HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 148 • NUMBER 341 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, October 24, 2018

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 24, 2018

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

● (1400)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the past 14 presidents of ADISQ have sounded the alarm: without proper legislation governing streaming services such as Spotify and Apple Music, Québécois music is in jeopardy. They are asking the federal government to force streaming services to make a financial contribution to our culture, pay artists what they are worth, and showcase Quebec content.

The film and television industries made similar demands regarding Netflix. It is time to open our eyes to what is going on. The digital transformation is hurting all of our artists, and our entire culture is fading away online.

The solution is not botched ad hoc deals like the one the government signed with Netflix. The solution is a complete overhaul of e-commerce legislation to compel companies to obey our laws. The law should apply to everyone, period.

* * *

[*English*]

HOUSING

Hon. Kent Hehr (Calgary Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an issue that affects my riding of Calgary Centre, and in fact the entire country, is homelessness and home insecurity. Over 150,000 Albertans do not have access to adequate, safe, affordable housing. That is why I was excited this week to announce in beautiful Banff our Liberal government's investment of $10 million in eight cost-effective, energy-efficient affordable housing projects. Phase one will create up to 467 rental units. The first project is the YWCA courtyard in Banff, a three-storey building, housing 78 at-risk women.

Our government understands that it is difficult, if not impossible, to build a life without a home. Project by project, our government is bringing affordable housing to Alberta. After a decade of inaction by the previous government, this type of major investment in affordable housing is long overdue.

* * *

● (1405)

43RD GENERAL ELECTION

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker,

With voting just one year away
I though it was time to re-play
All the promises broken
While people are toking
So the Liberals get voted away

I'll start with the latest denial
That keeps one navy man from fair trial
And then there's the scams
That's related to clams
And I'll add several more to the pile

Those tiny wee debts that became
Huge spending with Liberals to blame
No end is in sight
Of their deficit plight
Unless voters or CBC take aim

Their carbon tax lie is the worst
You can tell that they've really rehearsed
But it won't fix a thing
Just a Liberal cha-Ching
To take from the taxpayers first

I certainly don't have the time
To list all ill deeds in this rhyme
I've just got a minute
But Conservatives will win it
And then life will be just sublime

We'll balance the budget you'll see
And restore the economy
With help top of mind
For all peoplekind
To bring Canada prosperity

SPRINGHILL MINE

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday marked a sombre anniversary in the town of Springhill, Nova Scotia. It was at 8:06 p.m. on October 23, 1958 that Springhill changed forever. One hundred and seventy-four coal miners went to work that morning, but only 99 came home. A natural disaster known as the "Springhill Bump" occurred, collapsing the No. 2 colliery, killing 75 miners. It was one of the most severe coal mine bumps in North America's history, leaving many families without fathers, husbands, brothers or uncles.

The site of the closed mine is now the Springhill Coal Mining National Historic Site of Canada, and a commemorative monument has been erected in Springhill's town centre to honour the lives of the miners lost, as well as their families.

I send my thoughts to Springhill on the 60th anniversary of the bump, and I can assure everyone that Springhillers will never forget the bravery of the miners and rescuers from Springhill and the surrounding areas who went underground to save their fellow miners.

* * *

CONCORDIA HOSPITAL

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Concordia Hospital's 90 years of service to northeast Winnipeg. In 1928, a group of newcomers came together to open a maternity hospital. It was such a success that it has been either moving or expanding ever since. lt opened its current location in 1974, and since then has become a centre of excellence in hip and knee surgery. It opened Concordia Place, offering more personal care home beds to northeast Winnipeg, and its emergency room has offered needed care to people in crisis.

Unfortunately, the provincial Conservative government plans to close the ER in the new year. Other ERs in Winnipeg have been replaced with urgent care centres, but for some reason, northeast Winnipeg has been singled out to be the only part of the city losing 24-7 access to care. People of northeast Winnipeg have been pushing back. We deserve the same access to care as every other part of the city, and if the Conservatives cared at all about northeast Winnipeg, they would give their heads a shake and keep the Concordia ER open.

* * *

TORONTO MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Spadina—Fort York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the election in Toronto is over, and we have to talk about a very disturbing incident that took place during the campaign.

On October 2, following a demonstration held by a mayoralty candidate who is a white supremacist, a fire was deliberately set at a hotel that shelters homeless families and refugees. The attack followed false and inflammatory information that was published by the Toronto Sun. Elected officials, some in this House, have argued that people being sheltered at this hotel do not have a right to be in Canada.

Let me make three very clear points.

One, more than half the people at that hotel that was firebombed are children. Who in their right mind targets children?

Two, the City of Toronto has used hotels as emergency shelters for well over 25 years. We have a housing crisis in Toronto, not a refugee crisis.

Three, Toronto must never be governed by fear, violence or racism.

Everyone in this House denounces these horrible atrocities, and we demand that the people responsible be brought to justice.

* * *

WORLD POLIO DAY

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is World Polio Day, a day to shine a spotlight on international efforts to end polio. On the subject of global polio eradication, Nelson Mandela said it best, back in 1996: "[O]ur aim is not merely to reduce the numbers afflicted - it is to eliminate the disease completely. No country can be safe from this disease until the whole world is rid of it."

Today, we are closer to that goal than ever, and Canada has played a leading role. In fact, three Canadian prime ministers, Jean Chrétien, Stephen Harper and the current Prime Minister, have been recipients of the Rotary Foundation's Polio Eradication Champion Award. This is a testament to Canada's enduring commitment to this fight, working with equally dedicated partners, like Rotary International, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Global Citizen, UNICEF and RESULTS.

Here, it is all too rare for us to find common ground, but in uniting around the efforts of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, we have done so, and the world is a better place for it. Now we need to finish the job, once and for all.

* * *

● (1410)

GENOME CANADA

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since Watson and Crick decoded the double-helix shape of deoxyribonucleic acid, scientists and policy-makers alike have been dreaming of the benefits this discovery would have in the real world.

New DNA sequencing and computing tools have caused an inflection point in DNA research, and there is now an unsurpassed opportunity to leverage the value of genetics in our daily lives. Since 2000, Genome Canada has led the way, as a vital partner in helping the Government of Canada deliver on our national potential in genomics. In particular, Genome Canada has helped us leverage $1.5 billion of federal funding to well over $3 billion, including provincial government and industry partner support. I would particularly like to thank Genome Canada for launching a leading environmental genomics facility in my riding of St. John's East, called eDNAtec.

I invite all members to join Genome Canada on Parliament Hill today where its scientists will be available to teach us about their exciting industry.

* * *

[*Translation*]

COLLÈGE SAINTE-ANNE

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, women students from Collège Sainte-Anne, a school in Lachine in my riding, are on Parliament Hill today.

Collège Sainte-Anne has a long history. In May 1861, the Sisters of Sainte-Anne, a congregation founded in 1850 by Esther Blondin, who later became Mother Marie-Anne, took possession of the Simpson Manor.

