elements of Bill C-46 that propose to reform the alcohol-impaired driving regime. This area of the criminal law perplexes even the most seasoned criminal professionals. It has developed in a piecemeal fashion since the first offence was enacted in 1921. It has never been comprehensively reformed, and according to a 1991 report by the former Law Reform Commission, its provisions are "virtually unreadable".

This state of affairs cannot be permitted to continue, especially in the area of criminal law that is among the most litigated. Bill C-46 proposes to create a clear, simplified, and modernized legislative framework to ensure that the public can better understand the law and also ensure that the police can effectively enforce it.

Another element proposed in Bill C-46 is mandatory alcohol screening. In my view, this proposed reform is the most critical reform respecting alcohol-impaired driving in this bill. Mothers Against Drunk Driving agrees. In May 2017, Andrew Murie, the chief executive officer of MADD, said the following:

Simply put, mandatory screening is one of the single most effective ways Canada can reduce impaired driving. It has been in place in many other countries for years and has helped them to reduce overall road crashes and fatalities.

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Mandatory alcohol screening represents a significant change to the Canadian law of impaired driving, but it is a tool that has been used in many other countries, as I said, for several years. It was pioneered by the Australians in the 1970s with great success, and more recently it has been adopted in several European jurisdictions, including Ireland and Scotland.

This proposed element was the subject of much commentary and debate at the standing committee, and I thank all those who presented on this topic for their thoughtful and insightful comments.

Under the current law, police officers at the roadside must have a reasonable suspicion that a driver has alcohol in his or her body before they can demand a preliminary breath sample. Although this is a low threshold, the standing committee heard from witnesses who confirmed that a driver is often able to conceal visible signs of impairment from the police and thereby pass through a traffic stop undetected. The number of impaired drivers who can escape detection is simply astounding. In my view, this significantly undermines the detection and enforcement efforts of police as well as the public messaging with respect to impaired driving. If more than 50% of impaired drivers are able to escape detection following a traffic stop, a new approach is absolutely needed.

The chief concern raised by witnesses with respect to mandatory alcohol screening was that it would lead to racial profiling. While I strongly condemn racial profiling, I am confident that mandatory alcohol screening would neither facilitate nor encourage this conduct. In fact, Bill C-46 would guard against this in a number of ways.

First, the bill is clear that mandatory alcohol screening would only be authorized following a lawful stop. The Supreme Court of Canada has determined that police are authorized to stop any driver at any time to ascertain whether they are complying with the rules of the road, including whether they have a licence and insurance. These stops are authorized in both common law and provincial highway traffic laws. If an officer was acting within this authorization, he or she would be authorized to demand a preliminary breath sample.

Second, mandatory alcohol screening is most effective when all drivers know that they can be tested. Under our approach, drivers would know that they could be tested at any time and at any place to ensure that they were not drinking and driving under the influence of alcohol.

Finally, the standing committee amended the preamble of the bill to reflect the expectation that all investigative powers, including mandatory alcohol screening, must be exercised in a manner that is consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. While this is implicit in all our legislation, given the concern expressed with respect to the potential impact of mandatory alcohol screening, I understand the motivation behind this amendment.

• (1015)

I would now like to discuss two more key changes proposed in the bill, in particular the proposed changes to the “over 80” offence. Currently this offence is committed if the driver has in excess of the allowable blood alcohol concentration while driving. The proposals in Bill C-46 would change this time frame so that it would be an offence to be over the legal limit within two hours of driving.

The purpose of this revised formulation is to eliminate the risky behaviour associated with bolus drinking, sometimes referred to as drinking and dashing. This is when a driver consumes a significant amount of alcohol immediately before or even during driving in an attempt to get home before the alcohol is fully absorbed. This proposed formulation of within two hours also has the benefit of limiting what is known as the intervening drink defence. This can occur when a driver consumes alcohol after being stopped by the police but before a breath sample. This has the result of frustrating the breath-testing process, and this is unacceptable.

Some witnesses raised concerns that this could criminalize people who have done nothing wrong, who have simply had a few drinks after arriving home after a long week. I would like to clarify that the bill provides for this scenario by proposing an exception to the offence. It is intended not to apply to cases of innocent intervening drinking.

Furthermore, in situations where a driver's breath is tested outside of the two-hour window of the offence, a legislative formula is proposed to calculate what the blood alcohol concentration would have been at the time of the offence. I would like to thank the standing committee for its amendment to this provision, which clarifies that before a judge can resort to the formula, there must be at least 20 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood in the driver's body.

The final element that I wish to discuss aims to end what some have referred to as the “disclosure wars”. Bill C-46 aims to clarify that the maintenance records of the approved instruments are not relevant in determining whether or not the results of the breath tests are accurate. It is enough that the crown disclose the test results, any error messages, and the results of the calibration or system-blank checks.

Bill C-46 proposes many other changes aimed at improving the law of alcohol-impaired driving. A legislative background to Bill C-46 and the accompanying charter statements outline many of the key proposals, including the rationale and the charter considerations. If members have not yet done so, I would encourage them to review these documents.

I am immensely proud of the reforms proposed in Bill C-46. I am confident that they will reduce deaths and injuries. I am also grateful to all the witnesses who presented their views on the bill before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. In my view, the bill is stronger for their input.

In closing, I urge all members to vote for public safety and support Bill C-46. We must all work together to eliminate impaired driving and all of its tragic consequences.

• (1020)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Madam Speaker, an important witness that the minister did not hear from in committee is Families For Justice.

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Families For Justice is a group of traffic accident victims. They want a deterrent. They want the government to send a strong message that Canada does not tolerate impaired driving. One way of doing that is to impose a minimum sentence of five years for impaired driving causing death. We can see that this works as a deterrent since the prison population is decreasing.

Why did the minister not listen to Families for Justice and implement a five-year minimum sentence for impaired driving causing death?

[English]

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. friend across the way for his substantive work in this area. I have enjoyed the opportunity to work with him.

I have had the opportunity to meet with several members of Families for Justice. I would like to acknowledge the significant loss they have suffered and recognize that the intent of Bill C-46 is to ensure we do everything we can to promote safe and responsible driving.

In terms of the question around mandatory sentencing with respect to this particular piece of legislation, it has been found that the mandatory sentences are not the deterrents. As proven and supported by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the deterrence in Bill C-46 is the mandatory alcohol screening. At the justice committee, national Mothers Against Drunk Driving president, Patricia Hynes-Coates, said the following with respect to mandatory minimum sentences:

As a mom, as a stepmom, as a victim, I can't support it. There's no evidence to support that this will actually make a difference. We know once we bury our children or bury a loved one, it's too late. We need to focus on deterring it before it actually happens.

That is where mandatory alcohol screening comes into place.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I do not think we will find a parliamentarian in this House who does not agree that we need to do everything possible to discourage and, hopefully at some point, eliminate impaired driving. As one of my colleagues said the other day, driving is not a right, it is a privilege. The right of people to peacefully and safely drive on our roads must take precedence over any other person's right to drive while impaired.

On the other hand, as legislators, we have a responsibility to make sure that this legislation is very carefully calibrated. The Supreme Court has told us that in *R. v. Oakes* and other cases.

My questions to the minister are on this new legislation around cannabis. A number of people are suggesting that a reading of two nanograms of THC per millilitre of blood may not indicate present impairment, particularly with chronic users of cannabis, maybe medicinal users, who use cannabis every day. Does the minister believe that measurement is an accurate measurement of present impairment?

Second, I am led to believe that many experts say we do not yet have proper screening devices that can prove true impairment. Does she have any concerns that by adopting those standards, we may be giving criminal records to Canadians who are using cannabis, as her government is going to legalize—

•(1025)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Sorry, I have to allow for further questions as well. Remember that this is a questions and comments period, and there is a specific amount of time allotted. MPs should be able to ask those questions within one minute.

The hon. Minister of Justice.

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for underscoring that we all share the desire to keep our roads safe and do everything we can to keep those who have consumed alcohol or drugs off our roads.

In terms of the questions around legal limits and drug screeners, we have been working very diligently with the drugs and driving committee of the Canadian Society of Forensic Science. It has been providing advice on drug limits, as well as helping us ensure that, hopefully by the time of royal assent for this bill, we have drug screeners that are reliable and accurate. Drug screeners would not be approved for use by police unless they meet rigorous evaluation standards. We are confident that we will have these devices in place by the time this legislation comes into force.

Further, in terms of the legal drug limits, any level of THC is considered to cause impairment in an individual. We have three offences that we have introduced. We are taking a graduated approach to the offences. We trust in the science, and we will continue to ensure we work towards securing and setting limits as the science evolves to the place where alcohol screening is. This is an ongoing challenge, and we will continue to monitor it.

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Madam Speaker, there are a number of sections of this bill that make sense. I will not repeat the comments with respect to making sure that there at least is a penalty that people who kill somebody when driving drunk can and should pay. That being said, the minister, on a number of occasions during her speech, and in the comments, said we would like to do something to reduce impaired driving, yet she admitted that legalization could increase impaired driving. Would that not, in and of itself, give the minister pause that this is overall going to be a bad idea, if the minister is even acknowledging at this point that we will probably have more impaired driving on the roads? Did the Liberals take that into consideration when they brought forward these two bills, Bill C-45 and Bill C-46?

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Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question and his ongoing work in this regard. Of course, we took into account the reality and the impact of bringing in Bill C-45, the cannabis act, and its companion piece, Bill C-46, to ensure that we have the toughest impaired driving rules throughout the world. Impaired driving on drugs and alcohol is an offence right now. We are working to ensure that we have the best scientific evidence and the necessary oral fluid screeners to detect that at the roadside. We are committed to ensuring we do everything we can to improve that process, which Bill C-46 significantly does, and to detect more individuals who are behind the wheels of their car while impaired by drugs or alcohol. This is a real opportunity to significantly strengthen our impaired driving laws in Canada.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for bringing this to the House today. My question builds on some of the questions from my colleagues across the way, which were similar to questions asked during the debate on Bill C-45. My question to the minister is with respect to the timing of Bill C-46 and Bill C-45. I want to know how they work together, as well as the strategy of having Bill C-46 in place before Bill C-45 to ensure we have safe communities, safe people, safe roads. What is the importance of the legislation in the way it is now being presented to the House moving forward? Could the minister comment on that, please?

• (1030)

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Madam Speaker, I believe that this question speaks to the previous question of the hon. member across the way in terms of the objectives of Bill C-45, and Bill C-46, the cannabis act, and also wanting to improve the impaired driving laws in this country. What we are trying to combat is that the status quo simply is not working with respect to ensuring we do everything we can to keep cannabis out of the hands of kids and the proceeds out of the hands of criminals, as well as to keep individuals out of the driving seats of their car while they have been consuming alcohol or drugs. The objective of both of these pieces of legislation is to ensure that we move away from the status quo and put in place significant laws and regulations. There is no question that the Government of Canada is tackling these important issues and ensuring the safety of Canadians.

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-46, an act to amend the Criminal Code, offences relating to conveyances, and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

I will address a couple of things with respect to the bill, and one is the timetable for this bill and Bill C-45.

The government is making a mistake, quite frankly, first for even bringing in the marijuana bill and then pushing it forward to try to get it in by Canada Day of next year. Even though I have heard the minister say that the government will try to push through this bill in conjunction with Bill C-45, the whole thing is a mistake.

We heard considerable testimony from different groups that they thought this was being jammed through too quickly. The Canadian police services asked that the legislation be delayed so they would have the ability to train and put resources in place.

I suggest that the government has not done enough to put effective educational campaigns in place, despite statistics showing significant increases in fatalities due to drug-impaired driving. We have a problem already with drug-impaired driving. The Liberals tell us that by legalizing this, they somehow have come up with some solutions to this, but it is the exact opposite.

Mandatory roadside testing, in addition to the large number of officers who still do not have sufficient training to adequately detect drug-impaired driving through drug-recognition training, is another part of this, as well the refusal of the government to mandate proper storage restrictions of cannabis plants in homes. The government, in its excitement, was pleased to announce that everyone would be able to have a small grow-op in the kitchen. We were very much against this, for the reasons I stated at committee and before this. How can we make it any more accessible and easier for kids if the plants are in the kitchen?

I thought I received some good news a couple of weeks ago when a woman in my office, Cheri, said that I would be interested to know that the Liberals had made some changes about grow-ops in kitchens. I thought that was wonderful and that the Liberals had listened to us. However, the government said that the three feet was not high enough, that the plants would have to grow taller than that. Therefore, after getting criticism about this, the Liberals did the exact opposite. They would let people have four-, five-, or 10-foot plants. I guess there would be more joints available the higher these things grew. This is a huge mistake, one that we will hear about in the future if the bill passes.

Canadian police services from across the country have called on the government to delay the legislation beyond 2018 to allow law enforcement time to properly manage the threat of increased drug-impaired driving and the association that this would take place with the legalization of marijuana. The Canadian police services stated that there was zero chance they would be ready by July 2018.

Why are the Liberals so intent on not listening to Canada's law enforcement? They have imposed this deadline, again, with little regard to the health and safety of Canadians.

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During the recent meetings our committees had, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police warned that it needed more time to train officers under the proposed new law and more than double the number of police officers certified to conduct roadside drug-impaired testing. It also called for more time to implement public education. If we look around, officials in Washington State and Colorado have stressed the importance of implementing educational campaigns on drug-impaired driving as soon as possible and long before legalization.

The government's timetable is just too tight. The Liberals say that they will get Bill C-46 in before Bill C-45. However, with the timetable they have insisted upon for Bill C-45, we will not be ready.

• (1035)

The Liberals have not taken the advice of members of the police association or Canadian premiers who have voiced their concerns. The provincial governments need more time to get their rules and regulations in place.

The minister mentioned MADD Canada. It has also called for the government to ensure the legislative framework is in place under the Motor Vehicle Act, giving police the powers to lay drug-impaired charges. Currently, the standard breathalyser will not detect drugs, This was one of the things we heard.

My colleagues mentioned how challenging it was to exactly measure the level of THC and thus measure the level of impairment. It is further complicated now that we are encouraging people to smoke marijuana, especially in combination with alcohol. This is going to become more complicated. In the hearings and testimony on Bill C-46, it became very clear how difficult this would be. We heard different experts say that THC could be in a person's system for days afterwards. The THC level spikes with the first couple of joints and then it goes down. How quickly it goes down is the question and what happens when marijuana is used in combination with alcohol.

Again, we need to have people who are expert in this area. The police services have said that they need at least 2,000 experts to do this. I will quote Ms. MacAskill from Mothers Against Drunk Driving. She said, about the disposable saliva test, "If every officer can have that in their vehicle it will certainly have a positive impact on road safety."

Unfortunately, the government is not in a position to guarantee that those drug experts will be in place. It has not made the necessary provisions to make this happen. Again, the Liberals are focused on getting this through. Somehow it will be a wonderful that on the next Canada Day, everyone will be smoking a joint. However, this has been a huge mistake.

As well, I have to mention the penalties. The Conservative party is very clear that a \$1,000 fine for a person who kills because of drunk driving is unacceptable. Quite frankly, it sends the wrong message. My colleague talked about mothers for justice. They were very clear that it was not enough to say a person was arrested. We want to send a very clear message that if a person is drunk, starts to drive and kills people, that there are serious consequences, not just a \$1,000 or \$1,500 fine with a slap on the wrist. Our job is to ensure people get the message that they have to take responsibility for the crimes they commit. When we were in government, that message was consistent.

There has to be serious consequences for people who commit serious crimes and victimize others.

Statistics show that impaired driving due to drugs is on the rise. This is why we need to have nationwide public education. We know, having looked at Washington State, what will happen in our country. Fatal crashes among drivers who test positive for marijuana went up from 8% in 2013 to 17% in 2014. In Colorado, between 2005 and 2014, the number of drivers in fatal crashes who tested positive for marijuana, without other drugs in their system, went from 3.4% to 12%. It multiplied four times when marijuana was legalized in that state.

Dr. Mark Ware, co-chair of Ottawa's marijuana task force, stated, "Canada should immediately boost spending on intensive public education and research into the impacts of marijuana and not wait until 2018." I would go beyond that and say not to be forced into putting this in place by next Canada Day.

• (1040)

Dr. Ware told a drug policy conference in Ottawa that a bill to overhaul Canada's marijuana laws was the first step in what he predicted would be an unbelievably deep and tangled web with the provinces, territories, and the municipalities, which would be responsible for much of this scheme.

Here is what is going to happen when this legislation gets enacted. The federal Liberals will blame the provinces when this thing becomes a complete national mess. They will say that they legalized it but it is the responsibility of the provinces. They will point the finger and claim that it is not them who have made the mess. Once they get this off their hands, it will be up to the provinces, or they will say that the police services are screwing this up, that they are not doing enough. That is what is so unfortunate about this.

The government has been warned about the implications of legalizing marijuana and the required safeguards that should be in place. The Canadian Automobile Association has made the case that a public education campaign has to be put in place.

This will complicate our judicial system. It was made very clear that there would be charter challenges. I understand that whenever new legislation is put in, there is always the possibility that people will challenge it. Nonetheless, there will be a lot of cases that will compound the challenge this will have on the courts. We have raised this with the government on many occasions. We have told it to ensure enough judges are appointed. This has been a slow process, and not enough judges will not help the situation. When these cases are before the courts and there are delays, et cetera, it will not help things if the Government of Canada does not move forward as expeditiously as possible in appointing judges.