At a time when women did not have the right to express an opinion, let alone get an education, Mother Marie-Anne challenged the status quo by founding this institution, thereby inspiring future generations of women to pursue their studies. That institution, the oldest school in Quebec, has become a symbol of progress for women.

Mother Marie-Anne's love and courage made it possible for generations of women and girls to get an education and help create a better society.

* * *

[*English*]

CZECH REPUBLIC AND SLOVAKIA

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, October 28 marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of Czechoslovakia. Citizens of both the current Czech Republic and Slovakia celebrate this day.

Czechoslovakia peacefully dissolved into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993. This velvet revolution was a non-violent transition of power that happened in the wake of demonstrations against the Communist regime. This revolution ultimately ended the dictatorial single-party governance of Czechoslovakia, giving both new nations their independence and sovereignty. Today these two countries live peacefully side by side in prosperity and together share a special 100th anniversary.

As chair of the Canada-Slovakia friendship group, and as a proud Canadian of Slovak heritage, I want to take today to wish all of those celebrating here in Canada and abroad a happy 100th anniversary of the founding of Czechoslovakia.

Gratulujem.

* * *

WORLD POLIO DAY

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on World Polio Day to recognize the efforts of governments, health workers, partners, donors and volunteers who are working hard to stop this virus for good.

Two years ago, the Minister of International Development announced major Canadian support for the global polio eradication initiative, which seeks to end polio by 2020. The UN Foundation, CanWaCH, RESULTS Canada, Global Citizen, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization and UNICEF have been hustling to make this vision a reality. Rotary International has also been doing heavy lifting. I want to thank all Rotarians, especially the ones in Whitby, who are leading the fight.

Canada has long been a champion of global health and polio eradication. I think every member in this House would agree. Let us keep taking bold steps to end polio.

* * *

● (1415)

JUSTICE

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week is Access to Justice Week. Launched by The Action Group on Access to Justice, the goal is to ensure that our justice system addresses the needs of all Canadians, including the most vulnerable, who either exist on the periphery of our system or are victimized by it. We share this goal.

Our government is committed to improving access to justice. In Bill C-78, we are streamlining family justice to make things less complex and less costly for single parents seeking the financial support they are owed, the vast majority of whom are single women. In Bill C-75, we are improving criminal justice to end peremptory challenges and ensure that our juries actually represent our communities, which will directly impact indigenous persons and black Canadians, two groups overrepresented in the criminal justice system. We have overhauled our judicial appointments system, because we know that accessing justice improves when Canadians can see themselves reflected on a more diverse bench.

Access to justice is a priority for our government, not just this week but 52 weeks a year.

Statements by Members

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we found out the details of the Prime Minister's forced plan to raise people's taxes, and sure enough, it looks like rural Canadians are going to be bearing the brunt of this ill-thought-out tax grab. At every turn, the Prime Minister has failed rural Canadians. When one lives in a rural community, one sometimes has to drive long distances to get to work, drop kids off at school, go to the grocery store to buy groceries or even go to a medical appointment. Rural Canadians do not have the same transportation options as people living in urban areas. There is no magical subway for people to just jump on in the middle of the Prairies, and I can assure the Prime Minister that there are no designated bike lanes on the Trans-Canada Highway.

Today I call on Liberal MPs from rural Canada to stand up to the Prime Minister, fight for their constituents, oppose this carbon tax grab and, for Heaven's sake, do not let him financially hurt those who call rural Canada home.

* * *

BRAIN CANCER

Ms. Kate Young (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is the first-ever Brain Cancer Awareness Day in Canada.

While we have made significant progress and advancements in various forms of cancer treatment, there is still much left to be done. That is why our government is undertaking a series of measures to modernize our health care system so that we will be in a better position to provide greater access to new treatments for diseases like brain cancer.

With disease awareness comes hope and support for research. I would like to recognize the Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada, a national non-profit organization based in London, Ontario. This week they launched “Hats for Hope”, a nationwide brain cancer awareness campaign calling on all Canadians to show support for increased brain cancer research.

I extend my thoughts and support to all Canadians impacted by brain cancer. Together we can make a difference.

* * *

[*Translation*]

WOMEN'S SHELTERS

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a recent study showed that more than one-third of women who use shelters have suffered a brain injury as a result of domestic violence. Unfortunately, no one ever talks about that.

All too often, victims of domestic violence are women with disabilities. No one ever talks about that either. I would like to thank the DisAbled Women's Network Canada for the work it does on this issue.

While we are examining the accessibility legislation, we should ensure that women's shelters get more resources. The government promised that victims fleeing domestic violence would not be left without support and that it would increase funding for shelters and safe houses.

It is therefore high time the government took action to give them all the resources they need and ensure that all women always have somewhere to go no matter where they are in this country.

* * *

[*English*]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians continue to face the consequences of the Prime Minister's continued failures. Now he is forcing a carbon tax on provinces that do not have a Liberal-approved climate plan.

Now, we have all heard them say how well the B.C. carbon tax is doing out west. The truth is that despite having the highest carbon tax in this country, emissions in that province continue to rise. In fact, the only thing the tax has done in B.C. is force British Columbians to pay more for gas than anywhere in North America.

Earlier this week, the Prime Minister actually said that this tax would be revenue neutral. Only a Liberal could say, with a straight face, that a new tax would leave more money in someone's pocket. As Brad Wall said last night, usually when someone tells people to send in money and they will get more back in return, we all know that it is an email phishing scam.

* * *

● (1420)

UNITED NATIONS

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October 24 is celebrated every year as United Nations Day. It is the anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations, which established the UN in 1945. It was recognized, following the atrocities of World War II, that a global forum was needed that would have, at its foundation, respect for human rights, peacekeeping and the establishment of an international, rules-based order.

Since that time, the United Nations has been at the forefront of humanitarian interventions, peacekeeping and peacemaking, conflict prevention, and the building of vital diplomatic spaces for the discussion and resolution of global problems such as war, poverty, climate change, migration, the preservation of cultural heritage and more.

I have had the honour of working with the UNDP and UN Women on projects to promote democracy, inclusive governance and gender equality. Today I pay tribute to all those Canadians who work so hard to build a better world for our children through their work with the United Nations.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for the second consecutive year, the Prime Minister is going after small businesses. Unlike large corporations that are entitled to special deals with the Liberals, small businesses will bear the brunt of the Prime Minister's carbon tax.

Why is it that every time the Prime Minister increases taxes, the people who can least afford it are the ones who end up paying the most?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we are proud of lowering small business taxes to 9%, which is the lowest small business tax rate in the G7.

Canadians expect us to put a price on pollution and to take climate action. This is exactly what we are doing, while ensuring that families, small businesses and our institutions are protected during the transition. This is exactly what we are doing.

The Conservatives do not want to take action and have no plan to fight climate change.