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The other thing we have to worry about is not just people smoking marijuana, but people who will turn marijuana into edibles. The Liberals will again say that the provinces are to blame if this is the case. I understand that, but we all have a responsibility. When this gets turned into an edible product and children have access to that product, it will be a serious problem. I appreciate that not all children will go after the pot plants in the kitchen and nor should they, but edibles will be another danger to young people and a danger that the government does not seem to take with the seriousness it should take.

I do like some sections in the legislation. The minister talked about one section that refers to marijuana tests being taken about two hours afterwards. Among other things, this will go after those individuals who will try to avoid an impaired driving charge by having a couple of drinks after the accident, using the excuse they needed those drinks to calm down. We all know that this is a way of avoiding or complicating an impaired driving charge. I actually agree with that section.

However, when my colleague from St. Albert—Edmonton came forward with a group of reasonable amendments to ensure people would live up to their responsibilities when they finally were convicted of impaired driving and impaired driving which resulted in somebody being killed, those penalties were completely rejected by the Liberals on committee. When somebody kills a child and receives a \$1,500 fine, the whole justice system is compromised. It decreases people's confidence in the criminal justice system when people are not given penalties that are commensurate with the crimes they have committed.

• (1045)

My Liberal colleagues do not want to put these tough penalties in the bill because they believe they will not stop people from committing these crimes. However, I think it does send a message to people that there are serious consequences for what they are doing. Yes, there are people who say that they had better be careful because there are serious consequences for their impaired driving.

I appreciate that Bill C-45 and Bill C-46 go together and that the latter bill complements the first, but my colleagues and I want the government to reconsider everything about this, its implementation and the whole question of legalizing marijuana and what it will do to our children. I promise that if the government implements this and the Liberals start to run away from it and say, "I don't know, you better talk to the education department, or the police, or the provinces", we will hold them accountable for everything, the complete mess this will create. We will not let them off the hook by pointing to someone else.

I have appreciated the opportunity to make comments on this. I know the government has not listened to us up to this point, but I hope it will in the future.

Mr. John Oliver (Oakville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government is investing up to \$270 million to support law enforcement and broader efforts to deter and detect drug-impaired driving in order to enforce the proposed cannabis legislation. We are committing up to \$161 million for training front-line officers in how to recognize the signs and symptoms of drug-impaired driving and to build law enforcement capacity.

The previous government invested \$2 million in 2008 under its drug recognition expert program. If the hon. member feels so strongly about this issue, why did his government not make a much more robust investment in drug recognition programs so we would not be so far behind today? What comes next? Why does he feel the status quo would be sufficient if we do not pass this bill?

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Madam Speaker, one of the differences between this government and our government was that we were not legalizing marijuana for everyone to smoke. We completely disagree with the idea that somehow everything is going to be cleared up in the whole area of impaired driving as soon as marijuana is legalized.

They do not have to take my word for it. They should check with police services. Ask them if they are going to be ready. They are the ones who are going to be doing this. The Liberals are turning our country into one where everyone can have a grow op in their kitchen and edibles will be available to everyone.

The police services came before the committee. The hon. member should check their testimony. They said they would not be ready, but the government is saying that it wants legalization in place by Canada Day. That is wonderful, but the police services are telling us they are not ready to implement this.

The hon. member says there will be money. There is money for everything on their side. They need to listen to what the people on the ground are saying and what the provinces are telling us about how ready they will be.

• (1050)

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloil—Chambly, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives once again are advocating for mandatory minimums, as they always do, despite the fact the statistics show a rising number of people driving under the influence, as the member recognized in his speech. Some of the experts we heard at the public safety committee on a similar bill for mandatory Breathalyzer tests said that the psychological impact of a mandatory minimum on a person would not affect their decision whether or not to get behind the wheel when they are obviously unable to do so, thereby putting others' lives at risk. What really matters is whether they believe they will or will not get caught.

The Conservatives and the government should instead focus on providing police with resources for roadblocks and such things. The sentencing itself is not what dissuades someone, but the likelihood of their getting caught. Does my colleague not agree that the important thing to focus on is not sentencing but making sure that the police have the proper resources and that we have proper education programs in place so that people will not put others' lives at risk by making this kind of horrifying mistake?

Government Orders

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Madam Speaker, we believe that we have to do everything. However, I do not get the New Democrats. They say that impaired driving is increasing and therefore we should reduce or lower the mandatory sentences. What kind of a message does that send?

When someone is drunk and gets in his or her car and ends up killing people, it hurts the justice system if that person gets a \$1,500 fine. It hurts the credibility of our justice system. It does no good whatsoever.

As to the idea that if we just got rid of tough penalties, people would say they would not drive impaired because the penalties were lower, no, it does not work that way. We want to send a message to people that there are serious consequences if they commit these disgusting crimes. That is what we want to do. This is what we say on this side of the House.

That said, we have to do everything we can to stop impaired driving.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, the other side would like to rattle off quotes. Here is what happened to my family: 27 years ago, my brother, Fabian, was killed in a drinking and driving accident by someone who was impaired. That was 27 years ago and it is shameful today that we are looking at lessening the sentences, that we cannot get tougher on this, that we are going to make it easier for someone to drink and drive and take and drive, and that if he or she gets caught, they will only be fined. That is shameful.

To my hon. colleague who mentioned this, we know that the municipalities and the police services will bear the brunt of this. The government has done nothing to help those charged with rolling this out. Has there been any discussion about what the government will give to the municipalities? When municipalities' number one cost is policing, will the Liberals be funding those municipalities and police services to make our roads safer?

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Madam Speaker, on the one hand, the government has made it clear that it has money for everything. The Liberals do not worry about balanced budgets; forget about it, there is money for everything. Certainly support for the municipalities and police services would be a huge and important part of what needs to be done on this. I have suggested to the Liberals that they should listen to what the police services are saying. They need more drug recognition experts because the Liberals are legalizing dope in this country. The Liberals should listen to what the municipalities have to say, listen to the provinces, and listen to the police. Although the Liberals will not listen to us because we are in the Conservative Party, they should listen to what the provinces, municipalities, and police services are saying. They are on the right track and the Liberals should listen to them.

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to know what my colleague thinks about the fact that the law and order approach taken by the Conservatives over the past 10 years did not work. I am not the one saying it. That is what we have been hearing from a number of experts.

The number of impaired driving offences increased under the Conservatives, despite the longer sentences the Conservatives put in place in 2008. In 2011, Statistics Canada noted that “[t]he rate of impaired driving increased for the fourth time in five years...and was at its highest point in a decade.”

Why do the Conservatives keep insisting that their measures lowered impaired driving rates even though statistics and scientific studies show that this is not the case?

Something that would work would be holding Canada-wide awareness campaigns and making more investments in this area. That is what CAA is saying as it calls on the government to launch a public awareness and education campaign before marijuana is legalized, for example.

Do the Conservatives not think that it would be better to do that instead of continuing to focus on a law and order approach that did not work, statistically speaking?

• (1055)

[English]

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Yes, Madam Speaker, the number of impaired-driving charges has increased because police have been given the tools and we have helped train drug recognition experts in this area to do the job they are supposed to do. The only promise I can make to the member of the NDP and indeed to all members of the NDP is that I have news for them. Once the government starts to legalize marijuana and there are grow ops in kitchens, impaired driving will go up dramatically. We will stand and bring it to the attention of this chamber. When the Liberals shrug their shoulders and say, “It is not us, the provinces must have screwed up”, we are not going to stand for that.

To the members of the NDP, I know it is always the same thing, that if we reduce the penalties these crimes will go down. I would say no, we do not buy that. People have to take responsibility for their actions. That is what our former Conservative government always said and this is what we will continue to say as a party.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before recognizing the next speaker, I should mention that I will have to interrupt him to proceed to the next item on the agenda.

The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Madam Speaker, today we are debating the other part of the Liberal government's marijuana legalization plan, the impaired driving bill, which not only covers marijuana, but also makes changes to the laws governing alcohol-impaired driving.

Statements by Members

We support this legislative proposal in principle. However, I just want to remind the House and everyone tuning in that the government's approach so far has been a miserable failure. I am, of course, talking about the consultations or lack thereof with the provinces, which will be saddled with the lion's share of this burden. The matter before us today, impaired driving, is no exception. As a member from Quebec, I have heard a lot from the Government of Quebec and my constituents about how the lack of consultation is seriously affecting their ability to plan adequately and to deal with the repercussions of this plan.

For example, the issue of education and public awareness, especially for youth, is very important. Obviously, it would be vitally important to launch a public awareness and education campaign with a view to preventing impaired driving. After all, there are already similar campaigns for alcohol, and we have to believe that there will be similar campaigns for marijuana. We are, however, assuming that the provinces and various provincial ministries will be the ones in charge of implementing these education and awareness programs. This is then very important, especially when we are talking about impaired driving.

Although we are not debating this today, we could also talk about sale, taxation, and all these issues. Furthermore, when we talk about impaired driving, I believe that sale and taxation are major elements. One point we have been hearing about since the beginning—

• (1100)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will have 17 minutes and 25 seconds to continue his speech.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are being told that at least 60 ISIS fighters have entered Canada after fighting a war against our allies and our own soldiers. Not only are these men criminals, but they also work around the clock to destroy anyone and everyone who does not share their ideology. These men promote hatred within their families and in public. How is it possible that these criminals are allowed to return to Canada and live here freely? We do not know who they are, where they are, or what their plans are.

Why has the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness not been proactive in informing Canadians about these criminals? Canadians have every reason to be concerned about these brutal men roaming our streets, not knowing exactly where they are. Just as frightening is the thought that this government has allocated millions of dollars to compensate them for their dedication to their cause. The members of the Conservative Party will be ever vigilant, and keeping Canadians safe will always be one of our top priorities.

[*English*]

ANNIVERSARY CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. John Oliver (Oakville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize two exemplary citizens in my riding of Oakville on the occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary. Fred and Esther Wieler first came to Oakville in 1967, where they became active in the life of our community and were dedicated to improving the lives of their neighbours. They have never stopped.

Fred and Esther are each individually pillars of strength, spirituality, and caring. Standing together, unified by their marriage, they have provided a home for family, a shelter for refugees, and a virtuous example for all of us. Fred and Esther have truly exemplified the Canadian values of generosity and selflessness, and their children and grandchildren were raised with these same values and are continuing this legacy both in Oakville and across the country.

We are so fortunate in Oakville to have such generous and dedicated residents. I would like to take the opportunity of their 60th wedding anniversary to congratulate Fred and Esther, and thank them for their many contribution.

* * *

MARIE-ANNE GABOURY

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Kildonan—St. Paul, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise once more during Women's History Month to recognize Marie-Anne Gaboury, a true Canadian adventurer and role model. Immediately after her marriage in 1806, in defiance of the customs of the time, Gaboury left the comforts of Montreal, tea and tourtière, with Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière to become Canada's first female coureur des bois. Gaboury led an exceptional life, trapping, hunting, and trading in the Prairies where she learned Cree and Ojibwa. During a buffalo hunt, Marie-Anne, nine months pregnant, went into labour, giving birth to her second child. Brave and fierce, Gaboury fought and killed a bear attacking a colleague.

The history of an amazing hero is mostly forgotten, but it is the story of Winnipeg, of a European settlement. Marie-Anne Gaboury's legacy included raising a grandson, Louis Riel, who would go on to lead the people of Manitoba into Confederation.

Let us close Women's History Month by paying—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the time is up.

The hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

* * *

CANADIAN FORCES

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, having the chief of the defence staff walk in Pride this year meant a lot, but this level of openness was not always the case in the Canadian Forces. Canada has a dark history for which we have yet to fully recognize the damage done.

Statements by Members

In 1989, Michelle Douglas was taken to a hotel where she was interrogated for two days. She was discharged from the Canadian Forces for being “not advantageously employable due to homosexuality.” As an exemplary soldier in the Air Force, she was discharged solely based on who she loved.

Today, it is because of Michelle Douglas' courage that we celebrate 25 years since the Canadian Forces ceased its discrimination based on sexual orientation. Like Michelle, hundreds were unfairly discharged. It is time for a formal apology, recognizing the damage that these actions had on their lives and careers. We must revisit their service records to honour their service to our country.

As the proud representative of 19 Wing Comox, I am inspired by the work they do to be an inclusive workplace for the LGBTQ community.

* * *

NUTRITION FOR LEARNING

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one in 10 children arrives at school in Canada without enough food to sustain themselves an entire day. Good nutrition can lead to improvements of memory and an increased ability to focus in the classroom

Recently I visited Howard Robertson Public School in Kitchener, just before the start of the school day, to take part in a breakfast program for students operated by Nutrition for Learning. I got to see first-hand how the program is delivered. It is truly a collaborative effort between Nutrition for Learning, school staff, and students. Nutrition for Learning feeds over 21,000 young people at 135 schools in Waterloo Region. Their investment in our students will result in positive outcomes for them and our communities.

I thank Nutrition for Learning and the Howard Robertson staff for the fantastic work they do for children in Waterloo Region.

* * *

● (1105)

#IVEGOTYOURBACK911

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I stand to salute co-founders Jill Foster and Shaun Taylor, and their incredible campaign, #IVEGOTYOURBACK911.

On October 1, 2014, the #IVEGOTYOURBACK911 campaign was created. Two paramedics came together to make a difference by launching a social media campaign aimed at increasing awareness and eliminating and reducing the stigma of PTSD within the emergency services.

Over 25,000 likes, over 12,000 Instagram followers, and over 5,000 Twitter followers helped to engage the community. Their reach is incredible including across Canada, Australia, Holland, Germany, Singapore, and the United States. Their online store has already raised \$250,000 that has been donated to various organizations that assist first responders. They were also financial supporters of *The Other Side of the Hero* documentary.

Today, I would like to recognize them in the House of Commons and to share with my colleagues and all Canadians these incredible—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Madam Speaker, last Friday, my colleague from Dartmouth—Cole Harbour and I had the opportunity to meet with Minister Joly at École du Carrefour, a school in the Acadian provincial school board, as well as with a number of organizations to discuss official languages. That evening, I went to the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse on behalf of the minister to talk about the positive steps our government is taking.

[English]

Finally, this past week the Standing Committee on Official Languages had the opportunity to meet the English community in Quebec as well as the French community in Nova Scotia and we are working hard to ensure that official languages are strong and well in Canada, in Nova Scotia, and across the world.

* * *

[Translation]

SENIORS' QUALITY OF LIFE

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on October 11, I had the opportunity to facilitate a round table discussion on the quality of life of seniors in our beautiful riding, Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation. My team and I hosted more than 50 people from various organizations. We discussed the daily challenges affecting our seniors. As my colleagues here in the House can see, the aging demographics affects all our ridings. In my riding, 20% of the population is currently over 65. During this round table, we discussed several themes such as financial security, transportation, and accessibility.

I want to thank these organizations that came from all corners of our large riding and that work hard every day for the well-being of our seniors. Together with our government we are working on improving the quality of life of our seniors.

* * *

[English]

UNITED CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF ALBERTA

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, this weekend, more than 60,000 Albertans are taking part in one of the most important elections in our province's history. Members of the new United Conservative Party are selecting their new leader. There are three candidates, including two former members of the House.

Statements by Members

In about 18 months, Albertans will have the choice between an NDP government that has racked up huge deficits, not unlike the Liberals here in Ottawa, or a fiscal Conservative Party. They will also have a choice between an NDP government, which has brought in harmful policies around the environment and energy, not unlike again, our Liberal friends across the way, or a Conservative Party that understands what is important to Albertans. They will have a choice to elect a party that will stand up to the Liberal government and its harmful policies toward our province or a party that has proven that it is controlled by the big public sector unions.

Good luck to all the candidates because Alberta cannot wait until 2019 when we can get a new government in Edmonton and a new government in Ottawa.

* * *

[Translation]

2017 NATIONAL POPPY CAMPAIGN

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the official launch of the 2017 National Poppy Campaign.

This year, as we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Passchendaele, and the 75th anniversary of the Dieppe raid, let us remember the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice, the men and women who serve our country today, and the families who serve alongside them.

[English]

This year again I will be supporting my local legion by volunteering at the poppy drive and taking part in various Remembrance Day events. I urge every member of the House to do the same. The funds raised through the poppy campaign help the Royal Canadian Legion continue the great work that it does. I encourage all Canadians to proudly wear their poppies over their hearts as a visual pledge to never forget.

I speak on behalf of my fellow military families.

● (1110)

[Translation]

We will remember them.

* * *

[English]

ISLAMIC HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Madam Speaker, October is Islamic History Month, an opportunity for Muslims and non-Muslims alike to learn from one another, to not simply tolerate their differences but to celebrate them.

Islamic History Month is also a chance to learn more about the tremendous contributions of Muslims in building this country, like the fact that the Al Rashid mosque, the first mosque in Canada, was opened on the Alberta prairie in 1938, like the fact that Canada is home to the only Islamic art museum in North America, the magnificent Aga Khan Museum in my hometown of Toronto, like the fact that in Quebec, female Muslim academic, Dr. Sajida Alvi,

was the first-ever chair in Urdu language at the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill, like the fact that the lead structural engineer of the CN Tower was Muslim Iranian Canadian Jamil Mardukhi.

When we learn about the history of Muslims in our country, we learn more about Canada itself. This lesson is more important now than ever before, with the rise of division, misunderstanding, and Islamophobia. As a Muslim Canadian and the parliamentary secretary for multiculturalism, I encourage all Canadians to observe, celebrate, and, most importantly, to learn during this important month.

* * *

WALLACE AND DISTRICT FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Speaker, once again the firefighters of the Wallace and District Fire Department answered the call and with the help of many others, put out a devastating inferno that recently engulfed Virden's downtown. With volunteer firefighters from both Elkhorn and Virden stations and with the help of a track hoe from Sparks Sand & Gravel, they stopped the fire before it could spread and do further damage to adjoining businesses.