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister talked about protecting businesses, but it turns out that his carbon tax scheme protects large corporate emitters by giving them a massive exemption from the costs they will have to pay. Small businesses that will face rising fuel and home heating costs will have to bear the brunt of his new carbon tax plan.

Therefore, the question is very simple. Will he grant the same exemption to small and medium-size businesses he has given to large corporate emitters?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is simply not true. We are moving forward with putting a price on pollution, taking real action on fighting climate change, something the Conservatives were unwilling and unable to do for 10 years while in government, and evidently, continue to be unwilling to do. They have no plan to approach the fight against climate change and will not put a price on pollution. They want to make pollution free again. We are putting a price on pollution and are supporting families so they are actually better off with our plan to fight climate change.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister can try to deflect attention all he wants, but the facts are in his own government's backgrounder. It states:

> The federal system has two components: a charge on fossil fuels that will generally be paid by fuel producers or distributors, and a separate pricing system for industrial facilities

That separate system includes a massive exemption. The question again is this. Will small and medium-size businesses get the same deal?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the many Canadians who were watching my intervention yesterday saw, I predicted that the Conservatives would end up trying to find a rhetorical trick to make this seem very complicated and very difficult. Therefore, let us make it very simple. We are putting a price on pollution because we want less pollution, and putting a price on it actually reduces pollution. At the same time, we are putting money in the pockets of Canadians to help them through the fight against climate change, because we know that Canadians expect real action, real action they are incapable of—

● (1425)

The Speaker: The hon. leader of the opposition.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister likes simplicity. Let me make it very simple for him. His own documents show that he has a separate system that includes a massive exemption for large corporate emitters that can afford well-paid government lobbyists. Small businesses, which are the backbone of this economy, will face higher fuel costs and higher heating costs. Will those same businesses, this is very simple, get the same deal?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are taking real action on a plan to fight climate change. The Conservatives, evidently, as is their right, as is their responsibility, need to oppose, and that is fine. They will. They will find fault with our plan to concretely fight climate change and support Canadians.

The question is this. Canadians are not satisfied with just opposition. They want to know what his plan is. What is the Conservatives' plan to tackle the greatest global challenge we are facing right now? What is their plan to fight climate change?

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister will have plenty of opportunity to ask me questions after the next election.

The question today is very simple. The Prime Minister can act all he wants, but he cannot act his way out of this one. He has given a special deal to large corporate emitters. Small businesses with five and four employees will face massive new costs under his plan. Will they receive the same deal that government lobbyists secured for large corporate emitters, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians will be faced with a very simple question over the next 12 months. Do they want to act on climate change and protect future generations or not?

It is very clear that the Conservatives are unwilling to take leadership and action in the fight against climate change. We have put forward a comprehensive plan that actually involves a price on pollution and many measures across the economy that will demonstrate that we can not only fight climate change but also benefit Canadians and grow the economy at the same time.

They have no plan. We have a strong plan.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, indigenous communities and environmental groups in British Columbia denounced the new Trans Mountain pipeline assessment process. They condemn the government's rush to get everything wrapped up by February. They condemn the botched consultations that will lead to yet another botched assessment. According to Stewart Phillip, Grand Chief of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, the new process is even worse than the old one.

Is that because the Liberals are working to cobble together a process that will lead to a yes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are following the blueprint put forward by the court to move ahead with this project in the right way. We understand that moving ahead in the right way means taking real measures to protect the environment and engage in meaningful consultations with indigenous peoples. Not doing either of those things is why, for a decade, the previous government was unable to get resources to markets other than the United States. We understand the importance of diversification, and we will do it in the right way.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to believe that it is meaningful when they are giving themselves four months to consult.

The more time goes by, the more Canadians believe that the Liberals did not negotiate a good trade agreement with Mexico and the United States because the cost of prescription drugs is going to go up, they have created a new breach in the supply management system, and there is no guarantee that the tariffs on steel and aluminum will be eliminated. Entrepreneurs, workers, and farmers feel that they have been abandoned by this government.

Why did the Liberals give in instead of standing firm for Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, over the past year and a half we said that we would defend Canadians' interests above all else and that we would be constructive but firm.

The agreement in principle will eliminate uncertainty for our manufacturers and investors and improve the labour rights of all North Americans. When it comes into force, NAFTA will be preserved, updated and modernized for the 21st century. I want to again thank all Canadians who stood by us even in the difficult moments.

● (1430)

[*English*]

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a poll this week shows that 47% of Canadians feel that the USMCA is a disappointment. Liberals can repeat the same tired lines about this deal, but Canadians are not buying it. Instead of standing strong, they saw their government make concession after concession at the negotiating table, concessions that have put their jobs in peril, concessions that render their businesses more vulnerable, concessions that have made drugs more expensive.

This is not how one stands up for Canadians. How can the Prime Minister say he is proud of this deal when Canadians are going to pay the price?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just a few weeks ago, I was meeting with workers who were telling me what a great deal it was, how reassured they were. Where were those workers? In the Windsor area. Folks in Windsor, in particular, are extraordinarily pleased that we have secured access to the North American market for their jobs and industries.

We have made sure that we continue to invest in manufacturing across this country, including in the Windsor—Essex area, because we know that those are good, middle-class jobs that we have protected for generations to come.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to recycling, we can all get behind that, but when it comes to the Trans Mountain pipeline, the Liberal government has taken things to extremes, because the Prime Minister is recycling the same broken process that has already failed us. Indigenous leaders, environmental groups and local leaders have blasted his so-called new pipeline review, calling it "rigged" with "impossible" timelines.

Thrown out by the courts, rejected by indigenous leaders and a clear threat to our coastline, the only real question is how much longer will he recycle his flawed, failed and flagrantly inept process before he just finally gives up on the whole thing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we are actually following the blueprint put forward by the court to move ahead with this project in the right way. We understand that moving ahead in the right way means taking real measures to protect the environment and engage in meaningful consultations with indigenous peoples. Not doing either of those things is why the previous government, for a decade, was unable to get resources to markets other than the United States.

We understand the importance of diversification, and we will do it in the right way.

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not just Conservatives who believe that this new carbon tax will be hard on small businesses. Here is what the Canadian Federation of Independent Business had to say about this new tax: "They already picked a fight with business owners with the small business tax changes in 2017 and now it looks like there will be another big one in 2018".

It is the Prime Minister who accused small business owners of being tax cheats and who granted special deals to big corporations as he went after small business owners.

The question once again is this: will small and medium-sized businesses get the same exemption that big corporate emitters got?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, small businesses across the country rejoiced at the fact that we lowered small business taxes to the lowest rate of any country in the G7. As of January 1, 9% will be the small business tax rate. We support small businesses and will always do so.

However, we also understand that Canadians are concerned about climate change, wildfires, floods, drugs and increased hurricane activity south of us. These are the things that worry Canadians. That is why we are taking real action. Unfortunately, the Conservatives have no plan and are not doing anything.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, former premier Brad Wall said it best when he said, "Usually when someone tells you to send in money but you'll get more back in return, it's a Nigerian prince." The bad news for Canadians is that is actually coming from their Prime Minister.