It cannot be repeated enough that these are volunteer firefighters. They are everyday citizens who do not ask for anything in return, but are willing to rush to the scene of an emergency at the drop of a hat. It was a community effort that saved the day, and I would like to recognize all who contributed: the local RCMP detachment, EMS, Brock Koop, Longshot Services, the local Catholic church, Boston Pizza, Chicken Chef, and the spouses of the firefighters. They rose to the occasion to show the very best of what it means to be a Westman resident.

I thank them for being such pillars in our community.

* * *

RAPID ACCESS ADDICTION CLINIC

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to share with the House that Guelph has taken another step in alleviating addictions in the community. The Rapid Access Addiction Clinic in downtown Guelph will now offer immediate help and compassion for those struggling with addiction. The clinic addresses all forms of substance addiction, from opioids to alcohol, by offering a hassle-free and caring environment designed to cater to the specific needs of those struggling with substance abuse.

The clinic is staffed with professionals who treat addictions. A doctor, a counsellor, and peer supports are all accessible for free and without an OHIP card or appointment. Evidence-based initiatives like the Rapid Access Addiction Clinic in Guelph are an innovative and collaborative way of addressing addiction in our communities.

I hope all members can learn from this example in Guelph.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

PARLIAMENTARY PROTECTIVE SERVICE

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Madam Speaker, just over three years ago, I was in the Railway Committee Room when we heard gunshots outside our caucus room. A bullet even lodged itself in the room's door. Before we knew what was happening, an officer from our security service entered the room. He calmly and professionally told us what we needed to do to remain safe. The officers protected us that day at the risk of being wounded themselves. They saved us, and I think that they are deserving of our respect.

[English]

These guards have been trying to get a collective agreement to improve working conditions, shift predictability, and eliminate forced overtime. They have decided to wear green hats, bracelets, and stickers to ask for the respect that they deserve, a very Canadian protest: measured, polite, and efficient. The response has been threats of discipline and even suspensions. The very guard who took a bullet three years ago is facing a suspension for exercising his fundamental rights. That is wrong. I ask the managers to come to an equitable agreement with the guards and show—

• (1115)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Haldimand—Norfolk.

* * *

DIABETES

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Madam Speaker, I stand today to support residents in my riding of Haldimand—Norfolk who are living with type 1 diabetes. Managing this disease is time-consuming and costly. As a result, they rely on support programs like the disability tax credit. Unfortunately, the Liberals believe that people with diabetes no longer deserve this support. Under the current government, 80% of patients who used to be approved for this tax credit are now being turned away. What is worse, while being denied the disability tax credit, they are also disqualified from opening a registered disability savings plan to save for their own future. This is nothing short of shameful.

On behalf of my constituents, I call upon the Liberals to stop making the lives of people with diabetes more difficult and start giving them the support that they need.

* * *

[Translation]

MALVERN TOWN CENTRE

Mr. Shaun Chen (Scarborough North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to wish Malvern Town Centre a very happy 30th birthday. Built on former farmland, the mall has been the hub of the Malvern community for three decades.

[English]

Today, the mall is truly cosmopolitan, frequented by Malvern's diverse communities who come to shop at over 80 unique stores and service providers. Many are small family-run businesses, like the arts and crafts boutique owned by Chandana Benjamin Goni and Ali

Goni, two shopkeepers whose smiles are as big as the attention and care they provide to their customers.

Indeed, the success of the Malvern Town Centre demonstrates the accomplishments of our people and our small and medium-sized enterprises, which drive the Canadian economy. I ask members to join me in congratulating the Malvern Town Centre on 30 wonderful years, wishing it many more decades of growth, success, and prosperity.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

ETHICS

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Madam Speaker, for weeks, the finance minister has been telling Canadians that he has revealed all of his financial assets to the Ethics Commissioner. For weeks, he has been telling Canadians that he has followed the advice of the Ethics Commissioner on avoiding conflicts of interest. However, yesterday Canadians learned that the Ethics Commissioner has concerns about the finance minister's conduct related to Bill C-27.

If the Ethics Commissioner has concerns, that means the minister either failed to disclose all his assets to her or has ignored her advice on avoiding conflicts of interest. Which is it?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think it is important to remember that the finance minister has always worked with the Ethics Commissioner. He has followed all of her recommendations and always will. Yesterday, he met with the Ethics Commissioner to continue on that path of transparency to always being forthcoming with the Ethics Commissioner. He has announced to go even further than what the Ethics Commissioner initially recommended, divesting all his shares in Morneau Shepell, making sure that all his assets are put in a blind trust, and donating all profits generated, or the increase in value of those shares, since the day he was elected until today. He is working with the Ethics Commissioner on that front.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Madam Speaker, well, the Ethics Commissioner has serious concerns with the finance minister's conduct. She has already convicted him of breaking the rules for trying to hide his French villa, and now she is considering launching a new investigation into his actions on pension reform legislation. The minister can no longer hide behind the Ethics Commissioner and keep using her as a human shield. She has concerns with his conduct.

I ask again, what assets has the minister been hiding from the Ethics Commissioner, or what advice on avoiding conflicts of interest has he been ignoring?

Oral Questions

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the short answer is none. He has always followed all advice of the Ethics Commissioner. That advice, at the time, was to put in place a conflict of interest wall, which was, according to the Ethics Commissioner, the best measure of compliance possible. That was a measure that was good enough for the member for Milton, and good enough for Denis Lebel when he was minister. That was the advice of the Ethics Commissioner, which the minister has followed. He is going even further to keep working for the Canadian economy, for the Canadian people.

• (1120)

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Madam Speaker, how can these Liberals expect Canadians to believe anything that the finance minister says? He said he had placed his assets in a blind trust. He did not. He said he disclosed all of his assets to the Ethics Commissioner. He did not. He said he was following the advice of the Ethics Commissioner to avoid conflicts of interest, but clearly he did not, because she still has significant concerns about his conduct. The minister cannot buy his way out of this mess he has created.

When will he stop defending the indefensible and just admit that he has a blatant personal conflict of interest?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the finance minister has always followed the recommendation of the Ethics Commissioner, setting up a conflicts of interest wall, which is what she recommended as the best measure of compliance. That was a measure good enough for the member for Milton, and for Denis Lebel back when they were in power. I can understand why they want to forget their past, why they have selective amnesia, because when we look at their record, they failed to grow the economy, they failed to reduce inequalities, they failed on all factors on all economic indicators. We are doing a lot better for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Ethics Commissioner has not even completed her investigation into the Prime Minister's taxpayer-funded Christmas vacation yet, and now we learn that another ethics investigation is being opened, this time against the Minister of Finance.

We know that through his ties to Morneau Shepell, the minister is benefiting from policy decisions made by himself and his own department.

Will he finally admit that he never disclosed his conflict of interest during the discussions on Bill C-27?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance has always worked with the Ethics Commissioner and followed her recommendations, and he continues to do so with full transparency.

What the commissioner did with the Minister of Finance, and with every parliamentarian, was to assess each individual's circumstances and make recommendations. The minister acted on her recommendations, and now he is going even further by divesting himself of his shares in Morneau Shepell and donating to charity any difference in the value of those shares between October 19 and today.

I think that if a—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I would like to remind hon. members to respect their colleagues and listen when others have the floor. Members may not like the answer, but they have to listen nonetheless.

The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Madam Speaker, facts are facts. The Minister of Finance stated in a press conference on October 16 that he had been naive with regard to his shares in Morneau Shepell.

We now know that the minister has ties to Bombardier, the Bank of Canada, the Canada Revenue Agency, the Senate, the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. All told, Morneau Shepell's contracts with the government are worth over \$14 million.

Does the Minister of Finance also believe that he was naive in admitting that he was guilty and in thinking that he could hide all his conflicts of interest behind a simple donation, for which he will get a tax credit?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance has always been in full compliance with the rules and laws that govern us.

However, I understand why the Conservatives want to focus on the finance minister's personal circumstances and not his record. If we compare his record to theirs, all of the economic indicators show that the Conservatives failed and that we are succeeding. We have the strongest growth in the G7, we have lowered child poverty rates by 40%, and we are helping 900,000 vulnerable seniors through the guaranteed income supplement.

We, on this side of the House, are reducing inequality, and we believe that the economy should work for everybody. It never even occurred to the Conservatives to reduce inequality.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, the finance minister tried to pass off multiple ethics violations as a distraction. Well, the Ethics Commissioner said that she has serious concerns with his bill that would benefit Morneau Shepell. Just before we found this out, the minister suddenly decided to donate millions of dollars to charity. When one gives money under duress, that is not charity, that is self-preservation.

Will the minister finally admit that he failed to live up to basic ethical standards, and will he apologize to Canadians?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think the finance minister has lived up to the Ethics Commissioner's expectations. He has followed her recommendations. He has worked with her from the beginning and will continue to do so, on all matters that fall under her portfolio.

When we look at the finance minister, he is a man who has dedicated the last two years of life to public service, with great results for Canadians. I can tell members that I am very proud. He has achieved great results for all Canadians.

Oral Questions

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brousseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Madam Speaker, charity is usually given out of compassion and not out of fear of losing one's job.

• (1125)

[*Translation*]

The Minister of Finance's sudden fit of charity occurred just before the NDP received a letter from the Ethics Commissioner stating that she has concerns about the Minister of Finance's actions and just before we learned that the Ethics Commissioner had chastised him for not disclosing all of his assets. The minister is trying to distract us all from the real issue and is still refusing to admit that he made a big mistake.

Will the Liberals join us in making sure this kind of thing does not happen again?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner is the entity responsible for preserving the integrity of Parliament and the House of Commons. We follow the Ethics Commissioner's instructions, and the Minister of Finance has always worked with her and will continue doing so to act on her recommendations and ensure that he is in full compliance with the laws governing us.

He announced that he would go the extra mile by divesting his Morneau Shepell shares and placing all his assets in a blind trust. That is what it means to be transparent, and that is what the Minister of Finance and our government are doing.

* * *

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brousseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Madam Speaker, on October 3, Quebec's minister of culture sent a letter to the federal heritage minister.

In the letter, he was critical of the fact that the agreement does not ensure tax and regulatory fairness among all businesses. He also criticized the absence of any guarantees regarding francophone content.

Unlike the federal government, the Government of Quebec seems to have the courage to address these problems, but in order to do so, it needs to see the agreement, and the Minister of Canadian Heritage still refuses to share any details.

Why are the Liberals refusing to make public the deal that they are so proud of?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.): Madam Speaker, we heard the opinions of Quebecers and Canadians everywhere. As part of our #DigiCanCon consultations, we heard from over 30,000 people from across the country. It was obvious that they want a government that finally cares about the arts and supports Canadian culture. We listened and we took action.

We have invested \$2.2 billion in arts and culture, the largest investment in the G7 and the largest investment in the past 30 years in Canada. This is about investing in our creators and promoting their stories and Canadian content around the world.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, the heritage minister keeps claiming that she listened to cultural experts and the industry, but Netflix seems to have had special attention. Not only did it lobby her office multiple times, but it also does not have to pay its fair share for doing business in Canada.

Now, there is a very easy way for the minister to clear up the confusion around this sweetheart deal that she signed with Netflix: just show us the deal.

Will the heritage minister table the deal that she signed with Netflix in this place?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have heard the concerns of Quebec and the concerns of the rest of Canada. In the context of our consultation on digital Cancon, we heard from 30,000 people around this country. What they said to us was very clear. They want a government that finally believes in and supports the arts and Canadian culture.

We have heard, and we have acted. We have invested \$2.2 billion in arts and culture, the largest amount in the G7, and the largest amount in this country in 30 years. This will help our creators. It will help to ensure that Canadian stories are told in Canada and abroad.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ETHICS

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance confirmed two things in his statements yesterday. First, he confirmed that he was in direct conflict of interest and that he and his family have been profiting from that situation for two years. Second, his gesture proves that he takes action only when he is caught red-handed.

The story does not end here. The reality is that the Minister of Finance still owns numbered companies. If he truly wants to be honest with all Canadians, when will he declare all his assets in his numbered companies?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance has only ever acted with the interest of Canadians in mind. Under his leadership, our economy has grown faster than it has in the past 10 years, and the unemployment rate is lower than it has been in the past 10 years. He lowered the child poverty rate by 40% with one of the most ambitious social policies in the country. I think that we can all be proud of the work of this Minister of Finance. I can totally understand why the Conservatives do not want to talk about the decade of darkness when they failed on practically all fronts when it comes to the economy and they failed Canadians.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member seems to have forgotten that, contrary to what the government continues to claim, as a result of the government's economic policies, the wealthiest Canadians have paid \$1 billion less in taxes since the Liberals came to power, compared to when we were in government.

Oral Questions

I will ask the member again. He is shaking his head, but I would just like to tell him that this comes from the Department of Finance, his own department. The question remains. Why does the Minister of Finance not declare all of his assets held in numbered companies, so that Canadians can finally have the truth?

• (1130)

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, all members of Parliament and parliamentarians are required to work with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner and to be fully transparent with her. She makes recommendations based on each person's situation. This is what she did with the Minister of Finance, as soon as he took office, and she recommended that he maintain a conflict of interest screen, which he did. This option was good enough for Denis Lebel and for the member for Milton, when they were in power. The Minister of Finance continues to act with the utmost integrity. As he announced last week, he is doing even more.

[*English*]

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is essential that Canadians have confidence in their government and believe that what it does is in the best interest of Canadians. Canadians should also be able to have confidence that ministers will be honest about their assets and not abuse their office for personal gain, yet this is exactly what the Minister of Finance has done.

My question is simple. What other stocks does the minister own in his numbered companies that could benefit from his ministerial actions?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the finance minister has worked with the Ethics Commissioner. He is collaborating and has always been proactive with the Ethics Commissioner to not only be in full compliance with the rules that govern us but also to follow her recommendations, which he has done. He is going even further by divesting himself of all his shares in Morneau Shepell, and donating to charity any difference in value between the time he took office and today, and putting all his assets in a blind trust so he can focus on the important work he has been doing for all Canadians over the last two years, with remarkable results.

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Madam Speaker, while the government talks about being open and transparent, the finance minister has proven that it just is not true. Two years ago, he said he was going to put his assets in a blind trust, but he did not. He told the Ethics Commissioner that he had disclosed all of his assets, but he had not. He said that he had a tight ethics screen, but he did not.

How can Canadians trust him not to own stocks through his numbered companies, stocks that he could blindly help, like he helped Morneau Shepell?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the finance minister has always worked with the Ethics Commissioner very proactively in a forthcoming and transparent manner. He will continue to do so. That is what he has always done.

Now we are focused on what he has done for the last two years, which is growing the economy; making sure that all Canadians have a fair shot at success; and reducing inequality, something that never occurred to them would be a good thing. This is what we are doing on this side: prosperity for all.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Ethics Commissioner is investigating the finance minister for his involvement in Bill C-27, where he directly benefited from his holdings in Morneau Shepell. We know that those holdings are in a numbered company in Alberta. We also know that he owns several other numbered companies. Will the finance minister come clean and tell the House what else he holds in those other numbered companies?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on this side, we have the utmost trust in the Ethics Commissioner to provide the right path forward for parliamentarians, and we are always forthcoming and transparent with her so she can guide us in our actions. This is what the minister did when he took office. From the very beginning, he has worked with the Ethics Commissioner, and he will continue to do so to make sure that Canadians have the utmost confidence in him as finance minister as he grows our economy and reduces inequality in this country. That is what is expected of the finance minister. That is what he is doing, and we are proud of it.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, too little, too late. Any magnanimous gesture by the Minister of Finance is just an attempt to direct from his grave ethical breach. The Prime Minister, who by the way is also under investigation by the Ethics Commissioner, is allowing this to be swept under the rug rather than dealing with it. This is shocking to Canadians across the country.

Could the finance minister tell us if he will claim a tax credit from this grand gesture?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the finance minister, as he proceeds to donate the difference in the value of the shares between when he took office and today, will work with the Ethics Commissioner. He will always work with the Ethics Commissioner as he moves forward to divest all his shares in Morneau Shepell and place his assets in a blind trust, and then he will keep working for the Canadian economy.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Madam Speaker, an independent review of the CSIS regional office in Toronto has been released.

The review found that a majority of employees do not trust management to ensure a healthy workplace that is free of discrimination. This comes on top of a lawsuit filed by former CSIS employees who have made some extremely serious and troubling allegations.

Will the minister take action to fix CSIS's toxic culture and immediately launch an investigation into this behaviour?

Oral Questions

● (1135)

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this is an extremely serious matter. The former director of CSIS launched the examination the hon. member refers to. The findings of that examination are certainly troubling.

The current director of CSIS has taken personal charge of this matter and has made it very clear that the behaviour being complained of here is absolutely unacceptable. It should not exist in a federal workplace. The Government of Canada will take the necessary steps to make sure that it stops.

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Madam Speaker, I agree with the minister on the seriousness of the allegations, but the issue here is that there is clearly a cultural problem, and one third-party report is not enough.

We are asking the minister to launch a full investigation into this type of discrimination, these allegations of homophobia and Islamophobia, and also to investigate to make sure it is not affecting the work CSIS does with regard to the people it targets. More importantly, will the minister undertake to make sure that the managers responsible for this behaviour are held directly responsible, and if necessary, fired?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Madam Speaker, CSIS, indeed all the agencies in the public safety portfolio, know very clearly my attitude with respect to these matters. This behaviour is unacceptable. When it happens, there must be appropriate consequences that follow.