The government expects suburban moms and dads to believe that a measly $12.50 a month per taxpayer will cover higher fuel costs and higher home heating costs.

If the Prime Minister believes that to be the case, why will he not finally table the documents that show the true cost of the carbon tax for those very same families?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, excuse me if I find it a bit rich for them to be asking us to table documents when they have not even put forward any plan at all to fight climate change.

Canadians expect leadership. Canadians expect action. Maybe they—

An hon. member: I can't hear a thing.

The Speaker: Order. An hon. member just said he could not hear a thing. It is very hard to hear the answer.

I would ask members to restrain themselves. It is important that we hear the questions. The questions can be aggressive and the answers as well. They are important. We do not always like what we hear here, but we have to listen despite that, because we are civilized —it is a democracy—or reasonably civilized.

The Right Hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

● (1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition mentioned earlier that he hopes to be on this side of the House after the next election. Canadians will not allow him to get here if he does not show real leadership on climate change, on taking—

The Speaker: Order. The President of the Treasury Board is not helping, and nor are lots of others.

The Right Hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the Conservatives have no plan to fight climate change. They want to make pollution free again.

We are putting forward real and concrete action to help Canadians create jobs and protect their future generations. This is something that we take very seriously.

Just like the 10 years under Stephen Harper, when they were unwilling and unable to act on the environment, they continue to be unwilling and unable to take on climate change.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, now the Prime Minister says that small businesses should rejoice at his tax increases.

First of all, according to him, they should rejoice that he is punishing them for saving money within their companies and for sharing the work and earnings of their business with family members who contribute, and now he wants them to rejoice that they will have to pay higher energy costs because of his tax.

I have a simple question, and we will all rejoice if he finally answers it. Will small businesses get the same exemption as large industrial emitters under his plan?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Conservatives we believe that emissions need to go down, that we need to continue creating good middle-class jobs for Canadians and support small businesses.

What the Conservatives are saying is factually wrong. We have set a target for industry to reduce pollution and if it fails to meet that target, it will pay the price. If industry does better, for example, through innovation, it will be rewarded.

Our plan will also give money directly to households where the federal backstop applies. The only mystery here is why have the Conservatives not put forward their plan?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, actually, what his own government documents state is that that so-called target is a 90% exemption for the large industrial emitters. We have simply asked if small businesses will get the same exemption. We have had no answer.

In light of that, the Prime Minister still thinks that Canadian taxpayers should believe that if he puts his hands in their left pocket, he will give some of it back in their right pocket. His own documents admit that the government will collect more in taxes than it will give out in rebates. Is that not proof that this is just another Liberal tax grab?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, that is simply not true. We are ensuring that we are returning all the money collected from the price on pollution to the jurisdiction in which it was collected. That is a commitment we have made in law.

Of course, that is a law the Conservatives voted against. A lot of the Conservatives continue to stop that because they have no approach to fight climate change. They do not think that it matters to fight climate change. Tell that to folks in B.C. suffering through forest fires every summer. Tell that to folks in Saskatchewan dealing with floods. Tell that to the people facing droughts in Manitoba. Tell that to the folks across the country who know that climate change is real.

The Speaker: There seem to be a lot of members who think they can talk in this place without being called upon. There is always the danger they will not be called upon for awhile.

The hon. member for Carleton has the floor.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, listen carefully to his wording. All the money collected from taxpayers will be returned to the jurisdiction, not to the taxpayer. That is a key distinction. The government plans to spend the money. The rule here is that if Canadians send it, the Prime Minister will spend it. That is distinct from making taxpayers whole for their costs. This will be especially hard for suburban commuters, hockey moms and middle-class people who will pay more and get less, all so that the Prime Minister can spend it all in the jurisdiction of his choice.

Is that not a tax—

● (1440)

The Speaker: The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for allowing me to remind the House that we are actually giving a 10% top-up to small and rural communities because we know that we need to make sure that everyone has the proper support as we move forward with a price on pollution.

Specifically, our plan to put a price on pollution will encourage companies to innovate and pollute less, while ensuring they create good jobs for Canadians. Our system sets aside $1.45 billion from pollution pricing in order to support small and medium-sized businesses, because we know that small and medium-sized businesses are—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is talking about the billions he is going to spend, which is precisely what we predicted. They are collecting this tax so that they can spend it how they choose. In fact, just in Ontario alone, they admit they will collect $1.45 billion more in taxes than they will give out in rebates to individuals and families. That money, that difference, is the net tax grab on Canadians, especially suburban commuters, soccer moms and average ordinary families.

Is that not yet more proof that this just another Liberal tax grab?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am afraid I am going to have to channel my former profession of teaching when I point out that if the member opposite, who spends so much time trying to worm around and confuse everyone about our plan, spent more time on developing his own plan to fight climate change, we would all be better off and he would have something more intelligent to say.

We are fighting climate change and we are doing it in a real way on real terms because that is what Canadians expect.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the public health emergency caused by opioids is having devastating impacts on our families. Even our life expectancy is declining due to this crisis. The U.S. has already secured criminal pleas, along with dozens of states, for over $600 million in damages from opioid manufacturers, yet the Liberals have taken no steps to investigate potential violations of Canadian law, or to pursue civil damages. We need justice and accountability.

Will the government launch now an investigation into the role drug companies may have played in fuelling the opioid crisis in our country?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are deeply concerned about the tragic effects the opioid crisis has had across this country. Our response to this national public health crisis is comprehensive, compassionate and evidence-based.

We are making major investments in harm-reduction services. We are working closely with provinces and territories to support those on the front lines. We are also working with partners to turn the tide of this crisis by committing new resources to improve and broaden access to treatment, by supporting innovative approaches and by fighting the stigma related to opioid use.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in addition to the devastating toll that opioids are having on families across Canada, our public system has been severely stressed as well. Front-line responders, overdose prevention services, emergency room staff and treatment centres have all borne an enormous cost.

While opioid manufacturers have reaped billions in profits, the public has been left with massive costs from these addictive and dangerous substances.

U.S. governments have recovered over $600 million in damages and British Columbia has just launched a lawsuit to protect taxpayers. Will the government join it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you know, the opioid crisis is something that affects us all deeply and on which Canada is taking significant leadership, primarily by working with front-line responders and the provinces and municipalities to put forward the measures they need.

We are going to continue to work with the provinces on initiatives they think can help, because we realize the devastating impact on families, on communities and on people right across the country that this opioid epidemic has given.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by expressing my heartfelt condolences to the family of Constable Catherine Campbell. She was truly a hero to her community and we will always remember her contributions and sacrifice.

The government is changing the policy that led to Catherine's killer, Christopher Garnier, receiving benefits from Veterans Affairs, even though he never actually served in the Canadian Armed Forces. However, it has refused to intervene and revoke those benefits for Garnier himself.

Catherine Campbell's parents are visiting Parliament Hill today, so I wonder if the Prime Minister could explain why he is putting the interests of Catherine Campbell's killer ahead of the interests of Canada's veterans.

● (1445)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our hearts, and the hearts of all Canadians, go out to Susan and Dwight and all of Constable Campbell's family. I know the Minister of Veterans Affairs and the member for Central Nova have reached out and conveyed that to them directly.

The minister has increased the level of scrutiny and the department is addressing its existing policy in relation to treatment of family members under extenuating circumstances, such as conviction of a serious crime. This will ensure we continue to support veterans and their families that need our help.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Chris Garnier is still in jail receiving treatment that veterans and first responders should get. Yesterday, Catherine Campbell's mother said that she could not believe that a government would condone a convicted murderer receiving treatment that veterans and first responders deserved.

Incredibly, despite their loss and immeasurable pain, all the Campbells want is that our first responders and our veterans come first and get the help they need, not convicted murderers.

Could the Prime Minister look the Campbells in the eyes and tell them why Chris Garnier continues to receive this treatment.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every member in the House is grieving with Constable Campbell's family. This is a tragic situation and the minister has taken steps to address the policy to ensure this does not occur moving forward.

The minister has increased the level of scrutiny and the department is addressing its existing policy in relation to treatment of family members under extenuating circumstances, such as conviction of a serious crime. This will ensure we continue to support veterans and their families that need our help, while maintaining the integrity of the system.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. The family is right here in Ottawa, and it deserves an answer. The real question is this. Does the Prime Minister think this murderer should be getting veteran benefits? If he does, he should say so. If he does not, he should tell us what he is going to do to stop these payments. Will he finally give the Campbell family and veterans a straight answer?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what happened in this case should not have happened. The minister has taken steps to address this policy and ensure that this ceases with cases going forward. However, because a veteran is involved, I am not allowed to discuss what benefits he or his family may or may not be receiving.

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every Liberal stood in the House and voted to maintain the benefits to murderer, Chris Garnier. True leaders, when they realize a mistake has been made, correct it. Chris Garnier never served one minute of his life in a military uniform, yet he is getting benefits for which veterans are waiting. This is outrageous, and we demand the government take leadership and revoke his benefits.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what happened should not have happened. We are ensuring that going forward these cases will not reoccur. We are changing the policy.

We understand how important it is to support veterans and their families and we are making sure that we do that in an appropriate and responsible way. However, because this is an issue that affects directly a veteran and his family members, we will not be commenting on the specifics of this case. We respect the privacy of members who have served in this country.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in January, the government announced that it will establish a Canadian ombudsperson for responsible enterprise, also known as CORE.

CORE's jobs is to investigate the allegations of human rights abuses linked to Canadian corporate activity abroad. However, here we are 10 months later and all that has been done is one announcement, one meeting, one phone call. No ombudsperson has been named yet and there is no mandate yet.

Canadians expect our government to uphold corporate responsibility abroad. Therefore, when will we see real action on this new human rights watchdog?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to this government, it is important to all Canadians that Canadian companies around the world respect the values and the laws that we cherish in Canada. That is why we are moving forward on a process to do a better job of holding Canadian companies overseas to account.

We look forward to continuing to work with all members in the House to make sure that we are doing it the right way and in a way that will meet the high expectations of Canadians, and continue to demonstrate our capacity to create growth and success around the world.

* * *

● (1450)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Steve Fobister Sr. of Grassy Narrows died of mercury poisoning. That is a fact. Seventeen-year-old Calvin Kokopenace died from mercury poisoning. That is a fact. Children who are suffering ongoing mercury poisoning have been denied special education funding for six years. That is a fact. What is also a fact is that the Prime Minister promised the people of Grassy Narrows that he would clean up that river "once and for all" and not a dime has been spent.

What is it going to take for the Prime Minister to admit that people are still being poisoned and for his government to pay its share to clean up the Wabigoon and English River systems, once and for all for these people?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is actively engaged with communities to support their health needs. Last November, we affirmed our government's commitment to funding the treatment centre that the people of Grassy Narrows need and rightfully deserve. We are actively engaged with the community to move it forward. We are working closely with both communities to determine their needs and priorities.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our plan to create jobs and grow the middle class with programs like the Canada child benefit is working in Guelph and across the country. The latest Statistics Canada labour force survey showed something I am proud to share. The city of Guelph has the lowest unemployment in Canada at 3.6%.

Could the Prime Minister update the House on more highlights from the latest Statistics Canada labour force survey and the success that Canadians across Canada are experiencing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Guelph for his tireless work in the community and congratulate the people of Guelph for the success they are building.

We were elected to grow our economy and support the middle class. The growth in Guelph is just one example of how Canadians are succeeding, thanks to our plan. We have been working hard with Canadians all across the country who have created over half a million full-time jobs.

We know the job does not end here. We will continue to invest in Canadians to grow the middle class and help all those working hard to join it.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ETHICS

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on November 20, CBC reporter James Cudmore broke the story of the Liberals' decision to terminate the Davie contract. Curiously, two months later, as if by magic, he was hired by the Minister of National Defence's office as a policy adviser.

I have a simple question for the Prime Minister. Was it the Prime Minister's Office or the Minister of National Defence's office that hired Mr. Cudmore to keep him quiet about the Liberal schemes he had exposed involving the Davie contract?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these employment details were already provided to the opposition House leader.

The Conservatives are simply trying to indirectly prosecute an ongoing court case in the House. We will not comment on an ongoing court case.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all we asked for was the date that James Cudmore was offered a job in the Minister of National Defence's office. We have had no answer for three days.

We asked if he was hired to stop him from continuing to report on the Liberals' political meddling in the Davie shipyard contract, but our question is still unanswered.

This sounds like more Liberal skulduggery.

What is the Prime Minister hiding?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these employment details were already provided to the opposition House leader. The Conservatives are simply trying to indirectly prosecute an ongoing court case in the House. We will not comment on an ongoing court case.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I believe the question that the government was asked to answer was the date on which the offer was made. That is the information we will continue to seek.

In 2015, right after swearing in, the cabinet and the government set up a secret cabinet committee. This secret cabinet committee had one purpose, and that was to stop the procurement of a navy vessel.

Interestingly enough, in the attempt to cover it up, the government is now denying documents for a fair trial. In the spirit of access to justice week, will the Prime Minister release these documents?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, those employment details were already provided to the opposition House leader. The Conservatives are simply trying to indirectly prosecute an ongoing court case in the House. We will not comment on an ongoing court case.

● (1455)

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what I am looking for comment on is the reason why the Prime Minister is withholding documents for a straight-up defence of a person accused of a serious crime. If he will not tell us who he is protecting, maybe I can surmise that it was the President of the Treasury Board who did receive a letter from Irving, asking for his intervention.