I would simply point out to the hon. gentleman that the legal procedures that are engaged here are at an early stage of evolving, and they need to properly take their course, but they will be followed very carefully by me and my officials to determine an appropriate outcome. This kind of behaviour is simply—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, the people in my riding work hard to make ends meet. They pay their fair share of taxes, and they expect their politicians to do the same thing.

If it seems unethical that someone shaping public policy should have the ability to directly benefit from that policy, well, it is because it is. The minister owns several other numbered companies that could put him in additional conflicts. Will he finally do the right thing and tell Canadians what is in them?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I have mentioned, the finance minister has always worked with the Ethics Commissioner and will continue to do so to follow all the rules that govern us in the House. He is going even further than the recommendations she initially provided to him.

The member talks about Canadians having difficulty making ends meet. They were neglected for 10 years under his government. We are doing all we can to support middle-class Canadians and those working hard to join them.

While they were raising the TFSA limit, to which only 3% of the wealthiest Canadians contribute, we are lowering taxes for nine million Canadians. We are giving more to nine out of 10 Canadian families, on average \$2,300. That is how—

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I must remind opposition members to be respectful and to listen when someone else has the floor, whether they like the answer or not.

[English]

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, for the first time, we have a finance minister and a Prime Minister who are under investigation. What world do we live in if one can just pay oneself out of problems? Oh, right, it is if one is a billionaire finance minister.

The conduct of the finance minister is appalling. While trying to bilk hard-working small business owners out of their money, he was sitting at the cabinet table agreeing to sponsor a pension bill that would grease his own pockets. The Ethics Commissioner has seen fit to look into his shady actions.

Caught red-handed, will the finance minister finally come clean with Canadians?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I understand that members want to keep focusing on the finance minister's finances while we focus on Canadians' ability to pay their bills and Canadians' ability to prosper and be successful so that all Canadians, regardless of what their situation is at birth, have a fair shot at success, and regardless of the cards they are dealt at birth, can play a good hand. That is why we have put in place, and this finance minister has put in place, the Canada child benefit that is reducing child poverty by 40% in this country. That is how we are helping Canadians from all walks of life. While they keep playing politics, we work for Canadians.

● (1140)

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance introduced Bill C-27 to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act. Immediately afterward, his shares at Morneau Shepell jumped by \$2 million. We all know he forgot about his fancy villa in France, but surely he did not forget about the company he has a million shares in, the company his father founded, which just so happens to be a pension management company. Stocks go up; credibility goes right down. When, with the Ethics Commissioner investigating the minister's actions, can the minister inform this House what other investigations he is facing?

Oral Questions

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know they like alternative facts on the other side of the House. They talk about the share value in Morneau Shepell. Two weeks after Bill C-27 was introduced, the share price was down 12% from what it was when the bill was introduced. They can keep playing politics. We will keep working for Canadians on this side of the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I must once again remind the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent and his colleagues that they need to listen to what is happening in the House and to speak only when they have the floor.

Order. The hon. member for Lévis—Lotbinière.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Madam Speaker, if I drive 150 kilometres an hour through a school zone, I will lose my licence and my car.

A charitable donation is not going to minimize my crime and give me my privileges back. Under the Conflict of Interest Act, I am required to declare my assets within 60 days of my appointment. The Minister of Finance has yet to do that after 760 days. I sympathize with the parliamentary secretary who is stuck having to defend the indefensible.

When will the Minister of Finance disclose his holdings in his other numbered companies and why is he untouchable?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am not defending the indefensible. I am defending a Minister of Finance who has always complied with the law and the rules and has always followed the recommendations of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

First and foremost, I am defending a Minister of Finance and a government who have done more for Canadians who need it most than the party in opposition did during its 10 years in power. The Conservative government was far too focused on giving tax breaks to the wealthy and it neglected the middle class.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, last week the NDP proposed a very sensible plan. We asked the government to begin talks within one year to start the process of implementing universal pharmacare. Unfortunately, Liberals joined with the Conservatives and defeated our motion. However, what just happened at the meeting of health ministers? The provinces forced the federal government to add it to the agenda. Doctors, nurses, health professionals, policy experts, the business community, and the public, and now the provinces, all want universal pharmacare as soon as possible. Why do the Liberals not?

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of

Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canadians pay too much for prescription drugs, and our government is taking bold action now, in partnership with provincial and territorial partners, to bring those prices down. We have joined the provinces and territories as a member of the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance, which negotiates lower drug prices on behalf of public drug plans.

Through budget 2017, we have invested over \$140 million to help improve access to pharmaceuticals and to support innovation within the health care system. These are the actions that will save Canadians money as we continue to work with the provinces and territories to make prescription drugs more affordable and accessible for all Canadians.

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BANKRUPTCY

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, everyone knows our bankruptcy legislation is failing to protect Canadian workers. It is why the Liberals promised to fix the legislation when in opposition and why the Prime Minister promised to protect workers during the election, but since then they have done nothing but help wealthy corporations. Today it is Sears workers and pensioners, but tomorrow it could be workers at another company. If the Liberals are serious about working for the middle class, they must protect our workers and retirees.

It is simple. Will the government commit to changing bankruptcy and insolvency laws?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first and foremost our government truly believes in secure pensions. That is why we enhanced and strengthened the Canada pension plan.

With regards to the challenges the families are facing at Sears Canada, we understand how difficult this is for the workers, their families, and the many communities involved. That is why, through Service Canada, we have engaged with Sears representatives across the country. We have held more than 82 different sessions to assist them during this difficult time.

* * *

● (1145)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Madam Speaker, here in Canada we are incredibly lucky to enjoy such a magnificent natural environment, marked by vast landscapes, soaring mountains, and diverse wildlife. However, Canadians know that because of climate change, our environment is under threat. Across the country, communities are looking for meaningful ways to contribute to the fight against climate change.

Can the government please update us on how it is working to empower grassroots action on the environment?

Oral Questions

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am thankful to the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour for the leadership he has shown at the environment committee.

Taking strong action on climate change and a clean, healthy environment are priorities for our government. On October 13 in North Vancouver, my hometown, I was pleased to announce more than \$4 million in new funding for 66 community projects under the EcoAction community funding program. This funding will support local action at the community level to help fight climate change and to ensure that Canadian families enjoy a clean and healthy environment, including project like the pollinator gardens being established by the Tsleil-Waututh and the Squamish—

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

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, Albertans cannot catch a break under this Liberal government. In their most recent example of “it moves, then tax it” policy, they are now raising taxes on vulnerable Canadians suffering from diabetes.

A mother in my riding reached out to me with a desperate plea. Her son needs seven needles a day to manage his condition, but no longer qualifies for the disability credit. Enough is enough. How much more are my constituents supposed to take from the government before it will realize that its endless taxation is hurting Canadian families?

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that all Canadians have access to the credits and benefits they are entitled to.

Let me be absolutely clear that there has been no change to the eligibility criteria for the DTC related to diabetes. Our government is actually making it easier for Canadians through private or online nurse practitioners to complete their application process.

The concerns raised by some of these groups are worrisome. We have already met with them and will continue to work with them.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Madam Speaker, while the Prime Minister takes selfies, shows the world his socks, and flashes a phony smile, people suffering from serious mental health problems are being denied the disability tax credit. The Liberals have no compassion and would rather line the finance minister's pockets.

Will the minister immediately order her department's collection agents to revert to the criteria they were using last April? Will she stop blaming everyone else and start taking responsibility?

[*English*]

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I have stated time and again, our government is committed to ensuring that all Canadians have access to the credits and benefits they are entitled to.

I find it a bit rich that the Conservatives complain about a change they made. Our government is making it easier to access services with the support of the DTC, including mental health services. That is why the approval rate for the DTC in relation to mental health was actually at an all-time high in 2016 and 2017.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, yesterday, I asked the Liberals why they had increased taxes on people with type 1 diabetes, and the response was the same as it is today, that nothing has changed. However, something has changed because 80% of the people who were previously approved by a doctor to receive the benefits are now being rejected.

Today, we learned that people with autism, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and other mental health issues are also being cut off. Why can this government not get their spending under control instead of this heartless tax hike on the most vulnerable?

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that all Canadians have access to the benefits and credits they are entitled to. That is why the approval rate for the DTC in relation to mental health was at an all-time high in 2016-17. We are investing \$5 billion through budget 2017 to ensure there is mental health support for more than 500,000 young Canadians under the age of 25.

We will continue to work in collaboration with provinces and territories to make high-quality mental health services more available to all Canadians, because that is what Canadians expect.

● (1150)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, the government is denying disability tax credits to people with mental health illnesses, diabetes, and autism. Thousands have relied on that support for many years.

Someone reviewing paperwork in Ottawa has no business overturning physician and nurse practitioner decisions made as a result of clinical examinations.

Will the minister stand up and commit to ending this latest tax grab targeting our young vulnerable Canadians?

Oral Questions

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, again, as I stated, our government is committed to ensuring that all Canadians have access to the credits and benefits they are entitled to.

Our government is improving access to the disability tax credit and mental health services. We made the DTC more accessible than ever by allowing nurse practitioners to fill out their patients' application forms. We have actually simplified the forms related to the DTC. That is why approval rates for the DTC in relation to mental health were at an all-time high in 2016-17.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind members that there is still a lot of noise coming from the opposition side. Again, I must remind members of the respect they need to provide. If this continues, someone will end up losing a question.

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[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Madam Speaker, there have been a number of environmental concerns connected to the *Kathryn Spirit* since 2011. We are talking about dozens of tonnes of hazardous materials and contaminated water.

I received a lot of messages about the dismantling of the wreck and how long the work will take. The *Kathryn Spirit* saga has been dragging on for six years.

My questions are simple. Can the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard assure us that the contractors have the necessary environmental expertise? If the dismantling and restoration of the site falls behind, will penalties be assessed?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this is one more promise kept, thanks to our Minister of Transportation, among others. Our government is committed to protecting the health and safety of Canadians and our waters. We are taking the necessary steps to ensure the safe, effective, and permanent removal of the *Kathryn Spirit*. Between July 2016 and June 2017, Public Services and Procurement Canada conducted the many assessments and studies required for dismantling the ship, and following an open and transparent procurement process, the contract for dismantling the entire ship was awarded.

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[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Madam Speaker, Kinder Morgan plans a massive expansion of its Burnaby Mountain oil tank farm.

The project poses serious risks to the environment and the surrounding population, which includes Simon Fraser University. Local residents, the university, and the City of Burnaby all oppose the expansion because they believe the risks are just too high.

This week local residents wrote a letter to the Minister of Public Safety demanding that he suspend the project until his department undertakes a thorough and public review.

Will he listen to British Columbians and immediately order this review?

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the decision that we took on the Trans Mountain project was based on facts and evidence, and was in the national interest.

We have listened to thousands of Canadians who have told us that we have a responsibility to get our resources to market, to take action to protect the environment, and to create good-paying jobs.

The approval of Trans Mountain will create 15,000 good, middle-class jobs for Canadians. The project is subject to 157 legally binding conditions to protect the environment and to ensure that the project moves forward in the safest, most environmentally favourable manner possible.

* * *

[Translation]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, the people of Lac-Mégantic are waiting. The town council is feeling ignored. People's health is taking too long to improve. Two weeks ago, we learned that high school students have been hit hard by post-traumatic stress syndrome. What is the government waiting for? When will it take action? The Minister of Transport says that this is his first priority, but he needs to put his money where his mouth is. The people of Lac-Mégantic were the victims of the worst rail disaster in Canadian history. When will they finally be able to find peace?

• (1155)

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

As always, our thoughts are with the families and friends of the victims of the Lac-Mégantic disaster. I want to assure the people of Lac-Mégantic that we are working very actively on this file. We are working with the province, and as members know, a BAPE study was recently conducted. I am working with Mayor Jean-Guy Cloutier, and I will work with his successor.

I know how important this is for the people of Lac-Mégantic, and we are working on this file.

* * *

[English]

ETHICS

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, yesterday, when I asked the Minister of Sport about his inappropriate use of House resources to advance the interests of his father during last week's civic election campaign in Calgary, his parliamentary secretary said that "we will take responsibility for our actions" and deal with the Ethics Commissioner.

Oral Questions

I would like to give the Minister of Sport another opportunity today to inform the House if he has in fact reported his unethical behaviour to the Ethics Commissioner and if there are any other potential conflicts that he disclosed at the same time.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary for Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities is very proud of his father.

At the age of 74, after 40 years in education, he decided to campaign for school trustee in Calgary to make a positive difference. The minister makes no apology for supporting his father's campaign. However, looking back, the minister admits that there should have been two separate tables for literature.

* * *

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in the Sudbury riding, we are proud of our cultural and artistic sector, which is a major contributor to the prosperity and economic diversity of our region.

I was fortunate to take part in an announcement recently with the Minister of Canadian Heritage regarding an investment that will greatly benefit our region's creative economy.

Can the minister tell us how the government is promoting collaboration among artists and creative industries, while contributing to the vitality of francophone minorities in northern Ontario?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Sudbury for his question and for his dedication to the Franco-Ontarian community in northern Ontario.

Two weeks ago, the Minister of Canadian Heritage was proud to announce an investment of \$12.5 million from the Government of Canada towards the construction of Place des Arts du Grand Sudbury. Investments like this one contribute to our vision of a creative Canada, while also creating good jobs for the middle class and new opportunities for artists, creators, and the entire community.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, Health Canada will issue part I of the revised Canada food guide in early 2018. Its proposal suggests that a new category will be created that lumps together plant-based proteins with meat protein. Animal-based protein provides a more complete amino acid profile. It is a source of key vitamins and minerals. It has an excellent protein-to-calorie ratio.

Why would Health Canada risk the health of Canadians by discouraging the eating of meat? Where is the beef?

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government is committed to improving the health and well-being of all Canadians. Health Canada's proposed revisions to the Canada food guide are based on

the latest scientific evidence on diet and health. We are consulting with stakeholders, experts, and the general public on our proposed recommendations and will use that feedback to finalize our recommendations to ensure that the new guidance and supporting resources are relevant and useful to all Canadians. The goal of Health Canada's healthy eating strategy is to make the healthy choice the easy choice for all Canadians.

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Madam Speaker, yesterday, the heritage minister tried to blame our previous Conservative government for lack of winter maintenance at the national Holocaust monument. That is complete nonsense. If the Liberals want it open year-round, they could do it. This is the same Liberal government that neglected to mention the Jewish people on the dedication plaque. Did the Liberals think this monument was not important enough to keep it open year-round?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.): Madam Speaker, we were proud to stand with members of both sides of this House to inaugurate the national Holocaust monument to commemorate survivors, and the six million Jewish people, as well as other victims, who were murdered during the Holocaust. We also plan to stand in solidarity in the fight against anti-Semitism, and all forms of racism.

Our government is committing to building a more inclusive society. The National Capital Commission, which is an independent crown corporation, is responsible for the day-to-day operations, management, maintenance, and safety of the monument.

* * *

● (1200)

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Ms. Mary Ng (Markham—Thornhill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Bill C-50 would provide Canadians with an unprecedented level of transparency in political fundraising. This bill would require the public to be notified of fundraisers that cost more than \$200 to attend, and involve cabinet, leaders of opposition parties, and leadership contestants. It would also require that parties publish who attended these fundraisers.

[Translation]

Would the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions tell the House about the progress of Bill C-50?

[English]

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Bill C-50 was reported back from committee to the House this week. I want to thank the members of the procedure and House affairs committee for their hard work and sound advice.

Oral Questions

Canadians want greater transparency with respect to how their political leaders fundraise. Therefore, it was very disappointing that all opposition members voted against Bill C-50 at committee. It was also disappointing that the leader of the official opposition has not responded to my letter from several weeks ago inviting him and his party to proactively adopt the transparency measures of Bill C-50, like the Liberal Party has. Our government is committed to providing this transparency, and we look forward to working with all parliamentarians to secure the passage—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Madam Speaker, the minister recently met with his American counterparts to discuss illegal border crossings. Our border officers have been telling us that they do not have the resources to deal with all of these people once they are on Canadian soil. Many of them disappear into thin air and do not report to Canadian authorities.

I will ask again: did the minister ask the U.S. government to close the loophole in the the Canada-U.S. safe third country agreement?

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as we all know, the safe third country agreement is a very important tool that enables Canada and the United States to work together in handling systematic asylum claims. The agreement is based on a principle recognized by the UN refugee agency holding that individuals must claim asylum in the first safe country they reach. Canada's UN refugee agency representative said it would be irresponsible to withdraw from the agreement. The United States is satisfying the terms of the agreement, and we will continue to monitor the situation very closely.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Simon Marcil (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is not a great idea to have a minister making decisions that he himself benefits from. His situation is reminiscent of the Paul Martin era. The minister says it is not all that bad, because he is going to make up for his mistake by donating to charity. After being caught with both hands in the cookie jar, he is offering us a cookie to look the other way. Is he trying to buy our silence?

I would like the Minister of Finance to tell us exactly how much money he earned from each decision he made.

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, every time the minister has made a decision, there has always been a conflict of interest screen in place. This was one of the recommendations made by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner when the minister was first appointed, and he followed it as he has always followed every one of her recommendations. This week and last week, he announced that he would go even further by divesting himself of all his shares in Morneau Shepell and placing all of his assets in a blind trust, so that he can continue to work for Canadians by reducing inequality and

growing the economy, as he has been doing very successfully for the past two years.