I also note that the current Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade did not post his conflict screen until three months after the secret cabinet meeting.

Is that who the Prime Minister is protecting?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite and, indeed, the Conservatives in general used to understand that we cannot comment on an ongoing court case. That is why they cited that rule in the House over 300 times when they were in government.

We respect the independence of the judicial system, and we will not comment.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there are 40 Liberal MPs from Quebec, but they are obviously not listening to Quebeckers. Opposition to energy east is practically unanimous, but when the Conservatives promise to bring back the pipeline, the Liberals leave the door wide open.

Does Ottawa listen to anyone but oil industry lobbyists?

How much does the ear of an opposition leader or a prime minister cost? Does a private dinner go for $1,500?

That is a small price to pay to jeopardize Quebec's main drinking water source.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the NDP to follow the new public funding rules we brought in. We welcome the media, and we are open and transparent about all political donations. That is what we are doing. Why are they still hiding their secret fundraisers? All parties should be more transparent, just as we are being more transparent.

On the subject of investment, we are always open to investment, but everyone needs to follow the proper procedure. That is what all Canadians, including Quebeckers, expect.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know a lot of Quebeckers who are going to be concerned about the Prime Minister's answer because they are committed to protecting our rivers and our access to clean drinking water.

The Prime Minister is using his slingshot to fight climate change, when what we really need is to bring out the heavy artillery. The Conservatives are declaring war on Quebec by trying to bring back energy east. We are in trouble. The Liberal and Conservative pipeline coalition could not care less about the environment.

What I want is for the Prime Minister to commit, here and now, to never bring back energy east.

Does he have the courage to do that or is he the oil lobby's puppet? What is it going to be?

The Speaker: I encourage members to be careful with their comments. They know that they are to avoid remarks that could be construed as an insult.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the NDP is all talk and no action.

We have a real plan that will enable us to meet the Paris greenhouse gas reduction targets. We are putting a price on pollution with the understanding that we need to create jobs and a greener and more prosperous future for all Canadians.

That is the balance we are striking. We understand that that balance is what is necessary, and it is what we heard Quebeckers and Canadians say they want. The NDP is still pitting the environment and the economy against each other, which does not work for Quebeckers or indeed all Canadians.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will rephrase my question. We are not talking about Vice-Admiral Norman's case.

What the Conservatives want to know is whether the Prime Minister gave journalist James Cudmore a job so he would stop reporting on the Liberal government's shenanigans at the expense of Davie.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no.

[*English*]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on November 4, the Liberal cabinet was sworn in and within days it was trying to change the Davie contract. CBC journalist James Cudmore wrote three stories on this controversy. The last one was on December 21, and on January 8, he left his job with the CBC.

The Prime Minister is trying to be cute here. On what day was James Cudmore offered a job, and who in his office offered that job? Was it on Christmas Day? Give us the day, through you, Mr. Speaker, when James Cudmore was offered a job.

● (1500)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, employment details have already been provided to the opposition House leader.

The Conservatives are simply trying to indirectly prosecute an ongoing court case in this House. We will not comment on an ongoing court case.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister suggests he has provided that information and we are suggesting he has not. I would ask him to table the documents they have shared on what date he was offered a job.

What is really concerning about this is that James Cudmore's stories led to a Privy Council investigation in January. That investigation revealed six separate leaks and 73 people who knew the details of the Liberal cabinet meeting. I want the Prime Minister to tell this House how many of those 73 were Atlantic Liberal MPs.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we respect the independence of our judicial system. It is out of respect for that independence that we will not engage with the Conservatives' prosecution of this case on the floor of this House. It would be inappropriate for me to comment on an ongoing court case. The Conservatives well know that because they made that clear over 300 times when they were in government.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and rightfully so. As we know, across Canada, one out of eight women will receive the diagnosis of breast cancer during her lifetime. Research is key.

Can the Prime Minister inform this House of the actions taken by the government regarding breast cancer?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Brampton South for her hard work and her advocacy on this important issue.

Thousands of Canadians have joined walks in their cities and communities with many others who have also been impacted by breast cancer. This month, let us all learn more about breast cancer, starting with prevention and screening. We recognize the importance of research, and support organizations like Canadian Partnership Against Cancer with close to $50 million annually.

Mr. Speaker, through you to all survivors and families who have lost loved ones, we will not stop until we find a cure.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is a good actor, but a very poor negotiator. Just ask any dairy, egg or poultry producer in Quebec or the rest of Canada, who were sacrificed at the negotiating table to reach a deal with the U.S.

The president of Dairy Farmers of Canada has been clear. He simply does not understand how that agreement will benefit the 220,000 Canadian families that depend on dairy for their livelihood.

A good actor repeats his lines, and the Prime Minister has done plenty of that today. A good negotiator, though, prepares his strategy.

Can the Prime Minister tell us what studies he looked at before deciding to turn his back on Canadian farmers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the agreement with the United States and Mexico preserves and maintains supply management. Its future is no longer in question.

With regard to market shares, we promised farmers that they would receive full and fair compensation. The changes to market access in this agreement are similar to those in the TPP, which was lauded by the Conservatives.

Supply management is protected and farmers will be compensated. As always, the Conservatives are playing political games.

* * *

[*English*]

TRANSPORT

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this spring, there were two significant sulphuric acid spills from transport trucks in Trail, B.C. Over a thousand cars that drove through the spills had to be written off because they were unsafe to drive. The Trail fire department lost two of their trucks. A smaller spill happened again in September. Regional authorities are deeply concerned that Transport Canada does not have the staffing capacity to effectively deal with incidents like this.

Is Transport Canada investigating these acid spills? What enforcement actions will it take to resolve the issues faced by local residents and governments?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously, we take this situation seriously. This is something which, of course, Transport Canada is looking at. We know that the protection of communities and citizens right across the country is one of the fundamental responsibilities of any government, and it is one which we take very seriously.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, I am proud of the important work we have done on modernizing our election laws.

As part of our study of the Chief Electoral Officer's report following the 2015 election, we released a series of reports containing numerous recommendations. We are pleased to have completed our clause-by-clause study of Bill C-76 and to see that the bill will be sent back to the House of Commons this week.

Could the Prime Minister tell the House about the measures our government is taking to follow through on our commitment to strengthen the openness and fairness of Canada's democratic institutions?

● (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Laurentides—Labelle for his work on the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs' study of this bill.

Our bill addresses more than 85% of the recommendations made by the Chief Electoral Officer. We are improving transparency, making voting more accessible and protecting Canadians' privacy.

Unlike the Conservatives, who deprived many Canadians of their right to vote, we believe that our democracy is stronger when more Canadians are able to participate. That is exactly what we are aiming for.

* * *

[*English*]

HEALTH

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on May 3 of this year, I rose in the House to ask a question that was supposed to be asked by our colleague Gord Brown. I wanted to know whether there was going to be compensation for the forgotten thalidomide survivors coming from the promised spring budget. The Prime Minister said on that day, "We will have more good news to share shortly on this issue."

They are still suffering, so I am following up on the question today. When will the Prime Minister do the right thing and honour the word he gave us on May 3?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians who have suffered from the effects of thalidomide are of real concern to all of us. That is why we stand united in wanting to do right by them. We are working with them, ensuring that it actually gives them the proper support.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF): Mr. Speaker, with climate rebates, the Prime Minister has offered "mo'" money to Saskatchewan people, but our premier has responded with "Moe" problems.

A solution would be to extend the federal carbon price to the carbon content of imports from countries that do not price their emissions. Will the Prime Minister enact a carbon tariff to ensure a level playing field for Canadian workers and to collect more revenue, which could fund greater rebates?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for two years, we worked with premiers right across this country, including premiers of Saskatchewan, to establish a way forward on putting a price on pollution that would fight climate change and support families through this important transition in our economies. Unfortunately, Saskatchewan and other provinces decided not to move forward with a concrete plan to fight climate change and therefore, we are moving forward with our national plan.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. member the presence in the gallery of Canadian astronaut David Saint-Jacques. Mr. Saint-Jacques will travel to the International Space Station on an upcoming mission.

Hon. members: Hear, hear!

[*English*]

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, coming out of question period, I have a point of order.

The Prime Minister stood in his place and declared that on some previous date the Prime Minister's Office had contacted the opposition House leader's office to tell her office on which day James Cudmore was offered a job. I can tell members that is unequivocally untrue and I would ask the Prime Minister to table the evidence.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member, but that sounds like debate.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A), 2018-19

A message from Her Excellency the Governor General transmitting supplementary estimates (A) for the financial year ending March 31, 2019, was presented by the President of the Treasury Board and read by the Speaker to the House.

* * *

● (1510)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage entitled "Bill C-376, An Act to Designate the Month of April as Sikh Heritage Month".

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House without amendment.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 52nd report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts entitled "Report on the Message of the Auditor General in the 2018 Spring Reports".

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

* * *

PETITIONS

AFGHAN MINORITY COMMUNITIES

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition signed by thousands of Canadians drawing attention to the plight of Afghanistan's religious minorities, in particular the Sikh and Hindu communities.

The petition calls for the government to do more to advocate with our Afghan counterpart for the rights of these minorities. It also asks the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to use the powers granted him to create a special program to help persecuted minorities in Afghanistan. The community here in Canada is ready to sponsor these communities. It has been three years. It is time for action.

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise with a petition on behalf of concerned Canadians who are raising awareness about the urgency of the situation of minorities in Afghanistan. They urge the government to act with special and existing programming to address the plight of these people who do need our help urgently today.

I am tabling this petition with thanks to the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan for his initiative in organizing us to make this very strong statement through the avenue of petitions.

● (1515)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this place today to present a petition from thousands of Canadians who are deeply concerned about the plight of religious minorities in Afghanistan, particularly Hindus and Sikhs, who have been subjected to significant persecution.

The petitioners specifically ask that the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship create a program that will enable these persecuted minorities to find refuge in Canada and further ask the Minister of Global Affairs to raise this issue internationally and to pressure Afghanistan to respect human rights.

I also wish to thank the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan for his fine work on this issue.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to present a petition signed by thousands of concerned Canadians regarding the situation in Afghanistan with respect to Sikhs and Hindus and their difficulty getting sponsorships here in Canada. This petition calls upon the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to use his powers to create a special program to help persecuted minorities in Afghanistan, and it asks the Minister of Global Affairs to raise this issue that is so very pressing.

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition signed by thousands of Canadians asking the government to do more on the plight of Afghani Sikhs and Hindus. At one time, over 200,000 lived in Afghanistan, and it is now down to fewer than 1,000 people. They are asking the government to do more to bring them to this country.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by many residents of Canada. They are drawing to the attention of the House of Commons that at one time, the Sikhs and Hindus of Afghanistan numbered in the hundreds of thousands, and today fewer than 5,000 remain. They point out to the minister that he already has the power, through legislation, to allow vulnerable minorities to come to Canada as privately sponsored refugees directly from the country where they face persecution. They further urge the minister to raise the persecution faced by this community with his Afghan counterparts and strongly advocate for more to be done to protect them.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to add my voice and present a petition. The people who have signed this petition state that the Sikh and Hindu communities of Canada are ready to sponsor people from Afghanistan. Sikhs and Hindus have been persecuted in Afghanistan, and the people who have signed this petition would like the government to do something about it.

[*Translation*]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition that I sponsored and that was recently certified for presentation in the House.

Petition e-1530 has to do with women's rights, and it calls on the Government of Canada to intervene to require that all firms and organizations, whether private or public, increase women's representation on their boards of directors, achieve parity and prevent sexual discrimination.

This petition was created by Christine Poulin and obtained 582 signatures.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I cannot count the number of times I have risen in the House to add more names to the petition calling on the Minister of Transport to fund the VIA Rail high-frequency train project. There are only benefits to this project, including reducing greenhouse gases, making Canadians more mobile and stimulating economic development in the regions.

The people of Trois-Rivières have been waiting for more than 25 years to get the train back to their city. We hope that the government will step up with the next budget, but if not I will continue to work on this issue, since there is broad consensus, and one might even say unanimous support, within the community.

[*English*]

CANADA POST

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from Londoners in support of postal banking. As we know, nearly two million Canadians desperately need an alternative to payday lenders. These predators are crippling poor, marginalized, rural and indigenous communities with lending rates that are, quite simply, outrageous.

There are 3,800 postal outlets in Canada where there are few or no banks, and Canada Post has the infrastructure to make a rapid transition to include postal banking. Therefore, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to enact my motion, Motion No. 166, to create a committee to study and propose a plan for postal banking under the Canada Post Corporation.

● (1520)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by many members of my community in Cowichan—Malahat—Langford who recognize that plastics in our oceans, lakes, rivers and other bodies of water pose a very dire threat to sensitive ecosystems, wildlife, communities and individuals. They realize that these plastics make their way into these waterways through a variety of methods, not least of which is direct consumer and industrial waste disposal. Therefore, they want the federal government to initiate an oceans plastics strategy, in conjunction with the provinces, municipalities and indigenous communities, to stop the plastic debris from going through stormwater outfalls and ending up, basically, in our sensitive ecosystems.

BUS SAFETY

Mr. Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present a petition from constituents regarding bus safety and standards. The petitioners are calling on the House of Commons to promote better standards for public transit buses, including more secure workspaces to prevent assaults on bus operators.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Speaker's Ruling

POINTS OF ORDER

ELECTIONS MODERNIZATION ACT—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on a point of order raised on October 23, 2018, by the hon. member for Perth—Wellington regarding Bill C-76, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other acts and to make certain consequential amendments.