* * *

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, the heritage minister's officials said that she should tax Netflix, as did the experts, the artists, the producers, the creators, and the Government of Quebec, but she could not care less. Now, Quebec is left to clean up her mess by taxing Netflix on the provincial level, but she refuses to make the agreement public so we can know how to go about it.

Having failed to do her job, will she at least let others do theirs and disclose her deal with Netflix to Quebec?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are very proud of our creative community and we are taking concrete measures to support them. Our vision for Canada's creative future is threefold: investing in our creators, ensuring their stories are told, and promoting Canadian content at home and throughout the world.

Our government is supporting our cultural sector with a \$2-billion investment. Our new vision includes protecting our creative projects and investing even more in the Canada Media Fund.

* * *

● (1205)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Simon Marcil (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Madrid government has proclaimed that the people of Catalonia cannot vote on their future. It declared it illegal to voice the people's will and dissolved the Catalan parliament just this morning. It is abusing, imprisoning, and violating democracy and the right of the people to self determination. Its intransigence will stymie any resolution to this democratic crisis.

In light of Madrid's show of force, when will the Government of Canada call on the international community to mediate, as it did with Ukraine and Crimea?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canada very much values its relationship with Spain. The situation in Catalonia remains a domestic matter within Spain. A dialogue between Spain and Catalonia within the constitutional framework is still the best course of action. In accordance with international legal principles recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada, these decisions have to be taken within the constitutional framework. That being said, Canada recognizes a united Spain.

Government Orders

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.): *Qujannamiik uqaqti.* Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs. While I was visiting communities in my riding, many constituents expressed concerns about Nunavut's outdated power plants. More than half of Nunavut's power plants have exceeded their operational lifespan, putting communities at high risk. They are also 100% reliant on diesel fuel, outdated, and inefficient.

Given the government's mandate to encourage the use of clean technology and reduce harmful greenhouse gases, how does the minister plan to work with the Government of Nunavut to address this urgent concern?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government is committed to moving rural and remote communities off diesel, as identified under the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change. Canada's Arctic energy fund provides \$175 million to Nunavut to be used for upgrading the existing energy systems to improve energy reliability and efficiency and allow for integration of renewable energy.

Northerners are on the front line of climate change. They want to be part of the solution. We will continue to work together to ensure a sustainable future for northerners.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton have a point of order?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, I have a letter proving the Liberals made changes to the disability tax credit and I would like to seek unanimous consent to table it in the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the member have unanimous consent to table the document?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2017, NO. 2

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (for the Minister of Finance) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-63, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017 and other measures.

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

* * *

[English]

PETITIONS**PALLIATIVE CARE**

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand and present this petition

from residents in my riding who request the House of Commons to specifically identify hospice palliative care as a defined medical service covered under the Canada Health Act so that provincial and territorial governments will be entitled to funds under the Canada health transfer system to be used to provide accessible and available hospice palliative care for all residents of Canada in their respective provinces and territories.

* * *

● (1210)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-46, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (offences relating to conveyances) and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly has 17 minutes remaining.

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to pick up where I left off at the beginning of question period. I was talking about educating the public. At the risk of repeating myself, for those who are just tuning in, we can all see that the Liberals failed to really work with the provinces to ensure they have the planning time and resources they need to implement public education programs. These programs are so important to make sure people are educated about both marijuana use and, as we have been discussing, impaired driving.

I will move on to something else for now, but before I do, I think it is very important to emphasize something. Despite some of the comments I heard in this morning's debate that practically insinuated the opposite, all members in the House, across party lines, agree that impaired driving, whether involving drugs or alcohol, is a scourge. We want to eradicate it. There is no doubt about that.

Government Orders

As is the case with illness, these tragedies do not discriminate. Everyone here, across party lines, has been affected, or knows someone who has been affected, by the horrible consequences of someone making the tragic mistake of driving while impaired. It is important to acknowledge that, because we might not agree on how to go about, on the one hand, dealing with the new reality of legalized marijuana, and on the other hand, keeping our roads safe.

[*English*]

One of the big issues with the bill is this notion of mandatory stops and testing. This came up during the public safety committee hearings on a private member's bill that was tabled by a Conservative member, which sought to do something quite similar. Nothing in life is random, particularly, and unfortunately, in some of the work that is done in policing.

If we call for random mandatory testing, the odds increase exponentially for things like profiling, people of a specific socio-economic background being targeted. The New Democrats cannot accept that. I know my party's leader, Jagmeet Singh, considers this extremely important. It was central to the work he did in his leadership campaign, but also the work he now wants to do as leader of the New Democratic Party. He has said, much more eloquently than I can say in this place, that as a person of colour, he has been a victim of this.

When we put laws in place to ensure public safety, it always needs to be done in a way that ensures we will not be unfairly discriminating against certain segments of the population. I am not pulling this out of a hat. This was shared with the public safety committee by experts, although not on the specific line of study of this bill, even though that comment was raised by different members of civil society, notably the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and others. It was raised when other bills were tabled, both private members' bills and Conservative government bills that were discussed in the previous Parliament.

When we take this approach, we have to ensure we do not increase the risk of a problem that, let us face it, already exists, which is the problem of racial profiling. This is one of our concerns.

• (1215)

[*Translation*]

Another concern we have has to do with the THC levels that must be detected in a driver's blood before the driver can be charged with an offence. The bill barely mentions this, which is very troubling. How can police determine if an offence has been committed, or a crime in this case, if the law does not specify the precise quantity of THC that must be detected in the blood? That is extremely troubling.

In the United States, the various states that have legalized marijuana each take a different approach. Colorado and Washington state, for instance, have set a blood THC limit that must be detected before a driver can be charged with a traffic or criminal offence. Oregon, which has also legalized marijuana, decided to be more flexible and use the same test used for suspected alcohol-impaired drivers, that is, a test based on visual markers.

The lack of a fixed THC limit is compounded by the lack of police training. This is not to insult our men and women in uniform. It is something they themselves have said. This is yet another example of

how the Liberals' planning fell short. Although we support the legalization plan in principle, we would have thought it was obvious that the consultation with police should have been much more thorough. The Liberals should have realized that police officers would need additional training, for example, to recognize the symptoms of marijuana impairment in drivers or to make proper use of roadside screening devices. They should have sat down with police to set a blood THC limit, something this bill does not cover. These are things they could have done in collaboration with police.

To go back to a question asked earlier by a Conservative MP, this also seems to be a case of too many players involved. There are the municipal police forces in some big cities, the Sûreté du Québec and the Ontario Provincial Police, some cities' own police services, and of course the RCMP, which serves outlying regions in the other provinces.

I am not questioning the hierarchy or the division of powers within Canada's different police forces, but there seem to be a lot of players at the table. There are many voices that still need to be heard, and these people think there is a lot of work left to be done, something that has not happened so far.

[*English*]

The importance of that training was brought up in committee. Also, the importance of training police officers to recognize the symptoms and use these technologies goes in two directions. First, it is obviously essential for public safety so they can do their jobs properly. It goes without saying they need to properly identify people who are driving under the influence. However, they must also know who is not driving under the influence, who has not reached the legal limit of what they are allowed to either drink or smoke, depending on which substance they are dealing with. It is not only a question of public safety; it is also a question of protecting and ensuring the rights of Canadians, which police officers are willing to do, but require the proper training to do that, as the representatives of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police mentioned.

The issue of training also extends to the technology used. When we hear the experts and look at different jurisdictions throughout the world, the jury is still out as to the efficacy of certain tools that can be used, particularly when it comes to marijuana, to measure someone's physical state after consuming marijuana. One great example of that, as we heard in committee and as has been mentioned in other platforms over the course of the debate, both here in the House and throughout civil society, is the issue of how long traces of marijuana can be found in someone's system. Traces of THC can still be found in someone's blood for days, even weeks in some cases.

Government Orders

It is difficult for me to fathom a situation where someone might use marijuana recreationally, in what will then be a legal and appropriate way in the privacy of their own home, make the responsible decision to save lives and not go behind the wheel. Then a couple of days later, while driving into work, could potentially be found as having a false positive, even though he or she is no longer under the influence and is at 100% of his or her mental faculties and physical abilities to drive a vehicle without putting anyone's life in danger. That is extremely problematic, particularly when we connect that with some of the issues and concerns we have with regard to certain types of profiling that might happen with these random mandatory tests. We are extremely concerned about that.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

I heard the Minister of Justice talk about that this morning, when she said that there would be rigorous evaluation of the various technologies and that law enforcement would be properly informed and would participate in the process. The problem is that this is all happening very quickly, without the necessary consultations, and we are very concerned about how effective these technologies will be to ensure that the tests are viable.

For example, after a person provides an oral fluid sample, he or she could go to the police station and have to provide a blood sample. We are then talking about several types of tests, which shows a certain inefficiency and uncertainty relative to the samples taken for determining a driver's state and the levels of various substances in the person's blood. A number of experts have raised this serious concern, which the bill does nothing to address.

As I said, this is directly connected to our concerns about profiling. If someone who had allegedly consumed a substance long before being stopped, according to the proposed criteria, this individual could be caught and suffer some serious lifelong consequences, even if he or she is a responsible citizen. This person could end up with a criminal record and could even go to prison. This could even lead to some very complicated legal proceedings that will have an impact on the legal system.

In Quebec, with the Jordan case and the shortage of judges, a number of violence and murder cases were thrown out because of delays in the legal system. We could draw a link between this reality and the challenges that could arise from this bill. We have to take that into account.

The Conservatives are talking a lot about mandatory minimum sentencing, a public policy that failed under their watch here in Canada, as well as elsewhere in the world. Judges are appointed to use their judgment on a case-by-case basis. Taking that discretion away from them is not one of the values we promote in our justice system and it is not something we want to promote as legislators. Mandatory minimum sentencing goes completely against those principles.

I mention that because the Conservatives keep bringing up this argument and, if I understand correctly, it is one of the reasons why they are opposed to Bill C-46. Meanwhile, a bill on random breath testing was introduced by a Conservative MP. The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security heard not only from legal experts, but also from psychologists, who explained to us

the way of thinking of those who make the reckless decision to get behind the wheel when impaired, something that often proves to have tragic consequences.

• (1225)

[*English*]

Those experts shared something extremely interesting with us. They explained to us that the key thing we needed to look at as parliamentarians when it came to this issue was dissuading people. After all, that has to be the objective. If we are not dissuading people, then we already are dealing with the tragic consequences of driving under the influence. If we do not want to live with those kinds of consequences, then we need to dissuade people in the first place.

The argument is that punishment is one way of doing it. However, these experts told us that the magnitude of the punishment was not the disincentive to driving under the influence. The true disincentive was the likelihood of getting caught. That requires resources to the communities, to policing, and to education. This would allow us to teach fellow citizens that getting behind the wheel under the influence would not only be putting their own lives in danger, but they would be putting the lives of others in danger as well. This point is extremely important. Dissuasion and prevention are the objectives here. We do not want to see any more lives lost because of driving under the influence.

[*Translation*]

That is why we must invest in education. That is why we must ensure that our police have the resources they need to make arrests over the holidays, for example. Not every police force is able to do that because it takes human and financial resources. The numbers speak for themselves. We could work with organizations, such as Operation Red Nose, and support them. We know that, by putting these measures in place, we can reduce this alarming statistic, the scourge on our society that is impaired driving.

[*English*]

Let me conclude by saying that we will oppose Bill C-46 for the reasons I explained, because of the risks of profiling, because we feel these technologies are unreliable in measuring the level of THC in someone's blood, and because of the lack of a clear number of what the level of THC in someone's blood has to be in order to consider it a criminal offence.

However, let me be clear. That does not take away from the fact that no matter which party we may be in, we all agree that this is an alarming situation that needs to be dealt with.

[*Translation*]

We think that the government needs to focus on education and on giving the police the resources they need to eliminate this problem once and for all. I think everyone can agree on that.

[*English*]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of the things I am very concerned about are the lack of resources that have been devoted to get the police ready across the country for the doubling of impaired drug driving charges we are likely to see with the legalization of marijuana.

Government Orders

The government seems to be very proud about the \$161 million that it has given for the police, and the \$9.8 million for training. However, these are very small amounts compared to what has been done in Washington and Colorado, for example.

I wonder if the member shares my concern that not enough resources and time have been allotted to this.

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Madam Speaker, I absolutely share that concern. As I said at the outset of my speech, one of the criticisms we have had with this plan is on the inadequate consultations that have taken place with the provinces. We see how some of them are reacting, particularly when I look at my home province of Quebec, for example.

That point is even more important when we consider that, both in Quebec and Ontario, with such large populations, we have provincial police forces that are obviously going to be ensuring road safety and doing roadside stops. They need to be working with their provincial ministries, which the government seems to have left twisting in the wind.

I also believe that police officers will be the first ones to talk about the virtues of education and prevention. Police officers do not want to make these arrests. They, as we do, want to see prevention, so that we do not see lives lost in the first place.

How will education happen? It is hard to say right now. Certainly the provinces will bear a big load of that burden, which is part of the failure that the Liberal government has had on this front, despite our support, more broadly speaking, of legalization.

• (1230)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Beloeil—Chambly for bringing to light so many of the shortcomings in Bill C-46, which the Liberals are trying to ram through before July 1, 2018. They are putting the cart before the horse.

Of the many shortcomings he listed, one really touches a nerve with me: the lack of resources for prevention. We know that young people between the ages of 16 and 25 consume more marijuana than any other drug. We know that drug-related traffic accidents often involve young people between the ages of 16 and 25. The Liberals have, on many occasions, refused to invest more in prevention. Youth advocacy groups are calling for more prevention, and people on the front lines who work with youth want more money for prevention because there is not enough. Every time the Liberals talk about legalizing marijuana, young people figure that if the government wants to legalize it, it must not be bad for them, what could be the harm, it is already legal, they can use it and nobody is going to stop them. There are consequences to using marijuana, however, and young people need to be aware of them. If the government does not invest money in prevention, that is a problem.

Even though we are in the midst of an opioid crisis, the Liberals said they would spend \$2 million on prevention campaigns targeting all drugs. By comparison, Colorado spent \$4 million on prevention in 2015 alone.

What are my colleague's thoughts on this subject in particular?

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I also take this opportunity to congratulate her on her work on this issue. She has had the opportunity to ask the government a number of questions in the House of Commons on this very topic. However, the responses have been less than convincing, not only in terms of figures, as I mentioned in my speech, but also regarding taxation.

After all, the government could have committed to dedicating a certain percentage of the proceeds to education and prevention. It could have discussed and negotiated with the provinces to ensure that they do the same on their end. I know that the various ministries involved in the Quebec government have talked about the importance of education and prevention, and have spoken out about this shortcoming regarding legalization more broadly.

This is directly related to Bill C-46, because anything we do to try to tackle the scourge of impaired driving must include education and prevention; I want to reiterate that. After all, we do not want to be left only to deal with the consequences; rather, we want to prevent them altogether.

[*English*]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, is my hon. colleague aware that there are only 246 days left before the government intends to legalize marijuana?

I fully agree with what he is saying about us needing a public education program that is similar to what MADD did to try to reduce drunk driving. However, the fact remains that the RFP for the government's public education plan was due back on October 16, to pick a contractor so that it could begin to put together a public education program. That is not going to be ready any time soon. Was the member aware of this?

Mr. Matthew Dubé: It is certainly an important point, Madam Speaker. Again, this is the failing of the approach that the Liberals have taken. This is a complicated issue. It requires many people around the table, many of whom feel that they were either not at the table or not there long enough to properly execute what needs to be done.

I will go back to what we heard from police. They said that they need more training, that they want to be able to do the job they need to do. The reason why that is so important is because it is two-pronged. On the one hand, it goes without saying that better police training will go a long way to ensuring public safety. At the same time, if we also want to protect people's rights and make sure we are not getting these false positives and things, that is another reason for why training is so important.

There are all of these issues, whether money, education programs, training, consultations with the provinces, how it is going to be sold, etc. This has been one of the biggest issues with the Liberals plan, and it is unfortunate that the provinces have been stuck with picking up the pieces. In most cases that we have seen so far, they are doing their damndest, if I can say it that way. At the same time, it certainly shows a failed approach by the Liberal government, something it said it would do better.

Government Orders

• (1235)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I had the privilege of sitting on the health committee while it studied Bill C-45, the companion legislation that would legalize cannabis. My colleagues and I heard time and time again how important it is to base sound policy on facts, on evidence. A lot of mythology has accumulated over the last decades, about cannabis in particular. We also heard clearly that Canadian youth are among the second-highest users of cannabis in the world. In order to have an impact on them, we have to learn how to speak properly to them. That starts with giving them credible information.

The government has claimed over and over again that it is taking an evidence-based approach to this legislation. However, so far, I have heard no clear answers on a number of questions. Is finding two nanograms of THC in a millilitre of blood truly a sign of impairment? Do we have the equipment that can actually measure it? The government answers by saying it does not really know. I do not know how it can have an evidence-based approach to this legislation, and at the same time legislate, when it does not have hard science to back it up.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague could comment on that, and whether this legislation will be successful if Canadians, particularly youth, do not find the underlying concepts to be legitimate or valid.

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his great work on this file, at committee in particular. It is a complicated issue. The question he asks and the comments he makes are very interesting and important. I will admit that even I have sometimes heard contradictory information with respect to what level of THC is required in the blood to be in a state of impairment and, as is the case with this bill, to lead to impaired driving. I think that is certainly a huge challenge. As my colleague mentioned, the fact that the government does not have the answer to that is extremely concerning.

The issue here, and I will speak as the NDP's public safety critic, goes back to the work that policemen do. If we, as legislators, are grappling with these issues, and if the government does not seem to have the answers, then obviously police officers will need more than that. They want that fact-based information as well. My colleague mentioned about young people needing credible information. Certainly, police officers, when doing the work prescribed to them by a bill like Bill C-46, would also need that kind of credible information. The government does not have it right now. Therefore, I think it has a lot of homework to do before we can get this right.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

Certainly, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-46, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (offences relating to conveyances) and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, also known as the impaired driving legislation. As we know, this bill is the accompanying legislation to Bill C-45 on the legalization of marijuana, which I studied at the health committee with my hon. colleague from Vancouver Kingsway.

This particular bill, Bill C-46, seeks to create new and higher mandatory fines and maximum penalties for impaired driving, as

well as to authorize mandatory roadside screening for alcohol. I am in favour of taking a strong stance against impaired driving, but there is so much wrong with this bill that I am not sure I can cover all of it in just 10 minutes. However, I will try.

First of all, as I have said and will continue to say many times in the House, there are only 246 days left until the government can meet its arbitrary deadline for the legalization of marijuana. The provinces, police, and municipalities have made it clear that they are not ready. When this legislation passes the House, which will take some time, it then needs to go to the Senate. If the Senate amends it, it will come back to the House. When it is finalized, the provinces can have certainty about their legislation, which they need to line up with this legislation. When the provinces are finished with their legislation, the municipalities can then line up their legislation with the provincial legislation that in turn lines up with the federal legislation. It is at the municipal level that many concerns have been expressed about this bill, because it is the local police who will have to address the drug-impaired driving issue.

We already have a big problem with impaired driving. Right now, 16% of traffic fatalities are related to alcohol-impaired driving, and 24% to drug-impaired driving, of which the most frequent kind of drug involved is marijuana, and then there is another 18% involving a combination of the two. If we look at other jurisdictions that have legalized marijuana, all of them have seen an increase in drug-impaired driving. In Washington state, fatalities from drug-impaired driving, in this case from marijuana, doubled. In Colorado, it increased by 32%. There will be a lot more of these impaired cases to deal with. With that in mind, it is extremely troubling that there is no test for impairment.

The Liberal government always talks about being fact and evidence-based and taking a science-based approach. Well, here is what the science can do. Today, it can detect THC in the saliva and in the blood, but there is no research or correlation indicating whether that is related to impairment. There are a number of factors at play. For example, someone taking a huge dose of medicinal marijuana on a long-term basis might always have THC show up, but may be so used to it that they are not impaired. Other people who may have experienced second-hand smoke, for example, may have THC show up in their blood, but are also not impaired. By coming before the science we need to test for marijuana impairment, this legislation is just irresponsible.

Government Orders

As for the drug recognition training needed by police officers, the police have said they will probably need about 2,000 of these officers across the country. Right now, we have 600. To train 1,400 people will not just take a day. This training requires multiple sessions, and a lot of those sessions happen in the United States. We can appreciate that the U.S. training sessions are all booked up because of the many states that are legalizing marijuana. For that reason, I find it really hard to believe that in the next 246 days we will have trained 1,400 police officers to the level they need to do the job.

Municipalities testified at the health committee about the lack of resources and lack of understanding of the rural reality on the part of the Liberal government. One municipality testified that they had nine RCMP officers in total to cover everyone in a very widely spaced riding. If someone is impaired or suspected of being impaired by marijuana, that RCMP agent has to accompany that person to the next jurisdiction where the only available blood testing is available, and stay with them until the results are known. They consider this to be a huge burden on their resources. Of course, that has not been taken into account.

● (1240)

Every one of the places that has legalized marijuana has strongly advised Canada that public awareness and education is needed before legalization. That was not disputed by anyone. We know that Colorado spent about \$10 million for a population of five million, and Washington state spent \$7 million for a population of seven million.

In Canada the government has pledged \$9.8 million over five years for a population north of 30 million. It is completely inadequate. The program has not been created or even started to roll out. There are 246 days left, and the public education awareness RFP bids just came in on October 16. It was key advice by everyone we heard from that we need to have that in place before legalization. Thus, we would think that the government would act responsibly to protect public safety and say that when it gets everything in place, it will legalize marijuana. Rather, it is rushing ahead toward the arbitrary date of July 1, 2018.

One of the other topics of discussion in this bill that I find a little hypocritical is the mandatory and random testing. To give members some history of my background, I was a director of engineering and construction in the petrochemical industry. In the United States there is mandatory medical screening of prospective employees before they are hired for a job and the right to randomly test at any time. When I was with Dow Chemical, I had an office in Midland, Michigan, and was subject to random tests because that is the law of the land there.

There is a real concern at nuclear, chemical, or petrochemical plants about this, because they do not want to have people who are high on marijuana operating their facilities. As the employer has the whole liability, it ought to have the ability to do something.

In Anne McLellan's report on marijuana and how the government should move forward with legalization, there was a section included on this concern after hearing testimony from employers across the country. There were only a couple of lines in their report with recommendations, but the Liberal government refused to adopt them.

I think it is quite hypocritical for the government to say that we need mandatory testing because it is dangerous to drive a car, and not say the same thing about operating a nuclear plant, a chemical plant, or driving a huge train. I am the co-chair of the parliamentary rail caucus, and we had the railway association here this week. The association was extremely concerned that it has not been allowed to implement any kind of random testing.

There are some promising precedents. There was a TTC case in which the courts did allow the employers to start random testing because of the prevalence of drug use. There was another case recently by Suncor that also allowed random testing.

I think we have to be consistent in our approach. If it is okay to do roadside mandatory testing or random testing, then it should be done as well, assuming there is a test that can show impairment. I have already talked about the fact we do not have one currently.

When we think about drug-impaired driving, the message has not gotten out there, especially to young people. In the 18 to 35 year old demographic, 40% of people are consuming cannabis. They do not recognize it is harmful to them and do not understand that 30% of consumers under the age of 25 will experience schizophrenia, psychotic disorders, depression, or anxiety, all of which are lifetime conditions. As well, they do not understand that it is hazardous to get behind the wheel of a car when smoking marijuana.

I am hugely concern about this bill for that reason. I urge the government to do the right thing to protect the Canadian public. Do it right. Quit rushing, and wait until the test exists.

● (1245)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, first of all, I thank my hon. colleague for her contributions to our health committee. She is a strong and well-informed voice on the committee. I would also like to congratulate her for a well-informed speech pointing out some of the serious issues with the bill.

I think it is a fair comment that the whole issue of cannabis has been handled by the Liberal government from the very beginning as a political issue. The promise of legalization was a political one made by the Prime Minister when he was leader of the Liberal Party. I think the Liberals found themselves, surprisingly, as a majority government and have been rushing ever since to roll this out. I say this because expert after expert, stakeholder after stakeholder, person after person who has come before the committee and Parliament to talk about the issue has contradicted some of the major tenets of the government's legislation.

Government Orders

I would ask my hon. colleague a question about one of those things, namely the limits. The member commented on the difficulty of proving impairment. What impact does she think the bill would have if it gives Canadians criminal records for driving while impaired when they were not actually impaired?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, there will be people legitimately charged under the proposed legislation if the Liberals set a per se limit. If they do not know what the impairment level is, it might be logical to set a per se limit of zero, which some jurisdictions have done. Colorado arbitrarily set a limit of 0.05%, which is fine. However, if someone is a medicinal marijuana user, and there are a lot of people across the country who are using medicinal marijuana to address epilepsy, sleep disorders, and chronic pain issues, that person will have THC in their system and would test positive. They would be charged with impairment, because their levels would be relatively high, depending on their consumption. These folks would then get a criminal record when they do not deserve one. The same point could be made for those affected by second-hand smoke.

Therefore, I think there will be a lot of court challenges, not only because there is no science to say what impairment is, but also because there will be a lot of people who are not actually impaired but will be charged as impaired. This will tie up our courts at a time when murders and sex offenders are going free, because we do not have enough judges, because the justice minister has not appointed them.

• (1250)

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech and will note that I am welcoming one of her constituents, my father-in-law, out for lunch shortly.

I sympathize with some of the comments made by members, particularly with respect to medicinal cannabis patients and the extra burden on our criminal justice system. However, I would note that when the member cautions against proceeding quickly with cannabis legalization, Colorado and other jurisdictions certainly moved faster than we are moving. I think we are actually taking our time and proceeding with some caution.

I wonder what the member might say to the fact that over 43% of Canadians have self-reported using cannabis in their lifetime. Now, this is self-reported, so the real number is obviously higher. People are therefore already on the roads impaired by cannabis and we do not have any regulations in place to deal with that. Perhaps these are not the appropriate regulations, but does she not view that as a concern? Is it not a better approach to have some regulation, perhaps not perfect, rather than a complete and total absence of regulation?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, the member is quite right that 43% have said that in their lifetime they have tried cannabis, but another great statistic is that currently 88% of Canadians do not use marijuana. They are the Canadians who are going to suffer the unintended consequences from the rush. However, whether one is on the side of legalization or not, the real issue is how we protect the public and children in a sensible way.

Why is the Liberal government rushing to do this within the 246 days left? It is because of that voting demographic, the 18 to 35 year

olds, 40% of whom use marijuana. This is the biggest voting demographic. The government made a campaign promise that it would legalize marijuana. It has been two years in the making here. In two years, the Liberals have done nothing on public education. They have done nothing to prepare the public for the increase in drug-impaired driving that will result.

I would encourage the member opposite to encourage his caucus to slow down, because they have had two years and they are not prepared.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-46, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (offences relating to conveyances) and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

Where do I begin? How can I explain to the House just how bad this bill really is? When I read it, it raised a lot of questions and provided very few answers. You would think that it was written by the Minister of Finance or someone at Morneau Shepell. There are so many questions and very few answers.

The Liberals are in the habit of making promises that are long on enthusiasm, but short on details. This bill is no exception. It is sorely lacking in detail and logic. The question that comes to my mind is the following: did the minister really take the time to read this bill before introducing it? No one in the House is questioning the ability of the minister or her officials, but something is not right here.

If the minister had introduced this as a draft and told us that the bill was still in development and that she wanted our ideas for creating a balanced and credible bill, I would have said that is a good idea and we could work together. However, that is not what happened.

This Liberal government is not at all interested in hearing the opposition's amendments or ideas. Madam Speaker, you can see how these Liberal ministers rarely answer the most basic questions. Their speeches are nothing but platitudes and empty promises.

They talk about helping the middle class, and meanwhile they are increasing taxes on the middle class and taking credits away from the most vulnerable. They give millions of dollars to a terrorist, but they cannot find a couple thousand dollars to clear the snow from the National Holocaust Memorial in the winter. They are pushing drug legislation, knowing that the provinces will have to foot the bill.

Government Orders

The Liberals are no strangers to offloading the costs onto the provinces. Not too long ago, they reduced federal health care funding for the provinces. They eliminated this funding to balance the federal budget. At the time, the federal government provided about 50% funding to the provinces, but the Liberals reduced that to 14%. Only after a public outcry and the resulting Romanow report were they forced to reverse their decision. At the time, they bragged that their Minister of Finance was the best financial manager in the G7. However, it does not take much management know-how to send the bill to the provinces. The same thing is happening with Bill C-45 on the legalization of marijuana.

The bill we are debating today is missing a number of details, and the government needs to more seriously reconsider this bill. Two years ago, we said that the Prime Minister was simply not ready to govern this country. Two years later, we have ample proof that he is still not ready. Sure, he has some nice, hip coloured socks and is known around the world as the selfie wonder, but those two things are not enough to govern our country.

The Prime Minister's entourage also seems to suffer from memory loss. For example, his Minister of Finance forgot that he was the owner of a villa in France worth millions of dollars. The member for Peterborough—Kawartha forgot where she was born. Then there is the former Minister of Defence, who forgot what role he actually played in Kandahar. These examples are only the tip of the iceberg. Two years ago, the Prime Minister announced that his government would run a deficit of just \$10 billion. Now look where we are. The Prime Minister forgot his promise too, because his government is spending money like there is no tomorrow while our country's debt continues to mount.

The bill before us today is another example of the Liberals' thoughtlessness and lack of preparation. First of all, the bill they propose is far from complete. Again, the bill raises questions the government makes no attempt to answer. When I read it, I wondered how the minister could possibly have thought it was a good idea to proceed with the bill in its current form.

We heard testimony from over 70 witnesses, and I can assure the House that their comments are in no way reflected in this bill. For example, its proposed minimum fines for impaired driving causing death or bodily harm are utterly pathetic. This bill also fails to strike the right balance between civil rights and public safety.

The rights we enjoy as Canadian citizens come with a duty to act responsibly. A driver's licence is a privilege, not a right. We need to send a clear message that taking a life by driving while impaired is an extremely serious crime.

•(1255)

For many years now, all levels of government and groups like Mothers Against Drunk Driving have been working hard to educate the public on the consequences of impaired driving.

However, today, we have a government that wants to hastily pass a bill without seriously considering the safety of Canadians. That makes no sense.

Obviously, the Liberals have always been more concerned about the rights of criminals than about those of law-abiding citizens. Just recently, this Liberal government gave a terrorist \$10 million. Did

the courts order the government to make that payment? They did not, but the government paid it without any hesitation. Did the terrorist expect to receive any money? I doubt it, but what I can say for sure is that the message the Prime Minister's government is sending is that crime pays. That is what people will remember, and that is shameful. Did the Prime Minister think carefully before making that decision?

This bill seems reasonable at first glance, but it does not provide any clear information about how the police will enforce it. The bill does not provide any explanation as to how police will be able to effectively determine whether or not a driver is on drugs. Obviously, this bill is a half-baked measure.

For alcohol, we have the technology to determine blood alcohol content and whether a driver's BAC is over the limit. Police officers can administer that roadside test on the spot. Detecting drug impairment is not so easy. Marijuana can be detected in a person's blood, but the technology cannot tell us when the drug was consumed.

It is even harder to determine when the drug was consumed in the case of chronic users. If someone smokes a joint every hour or two, there is no way to tell exactly when he or she consumed it. It is impossible. These two examples make it clear that the proposal before us today makes absolutely no sense.

When the committee discussed Bill C-45 on marijuana legalization, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness told us that marijuana sales grossed over \$7 billion a year for organized crime and that Bill C-46 would cut into that market and legally redirect a big share of the revenue into government coffers.

That would explain why the government wants to rush through Bill C-45 and Bill C-46. It does not really care about the details or what this will cost the provinces. What matters most to this government is finding a new source of revenue, that's it, that's all.

Let us be honest. The government cannot control its spending, and it is gradually starting to run this country in the same way certain third-world countries are run. What will happen to our economy if it continues to govern our country like this?

A few days ago, the Minister of Finance presented the update of economic and fiscal projections. Once again, there is no plan to return to a balanced budget. We are not running a third-world country here. We are parliamentarians in a G7 country, one of the largest countries in the world. If the Liberal government is presenting deficit budgets when we have a strong economy, what would its budgets look like if a recession were to hit?

Government Orders

The economy is cyclical; what goes up must come down. What do the government and the Prime Minister plan to do when the economy slows down? Does he ever think about that? Maybe he thinks that an economic downturn will not happen as long as he is in power, either by magic or through the power of his socks and his selfies. No problem.

An hon. member: It is his fantasy land.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Yes, Madam Speaker, it is a fantasy land. That is an appropriate expression.

Seriously, maybe the Prime Minister thinks that this will be someone else's problem, but he owes it to Canadians to govern with diligence and discipline. So far, we are not convinced that the Prime Minister understands the importance of his role. We know that he likes to take photos and deliver platitudes to the United Nations, but for the rest we are in the dark.

Bill C-46 introduces an imbalance between civil rights and public safety. As Canadians, we have rights, but those rights come with responsibilities. As I have said, having a driver's licence is a privilege, not a right. That is clear.

The Liberals are in a hurry to get Bill C-45 and Bill C-46 passed because they need money. It becomes crystal clear when we consider the fact that our police forces have repeatedly said that they do not have enough time and resources to enforce the law. They need to hire experts, acquire new technologies, and train their officers. It is impossible to bring this legislation into force properly before July 2018. The police knows it, we know it, and even the Liberals know it.

• (1300)

[English]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the major concerns about the bill has to do with the ability of the police to randomly stop someone without just cause and potentially to have that power misused. I know that our leader, Jagmeet Singh, has brought to the federal national stage the issue of racial profiling.

At the health committee, where we are studying the cannabis bill, we heard first-hand evidence from sociologists across this country, and other experts, about the disproportionate impact of criminalization on marginalized groups like racialized Canadians, young Canadians, indigenous Canadians, and poor Canadians.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague has any thoughts or concerns about the bill's provisions that may make it easier for police to randomly stop people without just cause and whether that power may be misused to target racialized, poor, indigenous, or otherwise marginalized Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, I thank my NDP colleague for the question.

This ties in a bit with what I was saying in my speech. There is a glaring problem in reconciling civil rights with public safety. We could end up in a limbo where the police will have to handle a new law with a serious lack of tools when it comes both to rights and

technical equipment needed to do their job. Again, this just proves that this bill is simply not ready.

• (1305)

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened very carefully to my colleague's speech, and I acknowledge his wealth of experience. He has done extraordinary work on this file since he was appointed as shadow minister for public safety and emergency preparedness.

The government members should listen to what my colleague has to say about the government's improvisation, on the time needed, and on the tools and resources that police officers are lacking to adequately enforce this bill.

We support any measure that will help decrease drug- and alcohol-impaired driving. Bill C-45 will not solve the problem. It will compound it by leaving the police with inadequate resources.

Does my colleague agree?

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable for his question.

Indeed, this is further proof that the government has no idea where it is going. This week, we voted on Bill S-230, a Senate bill that would amend the Criminal Code with respect to drug-impaired driving. The government decided to vote against this bill, which was ready, approved, and complete.

The government has introduced Bill C-46, which is all wrong, and it is trying to get us to embrace it by claiming that it will solve all our problems. On the contrary, it will create more problems. We have another problem to fix, and it has to do with how our government is managed.

[English]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, that was a far-ranging and wide-ranging speech the hon. colleague gave on very many topics apart from Bill C-46.

Back to the bill at hand, it seems as if the hon. member would like to have us do nothing, similar to the economic management of the previous government. Is that the approach he would like us to take?

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for listening carefully to my speech.

I was not digressing or off-topic. I was talking about Bill C-45 because it directly relates to this bill. At one point, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness said that we should have voted in favour of the bill and that we needed it because it was the carbon copy of Bill C-45. Once again, Bill C-45 is flawed and yet we want to hastily pass Bill C-46, which is deeply flawed. It is not that we do not want to do things right, as my colleague for Mégantic—L'Érable said. We want to help and we want it to work, but we need to do the job properly.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is the House ready for the question?

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

NATIONAL SICKLE CELL AWARENESS DAY

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill S-211, An Act respecting National Sickle Cell Awareness Day, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

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

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.) moved that the bill be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Darren Fisher moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise again today to speak to Bill S-211, an act respecting national sickle cell awareness day.

Bill S-211 seeks to establish June 19 as national sickle cell awareness day, bringing Canada on the same level, and in line with, international organizations like the United Nations, African Union, and the World Health Organization, all of which consider June 19 as World Sickle Cell Day.

Bill S-211 has been wholeheartedly supported by all members in this House and all senators in the other place, but no person has championed Bill S-211 more than Senator Jane Cordy of my home riding of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour.

Senator Cordy is a strong advocate for Canadians and has brought the voices of those affected by sickle cell disease to Ottawa. Senator Cordy understands the strength of awareness. We have the ability in this House, and in the other place, to bring Canada-wide awareness to sickle cell disease. Senator Cordy was back in Nova Scotia last week, and during a speech at a sickle cell workshop she said:

My fervent hope is that when S-211 passes it will provide the opportunity for Canadians and especially those at all levels of government to learn more about sickle cell. The more we know about an issue, the more power we have to make changes, whether that change is creating policies and laws or changing our understanding.

In the spirit of that quote, I will do my best here to make sure that all members in this House understand what sickle cell disease, also known as sickle cell anemia, is, and what it means to be affected by it.

Most folks out there, if they were asked, probably would not know what sickle cell disease is. It is a disease affecting approximately 5,000 Canadians and their families. The number of Canadians diagnosed with the disease continues to increase. The Sickle Cell Disease Association of Canada now estimates that one out of every 2,500 children will be born with this disease.

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:

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 45 the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, October 30, at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

[Translation]

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a point of order.

I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, the deferred recorded division on the motion for third reading of Bill C-46, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (offences relating to conveyances) and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be further deferred until the expiry of the time provided for oral questions on Tuesday, October 31, 2017.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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)

● (1310)

[Translation]

Mr. Greg Fergus: Madam Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent to see the clock as 1:30 p.m.

[English]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Private Members' Business

Sickle cell is the most common genetic disease in the world. Sickle cell refers to the presence of abnormal hemoglobin resulting in crescent-shaped red blood cells. Unlike normal, doughnut-shaped red blood cells, sickle cells struggle to move easily throughout the body's circulatory system, and struggle to deliver oxygen to the organs. Sickle cells have a very limited lifespan compared to healthy red blood cells. The diseased sickle cells become stiff and break apart as they die, clogging the vessels and starving the body's ability to deliver oxygen to the organs. As the organs are starved for oxygen, patients experience extreme pain, especially in their bones.

I was reading an anonymous Q and A with sickle cell patients the other day where one participant, a young person, explained the nature of sickle cell pain so vividly. It really put the nature of the illness into perspective and I am going to share it now.

This person said, "You know the way the sky and the atmosphere changes gradually just before a major storm? That's how I feel my body changing just before an onset of pain crisis. It sucks knowing that it's coming and there's nothing you can do about it. When the pain hits you it takes everything away from you—you have no thoughts, desires, knowledge of anything, everything within you is focussed on trying to get rid of the pain. Then the pain takes over. Completely. It might just be your arm, or your feet, or hips, or chest, but it chokes the life out of you, literally... The strongest painkillers don't really "kill" the pain—it only keeps it at bay and temporarily stops it from choking the life out of you. I am sure you've noticed the labored breathing just before the pain relievers take effect. It's not for show. You struggle to breathe, to live."

• (1315)

Most of these people are experiencing lifelong debilitating pain. Some people affected by sickle cell anemia are confined to their homes, requiring around-the-clock care. Many folks with sickle cell are receiving regular blood transfusions and are taking pharmaceuticals to manage chronic pain. Numerous blood transfusions are not uncommon for someone with this disease. This speaks to the importance of donating blood. Canadian Blood Services calls donating blood "giving the gift of life", and it could not be truer. By donating blood, we could be giving someone who suffers with sickle cell disease a longer lifespan.

This disease primarily affects those with diverse ethnic backgrounds: African, Caribbean, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, South American, and South Asian. In Canada, sickle cell disproportionately affects members of the African Canadian community.

Some time ago, I met with the Black Health Alliance and learned that black people were overrepresented among people with illness. I learned that discrimination could be one of the major reasons why sickle cell anemia lacked awareness. That lack of awareness results in individuals being underserved by the medical community.

I have heard loud and clear from folks, like my friend Rugi Jalloh, president of the Sickle Cell Disease Association of Nova Scotia, of the discrimination those patients with this disease experience. This disease can be debilitating and obvious, or debilitating and hidden.

These are folks like 16-year old Canadian Adeniyi Omishore, who says, "This disease is very limiting and many on the street look

at me weirdly....Some kids in school even make fun of me." Contrast that with this anonymous statement by a Canadian sickle cell disease patient who said, "A good hospital stay is whenever I'm not perceived as a drug seeker/junkie. A 20 year old black kid asking for heavy doses of narcotics always triggers an alarm. I've been refused care many times because of this."

This shows the importance of increasing sickle cell disease awareness across our country, awareness for all health care providers to recognize and understand this disease, and the importance of recognizing discrimination and how it affects people with sickle cell. Time and again, when learning about this disease, I have heard that folks have gone to the hospital for care only to be turned away and treated as junkies looking for a fix. For someone to be turned away at the emergency room because he or she may appear to be an addict and not someone in major pain, we must do better. There are organizations across the country working hard to raise awareness.

The Sickle Cell Disease Association of Canada remains focused on building awareness of sickle cell disease. It is working to enhance methods of identification, diagnosis and treatment. It also partners with universities and researchers to help toward a cure.

The Sickle Cell Foundation of Alberta is doing great work by helping patients deal with the condition and helping improve their quality of life.

The Sickle Cell Anemia Association of Quebec is working to raise awareness among at-risk groups of this disease. It is promoting research and education, and working to support sufferers and their families.

The Sickle Cell Association of BC, led by Adobie McAllister, is working on an education handbook for sickle cell patients to help better inform them of treatments and to help handle their concerns.

The Sickle Cell Association of Ontario has educated the community about sickle cell and aims to reduce the incidence of sickle cell within at-risk communities. Its initiative on poverty deserves recognition also as chronic illness and poverty often go hand in hand.

As I mentioned, in my home province of Nova Scotia, the Sickle Cell Association of Nova Scotia, led by Rugi Jalloh, is working hard to support individuals with sickle cell and their families financially and morally. I met with this society and I was blown away by its incredible advocacy. I will admit that before our meeting, I knew very little about this disease.

Private Members' Business

• (1320)

The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of rare disease research and has invested \$92 million since 2010. Close to \$1.3 million have been spent on sickle cell disease research, still some Canadians are living, undiagnosed, with this disease. Many Canadians have no idea they carry the sickle cell trait. Children of hereditary carriers of the disease who do not suffer any symptoms unfortunately have a 50% chance of inheriting the sickle cell trait and a 25% chance of inheriting the disease. These are frightening statistics and they speak to the importance of raising awareness. I firmly believe that, as a country, we can and will do better.

Some provinces are doing it right by automatically screening newborns for diseases like sickle cell, but many provinces still do not. We have a nationwide patchwork of testing programs, which is leaving Canadians with diseases like sickle cell undetected. Canadians are slipping through the cracks. This matters. If left untreated, sickle cell anemia not only leaves people with extreme pain; it can lead to organ damage, organ failure, and even death.

If members leave here remembering one thing they can share with their constituents today about sickle cell, I hope they will remember the importance of screening. We must encourage the screening of young children who are moving to Canada from countries with substantially higher risk of having sickle cell. We must screen all newborns in Canada for this disease and its trait. No one in Canada with this disease should go undiagnosed, and no one should go untreated. The earlier we diagnose, the better the outcome for individuals to lead a normal life.

Yes, Bill S-211 is an awareness bill, but awareness and understanding often lead to more research and less discrimination. For example, on the Sickle Cell Awareness Group of Ontario's website, Doreen Alexander wrote:

As a nurse, unfortunately I have heard the cries of many sickle cell patients in pain who are often misunderstood or dismissed by health care professionals while in desperate need for support.

Greater awareness could lead to more understanding and better training across Canada for health care staff. More people knowing about and understanding this condition could mean better, more supportive health care. Stronger research matters to sufferers of sickle cell disease. Every day, researchers are learning more about this debilitating disease. I have heard that doctors in Alberta are making progress with stem cell research and transplants, but we must continue to do more.

I would like to thank all my colleagues throughout the House for listening to me speak today about this and for their support, both past and continued, for Bill S-211. I ask all members in the House to continue supporting Bill S-211, an act respecting national sickle cell awareness day. Let us send a strong message to those who suffer with sickle cell that we support them, that we believe in stronger awareness for this disease, and that we hope greater awareness will keep sickle cell top of mind among our best researchers and health care providers.

• (1325)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I congratulate the member opposite for bringing awareness to this important issue. My question has to do with the association that

promotes sickle cell awareness. Does it have specific asks of the government with respect to many of the things you have mentioned, like research and so forth, and could you elaborate on what those asks are?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would not know that, so I would say that the member is to address the question to the Chair.

The hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Madam Speaker, we met with the Nova Scotia group and, at that time, its focus was on the awareness bill. That is where it wanted to put the emphasis. A fair bit of research is going on for sickle cell. Putting more focus on sickle cell specifically would drive more research toward finding a cure. Stem cell research is new on sickle cell. It is exciting and it is possible.

Right now, sickle cell patients need to have blood transfusions to extend their life expectancy. That is just not good enough. People can have a life expectancy of 40 or 50 years with sickle cell and they can extend it with blood transfusions. Imagine having 10 to 20 blood transfusions a month. Stem cell research is the direction researchers are looking toward right now. As I said, \$1.8 million were focused directly on sickle cell research, but more can be done.

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Dartmouth—Cole Harbour deserves kudos for championing this bill and for bringing it forward.

As someone who lives with the sickle cell trait, could he expand on what is necessary to ensure people are aware they have the condition? I knew I had it, so when I found a partner and had children, I was able to do the test. How important is it to ensure that people are aware of their condition and are, therefore, able to address it when they find life partners and have children?

Mr. Darren Fisher: Madam Speaker, the true champion of this bill is Senator Jane Cordy, who brought forward a private member's bill in the Senate prior to the election being called in 2015, at which time it died on the Order Paper. It was reintroduced after the election. She is the true champion of this. She is the one who pushed this from the start and deserves the credit for the bill. She is also from the wonderful riding of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, so it is always great to combine the two of us.

The number one thing we need to ensure is that we have newborn screening. It is absolutely important. When people are diagnosed with having the trait or having sickle cell disease, it is important to know from day one what kind of treatment plans are available. There are examples of young people being up to 20 years old before finding out they have sickle cell. They have gone through 20 years of excruciating pain. The way they manage their disease would be totally different if they were screened at birth and knew in advance.

Private Members' Business

•(1330)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, in 2006, the WHO, of which Canada is a member, adopted a resolution urging support for sickle cell disease research. It is 10 years later. Would my hon. colleague inform us whether any progress has been made in Canada on this recommendation?

Mr. Darren Fisher: Madam Speaker, we are behind on deciding to designate June 19 as world sickle cell day or Canada's sickle cell day. We should have done this back in 2006 or 2008 when the UN declared it, but there is no time like the present. I hope and expect that next June 19 will be the first national sickle cell awareness day in Canada. I look to that. I hope it brings the awareness that drives us to further push research in a direction that will benefit Canadians and others in the world who suffer from sickle cell.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak in favour of Bill S-211, an act respecting national sickle cell awareness day. This legislation seeks to designate June 19 national sickle cell awareness day in Canada. This is in line with many international groups that have also recognized the importance of raising awareness of this terrible disease. These include the African Union, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations, which designated this day for sickle cell disease in 2008.

There was a time when I was unaware of what went on in terms of the creation of these days and the benefits thereof, but since I have come to the House of Commons, nearly every day we have something presented as an awareness day for this or that topic. I have learned so much about the different needs of people suffering from various illnesses and about different causes. There is a lot of value in bringing forward and celebrating such a day when this kind of information can be brought to bear and the government can be informed of what the needs are to eradicate this terrible disease.

Today is not the first time sickle cell awareness has been brought before the House. A Nova Scotia senator brought a similar bill forward in early 2015. The same topic was brought forward by the current Minister of Science, who introduced Bill C-605 in 2010.

Designating June 19 national sickle cell awareness day would not give holiday status to this date. It would be used as a tool nationwide to raise awareness of this disease not only in the House but in schools, in workplaces, and at dinner tables across the country.

For these reasons, and many more, I would join my voice to those of my colleagues across the House and in the other House in favour of Bill S-211.

I would like to use my time today not only to show my strong support for the bill but to do everything in my power to educate Canadians about this little known disease.

[*Translation*]

Sickle cell disease is a condition people are born with. It is a hereditary disease caused by abnormal hemoglobin. Instead of being round like the letter *o*, in people with sickle cell disease, these cells look more like the letter *c*, similar to a farmer's sickle.

Hemoglobin is the part of the blood that carries oxygen and allows the vital organs to function. That ability is exactly what sickle cell

disease affects. The red blood cells become hard and clog the blood vessels. Although normal red blood cells live for 120 days, sickle cells have a lifespan of no more than 20 days. The rapid breakdown of these cells often leads to anemia.

•(1335)

[*English*]

Although there is no patient registry in Canada, it is estimated that approximately 5,000 Canadians live with sickle cell disease today. In the United States, the number is close to 100,000. Worldwide, sickle cell disease affects almost 100 million people. However, many Canadians do not know the symptoms, effects, or treatments related to this painful disease.

Sickle cell disease causes complications in two ways. First is the breakdown of red blood cells at a rapid rate. Second is the blockage of blood flow in blood vessels. Both problems can cause immense pain, especially in the bones.

Sickle cell disease can also lead to a whole list of other complications, including damage to the liver, kidneys, and heart; infection; chest pain; acute joint pain; blindness; and stroke. It can also cause irreparable damage to major organs, going as far as heart failure. This multi-system disorder has also been known to cause premature death.

Sickle cell disease does not have a cure. However, it is treatable, and I would like to recognize all the medical professionals and caregivers who treat and support those who live with sickle cell disease across our country.

Simple lifestyle changes have been shown to make a tremendous difference in the disease, and those living with sickle cell disease are encouraged to exercise regularly, eat a healthy diet, and reduce the amount of stress in their lives. In fact, I think we could all benefit from doing those three things.

Many complications can be prevented or treated through regular blood transfusions and through powerful medication. Those living with sickle cell disease routinely have between 10 and 20 blood transfusions every month. As such, I want to encourage Canadians to donate blood whenever possible.

[*Translation*]

This is a disease people live with around the clock, and we need to do more to draw attention to the way it affects Canadians and the need to improve research and data collection. Many people say that education is the first stage in the process and that a national sickle cell awareness day is an important step.

Private Members' Business

Sickle cell screening tests are available, but many people do not know about them. Since sickle cell disease is hereditary, it is very important to get the word out to those who want to have children. Universal sickle cell screening now exists in every state in the United States and, in Canada, this test is available upon request in Ontario, British Columbia, Yukon, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia. Screening is available in a limited number of hospitals in Quebec, but plans are being made to make the test available across the province as soon as possible.

When a child is born with sickle cell disease, we do not always know what complications will develop. For the first six months of life, high levels of fetal hemoglobin in the blood help to prevent most complications, but things can quickly go wrong after that.

Infection is the biggest concern for children with this disease. According to the World Health Organization, sickle cell disease is one of the main causes of death in children under the age of five. We need to do more to ensure that sickle cell disease detection, awareness, and education become an integral part of our health system.

[English]

As I said in my speech, it is important that we bring awareness to this disease, do research into how we can prevent the disease or reduce some of the terrible effects it has on different organs in the system, support those who are living with the disease and those who are caregivers, and share with our global partners. As I said, we have only 5,000 people in Canada who have the disease, but there are millions around the world who have it.

There is research happening around the world. We need to be at that research table. We need to be collaborating. We have seen Canada lead in medical health research when it comes to vaccines, disease, and things like brain complications. We can contribute, but we also need to work with our partners around the world to have a big enough population to learn how we can combat this disease.

In closing, I would like to thank the sponsor of the bill. I encourage all my colleagues in this House to join me in support of those living with sickle cell disease and in support of those who care for them. With groups like the African Union, the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture, and the World Health Organization, I want to recognize June 19 as sickle cell awareness day.

I believe Canada should take this step in the right direction and raise awareness about this important cause.

• (1340)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, as the health critic for the New Democratic Party, and on behalf of my colleagues in the NDP caucus, I am proud to stand today and express our support for the bill as well. It would declare a special day to commemorate national sickle cell awareness day and to bring attention to this very important condition.

Sickle cell disorder is the most common genetic disease in the world. The WHO estimates that sickle cell anemia affects nearly 100 million people on the globe. Canada's first recorded case was published in 1966. In 2016, some 50 years later, it was estimated that between 5,000 and 7,000 Canadians live with sickle cell disorder.

In 1978, it was discovered that the gene responsible for hemoglobin is on chromosome 11. A prenatal genetic test for sickle cell disease was developed in 1980. To be affected, an individual has to receive the defective gene from both parents. If only one parent passes on the defective gene, that individual will be a carrier but not affected. If both parents are carriers, there is a one in four chance that the child will be affected by this disorder.

Fortunately, sickle cell anemia can be detected before birth, and couples who are both carriers may wish to consider prenatal testing for the condition. Sickle cell disease is more common among those whose ancestors come from certain parts of the world, including India, the Middle East, and from sub-Saharan African, Caribbean, and Mediterranean countries. However, it is very important to note that, contrary to some common misunderstandings, sickle cell disease has no colour, because it also affects Caucasians from Europe and elsewhere. Getting all Canadians tested would be the best way to move forward.

Sickle cell disease is characterized by a mutation in the shape of the red blood cell, from a smooth circular shape to a crescent shape, which can result in the blockage of small blood vessels and the impairment of blood flow. This leads to a reduction in red blood cell survival and subsequent anemia. A sickle-shaped cell has a lifespan of only about 20 days, unlike a healthy cell with a lifespan of 120 days.

The problem of clogged blood cells and low blood count hampers the body's ability to bring oxygen to the organs. This starvation of oxygen most commonly manifests itself as severe pain in the bones and can damage shoulder and hip joints in particular, or cause chest pain. There can also be damage to the lungs, heart, liver, kidneys, and eyes.

The poor blood oxygen levels and blood vessel blockages that result from sickle cell disease can then lead to severe chronic pain, serious bacterial infections, and tissue death. The symptoms of sickle cell anemia can vary widely in number and severity. However, the most common symptoms are related to anemia and pain. Other symptoms are related to complications from those.

During painful crises, medications can reduce pain and help avoid complications, and extra fluids can prevent dehydration. Oxygen can be provided if there is not enough in the bloodstream. When anemia is severe, blood transfusions may be used to treat and prevent complications, and antibiotics are frequently administered when there are consecutive infections.

The lifespan of persons with severe sickle cell disease can be reduced by as much as 30 years. Currently, there is no cure. At this time, the only treatment options are to relieve symptoms by treating vaso-occlusive crises, preventing triggers, and administering blood transfusions to prevent anemia, and exchange transfusions to reduce hemoglobin S in the blood. Gene therapy is also being studied and holds some promise.

Private Members' Business

Many people with this condition are in reasonably good health and can live productive lives into their fifties and longer. Some people, however, develop severe symptoms and complications and require frequent hospitalization. The broad range of sickle cell disease symptoms may cause health care professionals to misdiagnose the condition.

In Canada, six provinces and two territories provide prenatal screening right now: Quebec, Ontario, B.C., Yukon, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, P.E.I., and Nunavut. Currently, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba are considering prenatal screening.

• (1345)

While recognition of June 19 of each year as national sickle cell awareness day is important in order to promote awareness among Canadians of the disease, and the bill is a good start, it is not enough. We need more.

Since this disease can place a substantial burden on family members, better support is needed for caregivers, particularly the parents of children with the disease. Support for access to screening of newborns and the genetic screening of adults at risk who wish to have children and improvements for diagnosis and treatment are long overdue.

Special awareness and communication plans for ethnic groups at risk are also important. Canada is, of course, one of the most diverse countries in the world. Many Canadians trace their roots to the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa, India, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean, which are regions where, as I have already pointed out, the SCD gene is more common.

We also need international co-operation and assistance to respond to requests from the WHO in a resolution adopted by the assembly in 2006 to help the most vulnerable groups identify and treat individuals with sickle cell disease. I think this is where all parliamentarians ought to be directing our attention after, hopefully, every parliamentarian votes in favour of the bill. It is not enough just to commemorate and recognize a disease. What is important in terms of government policy and what Canadians, whether they are at risk for SCD or not, expect from the government is action. We need to start seeing some meaningful resources devoted not only to SCD but also to other genetic conditions. I think that Canadians want Parliament to do everything it can to increase spending in research and treatment, so that we make the scientific and medical breakthroughs and inroads that are needed in order to find a cure for this condition and others like it.

I think health professionals need a special shout-out in terms of any bill before the House that deals with the health care field. Health care professionals are on the front lines of this disease and all others. We have to recognize the work that they do in what most Canadians would feel is the most important aspect of their lives, which is their health.

I know that many health care professionals, because of the relative rarity of this condition, are unaware of this disease, especially because of its uneven prevalence across the country, particularly in rural areas. Therefore, health care professionals need to be better informed about the prevalence of at-risk populations and the risk of misdiagnosis. We have heard other speakers in the House talk about

the fact that people can present at hospital or emergency rooms with indicia that do not necessarily present as sickle cell disease, and in fact are often misdiagnosed, sometimes in a very stigmatized fashion.

Testing and treatment, and I will deal with testing first, should be available across Canada. In particular, we must not forget the rural and remote areas of this country, which are often left out of the equation. Treatment protocols and pain reduction strategies should be shared, since early treatment cuts the cost of care and sets out what steps to take.

I will focus a little on the international situation here, because I think most Canadians want Canada to play a responsible role on the world stage, take our place in proper form, and meet our responsibilities, particularly when it comes to health, and particularly when it comes to diseases, like sickle cell, which know no borders.

As I mentioned already, in 2006, the World Health Organization, of which Canada is a member state, adopted a resolution urging support for SCD research. Ten years later, I think it does no violence to any party in the House to point out that we have not made any progress in that regard. The resolution at that time stressed the urgent need for member states to:

design, implement and reinforce in a systematic, equitable and effective manner, comprehensive national, integrated programmes for the prevention and management of sickle-cell anaemia.

Again, I congratulate my hon. colleague on moving this important bill forward. I think it is going to get all-party support to recognize this important day, but let us not leave it there. Let us heed the WHO. Let us do what we can in this Parliament to at least make a good start on fulfilling those obligations that the WHO called for and which Canada agreed to at the time.

* * *

• (1350)

TRANSPORTATION MODERNIZATION ACT

BILL C-49—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to advise that agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the report stage and third reading stage of Bill C-49, an act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and other Acts respecting transportation and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts.

[*Translation*]

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

Private Members' Business

[English]

NATIONAL SICKLE CELL AWARENESS DAY ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that of Bill S-211, An Act respecting National Sickle Cell Awareness Day, be read a third time and passed.

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand in this place, in solidarity with my colleague from Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, to support S-211, an act respecting national sickle cell awareness day. I also want to acknowledge Senator Jane Cordy who brought the bill forward and was a real champion for the legislation.

I want to take some time at the outset of my speech to thank the member from Dartmouth—Cole Harbour. As he said in his speech, he did not know anything about sickle cell before. I alluded in my previous question that I live with sickle cell trait.

Last night was a very difficult evening with me. I was talking to my kids on the phone. I am an Ottawa mom and they are Whitby kids. I kept thinking how tough it was sometimes to be a mom when I was here.

I had the opportunity to start thinking about writing this speech. I thought where else in the world would someone from Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, who had no idea about this disease, meet up with someone who lived with the trait of this disease and be able to work together, along with every other member, to raise awareness, do some incredible work, and amplify the voice of Canadians who suffer day in and day out with this disease. I cannot thank the member and the senator enough for their diligent work in bringing this forward. I am so proud to be here to see this go across the finish line.

Other members in the House have spoken to the thanks we should give to our researchers and medical professionals. With this bill and this day, I urge them to continue to ring the alarm around this condition. Members have spoken to the tremendous pain individuals go through when they appear at the hospital, looking for help. Oftentimes very young children arrive at the hospital in excruciating pain, asking for pain medication. The automatic dial is set, that these people are addicts.

I urge health care professionals and researchers to continue to talk to their colleagues and use June 19 as the day to tell them to turn the dial the other way, to show compassion and humanity for individuals, knowing they may have a condition about which we might need a little more awareness.

As I mentioned, I live with sickle cell trait. I do not have any symptoms of the disease and go through my normal life pretty much fine. However, this disease affects individuals of the Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, South American, and South Asian communities, and it disproportionately affects members of the black community. Many different people are affected and impacted by this condition.

It is so important to have a day like this for a couple of reasons.

One is to create that awareness and to continue the advocacy for newborn screening. The fact that it has a patchwork across the

country really does a disservice to Canadians. Again, we are talking about young people with this condition who suffer excruciating pain.

Second, we want to ensure that people who live with this condition are also able to talk about it. We have heard that they may undergo 10 to 20 blood transfusions per month. There are only 31 days in a month. They spend more than half their time in hospital getting blood transfusions.

At this point, I would like to take a page from both of the individuals who spoke to this, to give a massive shout-out to the Canadian Blood Services, and encourage people to donate blood. It really does save lives and makes quality of life for people a lot better, especially when we are talking about this disease.

● (1355)

I am going to go back to the individuals, their caregivers and families living with this condition. I encourage people to use this day and every day to advocate, to talk to friends and to neighbours.

My colleague, the member for Sarnia—Lambton, said that it was a conversation we had in the workplace, at school, and at the dinner table. That is such a profound statement because we do not want this to just be politicians, researchers, doctors, or people who do not have access to everyday individuals. People live with this condition. They feel it. People should use this day to feel empowered to go out, talk to and advocate for themselves and their children, and tell their neighbours. They might need someone to give them a casserole a couple of days a month because they are in hospital. I have never made a casserole, but I could make a macaroni pie or something.

It gives people an opportunity to get together with their neighbours and really do what we do best as Canadians, and that is help each other out. Use this day to speak about it. Do not continue to suffer in silence or suffer alone.

I want to also speak to the importance of individuals in the community speaking to each other. Imagine being in hospital 10 to 20 times a month to get a blood transfusion. What does that do? That decreases a person's ability to go to school every day. It decreases people's ability to get good, stable employment. That decreases people's quality of life. If that happens, I assume these individuals need support. They need a community. They need, as they say, a village to help them in their suffering, in the transition they have with their family and their loved ones who are going through the condition.

It might be that a friend from school is able to bring homework home. It might be that individuals are able to get a hot meal from someone who shares that. It might be the fact that individuals are able to just breathe for five minutes, because they are taking care of a child who is in exceptional pain.

Again, this bill and this day, June 19 would allow parents and loved ones the reprieve and the respite to say that they need help, or that they have this condition, or their sons or daughters or love ones have this condition.

Private Members' Business

Before I close, I want to give special kudos and shout-outs to the organizations that were mentioned by many of us today: the Sickle Cell Disease Association of Canada, the Sickle Cell Disease Association of Nova Scotia, and in particular, the Sickle Cell Association of Ontario.

Before getting to this place, I volunteered with a young woman in her nineties by the name of Lillie Johnson. Lillie Johnson is a force to be reckoned with and a staunch advocate for sickle cell disease. She received the Order of Ontario in 2011, the Toronto Public Health Champion in 2009, and was the first black director of Public Health. This woman is a tour de force in her advocacy for people with sickle cell. I worked in a research consulting firm. She solicited me to help her get the resources to advocate for research.

For my colleague who mentioned it, we do need continued and exceptional research dollars and funding for genetic conditions. We do need to continue to be that voice, to amplify the voices of those in our community who need our help, to continue to advocate for the funding to ensure Canadians can live the best possible quality of life.

I am so happy to stand with my colleague today. I am even happier right now to give a shout-out to his wonderful daughter, Ava, who is totally cool. I will do that right now.

● (1400)

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to begin my remarks by building a little on the remarks made by my colleague from Whitby. She referenced a number of very important advocacy organizations for those who suffer from sickle cell disease, and it is important that we acknowledge their important work.

I would like to take the opportunity to bring to the House's attention another extraordinary organization in the city of Toronto. It is called Camp Jumoke. It is a charitable organization that has been operating since 1994. This is an organization that is entirely volunteer. It receives no government funding but does receive support from the community. Since 1994, it has organized camps every summer for children in our community suffering from sickle cell anemia. I want to acknowledge the extraordinary volunteers and the commitment of the organization for the great work it does. Over the past two decades, I have had the privilege of attending a number of events for this organization and of meeting the children who are affected by sickle cell disease.

As we deal with this issue and speak about declaring a day of awareness, it is important to keep in mind those young kids and their families who have been affected by this disease and to remember those who are working tirelessly in our communities to make a difference and support them.

Because of the nature of these kids' illness and the way they suffer, they miss, on average, 50 days of school each year. They are unable to participate in many things most kids take for granted. To have the opportunity to spend time with each other and experience the fun of a summer camp with people who understand the limitations their health condition places on them is extraordinary. It is a great privilege for the House to have an opportunity to call on all Canadians to keep at the forefront of their thinking those children, their families, and those who support them.

Now I will go to my prepared remarks. We welcome the chance to add our voice in support of Bill S-211. I want to reassure Canadians living with sickle cell disease that the government and the people of Canada support them and have their backs. This act respecting national sickle cell awareness day is a testament to our national commitment to increase awareness of sickle cell disease and to improve diagnosis and treatment as we work to find a long-term cure for those affected by this disease.

Sickle cell disease is a devastating disease, as I said, that cannot be ignored. It is diagnosed more than 100 times each year in this country when a baby is born with this rare blood disorder. Those children join the other 5,000 Canadians already living with this disease and the hundreds of millions of people like them suffering around the world.

These are people who learn to cope with tremendous pain from a disease that, to date, has eluded a cure. The pain episodes they experience are due to bone marrow necrosis. These are people who suffer frequent painful attacks that send them to hospital for blood transfusions and drug therapies to manage their disease. They are far more susceptible to infection and have an increased risk of stroke and vision loss. Perhaps most alarming is that these people expect to live shorter lives than other Canadians, because sickle cell disease can lead to serious bacterial infections and tissue death, which can frequently result in an early death. Life expectancy is calculated to be 30 years less than it is for most Canadians. Aside from the terrible loss of loved ones, Canadian society as a whole is shortchanged when this happens. First and foremost, we lose the valuable contributions of these individuals to our economy and our communities. We also pay the high cost to cover their frequent stays in hospital, an average of \$20,000 per week for a one-week stay, and there are generally many more weeks than one.

This does not begin to capture the debilitating impact this disease can have on those individuals living with sickle cell disease and their families and friends. Few of us can imagine how harrowing the diagnosis of sickle cell disease must be, yet it is a reality that a significant proportion of the population knows only too well. Approximately 5% of the world's population carries the gene for sickle cell, which means that it is bound to surface in some Canadian families and communities.

● (1405)

In fact, given Canada's multicultural composition, it is sadly inevitable that we will see more babies born with this rare blood disorder. Studies suggest that the odds of a Hispanic person having sickle cell disease is one in 1,000, and that jumps to one in 500 for those of African ancestry. For a couple to have a child with sickle cell disease, both parents must be carriers. According to research, when both parents are carriers of the gene, each pregnancy they have has a one in four chance of the child being afflicted with sickle cell and a one in two chance that the child will be a carrier, even if he or she does not have the disease. The problem is that people with the sickle cell trait often do not know they have it, as they do not have the symptoms of the disease, even though they can pass the gene for the disease on to their children.

That is why we need all parliamentarians to lend their support to Bill S-211. It would create a national sickle cell awareness day each year on June 19 to promote awareness and to spur action to address this dreadful disease. A dedicated national disease day would help prospective parents understand the risks of being a carrier and potentially having a baby with sickle cell. It would also help to increase diagnosis among newborns to make sure that youngsters with sickle cell get the appropriate treatment as soon as possible. This can prevent the complications and improve the child's quality of life. Thanks to earlier advances in diagnosis and treatment, kids born with this inherited disorder can receive the right treatment and support as they grow up, to enable them to live active and productive lives.

Equally important, this national day would inspire researchers in their quest for a cure for sickle cell disease. As the parliamentary secretary noted earlier, some of this country's top scientists are already increasing our knowledge of these disorders and discovering new treatments. For instance, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research is involved in several clinical trials for the treatment of the disease, as well as in the treatment of sickle cell-related pain. This work is taking place under the International Rare Diseases Research Consortium, which we have helped to establish. The Canadian Institutes of Health Research is also engaged in international collaboration on rare-disease research through E-Rare. That is the European Union's main initiative to fund research into rare diseases. This collaboration is enabling scientists in different countries to

Private Members' Business

work together on a common interdisciplinary research project. These are the kinds of hopeful steps that can be inspired by a national sickle cell awareness day each June 19 in Canada, critical steps that would lead to promising results that can improve the lives of Canadians living with this disease.

Therefore, I take this opportunity to call on all parties to release this potential by supporting the passage of this important bill. Let us be part of the solution to this perplexing health challenge by standing up for Canadians already living with the disease and by helping to ensure that we protect future generations from it.

● (1410)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the time is up for the rest of the debate on this bill today. The member will have approximately two minutes the next time this issue is before the House.

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

[*Translation*]

The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:11 p.m.)

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