The hon. member objects to an amendment adopted by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, sometimes called PROC in this place, on the basis that it amends a section of the parent act not amended by the bill. He argues that the committee went beyond the mandate the House had given it and urges the Chair to strike the amendment from the bill. He notes that Speakers have exercised this power in the past to deal with inadmissible amendments adopted by a committee.

[*Translation*]

I am grateful to the hon. member for having raised this matter, as it affords me the opportunity to clear up a misconception about what is commonly referred to as the "Parent Act rule".

As the hon. member no doubt noted, the passage he cited concerning this rule, found at page 771 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, is contained in a section about relevance.

The Parent Act rule, the idea that an amendment should not amend an act or a section not already amended by a bill, rests on a presumption that such an amendment would not be relevant to the bill. This can be true. Often, such amendments attempt to deal with matters not referenced in the bill, and this is improper.

[*English*]

However, there are also occasions when an amendment is relevant to the subject matter of a bill and in keeping with its scope but can only be accomplished by modifying a section of the parent act not originally touched by the bill or even an entirely different act not originally touched by the bill. This is especially so when the amendments are consequential to other decisions taken by a committee or by the House.

In the present case, an amendment adopted by the committee creates a new section 510.001 of the Canada Elections Act. This section would empower the commissioner of Canada elections to request and obtain certain financial documents from political parties. The hon. member made no suggestion that this amendment was inadmissible. He objects, however, to a related amendment to section 498 of the act that makes it an offence to refuse to comply with the commissioner's request. Section 498, while not originally part of the bill, is the section that spells out offences relating to Part 19 of the act, which is where the new section 510.001 would be found.

I have trouble seeing how this could be considered irrelevant to the bill. Were I to accept the hon. member's argument, we would find ourselves in the strange circumstance of allowing an amendment that creates a new obligation but refusing an amendment that spells out the consequences for failing to comply with that new obligation.

The parent act rule was never intended to be applied blindly as a substitute for proper judgment as to the relevance of an amendment. Clearly, amendments that arise as a direct consequence of other admissible amendments should be considered relevant to the bill, even if they are made to a section of the parent act otherwise unamended.

● (1525)

[*Translation*]

The hon. member noted that our procedural authorities do not reference any exceptions, leading him to conclude that none are possible. He well knows, however, that practice and precedent are also binding. As is stated at page 274 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*:

> Where there are no express rules or orders, the House turns to its own jurisprudence, as interpreted by the Speaker, who examines the Journals and the Debates of the House to determine which rulings of past Speakers and which practices and precedents should be applied.

[*English*]

There are multiple examples of amendments of this nature having been accepted in the past. In 2003, Bill C-250, an act to amend the Criminal Code (hate propaganda), contained a single clause amending section 318 of the Code to change the definition of "identifiable group". At the beginning of the report stage, on June 6, 2003, the Chair accepted amendments to sections 319 and 320 of the Criminal Code, which also dealt with hate propaganda.

[*Translation*]

On May 5, 2014, when the Procedure and House Affairs Committee presented its report on Bill C-23, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other acts and to make consequential amendments to certain acts, the report contained an amendment to section 345 of the act, which was not originally amended by the bill, but sought to clarify what did not constitute an election expense under section 376, which the bill did amend.

[*English*]

Just last year, in a report tabled on October 5, 2017, the health committee amended Bill C-45, an act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code and other acts, by modifying section 7 of the Non-smokers' Health Act, originally untouched by the bill. This change arose out of an earlier amendment to the definition of "workplace" in the same act.

These are just a few examples where exceptions were made to the parent act rule because the amendments were clearly relevant to the bill. Given that the present amendment is of a similar nature, I have no difficulty concluding that it too should be found in order.

[*Translation*]

I thank all hon. members for their attention.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ELECTIONS MODERNIZATION ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-76, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other Acts and to make certain consequential amendments, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

[*English*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: There are 179 motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-76. Motions Nos. 1 to 179 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

I will now put Motions Nos. 1 to 179 to the House.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting the long title.

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting the short title.

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 2.

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 3.

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 5.

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 6.

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 7.

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 8.

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 9.

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 10.

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 12.

Motion No. 12

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 13.

Motion No. 13

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 14.

Motion No. 14

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 15.

Motion No. 15

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 21.

Motion No. 16

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 22.

Motion No. 17

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 31.

Motion No. 18

That Bill C-76, in Clause 45, be amended by replacing line 28 on page 25 with the following:

"political party, candidates for elected office or members of a legislature information"

Motion No. 19

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 47.

Motion No. 20

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 48.

Motion No. 21

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 49.

Motion No. 22

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 50.

Motion No. 23

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 55.

Motion No. 24

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 59.

Motion No. 25

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 61.

Motion No. 26

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 76.

Motion No. 27

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 84.

Motion No. 28

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 93.

Motion No. 29

That Bill C-76, in Clause 93, be amended by replacing line 20 on page 47 with the following:

"electors for the same polling division and who"

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

Motion No. 30

That Bill C-76, in Clause 93, be amended by replacing line 20 on page 47 with the following:

"electors for the same electoral district and who"

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 31

That Bill C-76, in Clause 93, be amended by replacing line 27 on page 47 with the following:

"iors or persons with a disability, where a polling station has been established, wishes to prove his or her"

Motion No. 32

That Bill C-76, in Clause 93, be amended by replacing line 28 on page 47 with the following:

"residence under subsection (3), the other"

Motion No. 33

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 94.

Motion No. 34

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 100.

Motion No. 35

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 105.

Motion No. 36

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 107.

Motion No. 37

That Bill C-76, in Clause 107, be amended by replacing line 31 on page 54 with the following:

"the same polling division and who"

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

Motion No. 38

That Bill C-76, in Clause 107, be amended by replacing line 31 on page 54 with the following:

"the same electoral district and who"

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 39

That Bill C-76, in Clause 107, be amended by replacing line 9 on page 55 with the following:

"or persons with a disability, where a polling station has been established, wishes to prove his or her"

Motion No. 40

That Bill C-76, in Clause 107, be amended by replacing line 10 on page 55 with the following:

"residence under subsection (1), the other"

Motion No. 41

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 108.

Motion No. 42

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 115.

Motion No. 43

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 116.

Motion No. 44

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 117.

Motion No. 45

That Bill C-76, in Clause 117, be amended by replacing line 36 on page 60 with the following:

"the same polling division and who"

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

Motion No. 46

That Bill C-76, in Clause 117, be amended by replacing line 36 on page 60 with the following:

"the same electoral district and who"

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 47

That Bill C-76, in Clause 117, be amended by deleting lines 11 to 23 on page 61.

Motion No. 48

That Bill C-76, in Clause 117, be amended by replacing line 14 on page 61 with the following:

"iors or persons with a disability, where an advance polling station has been established, wishes to prove his or her"

Motion No. 49

That Bill C-76, in Clause 117, be amended by replacing line 15 on page 61 with the following:

"residence under subsection (2), the other"

Motion No. 50

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 118.

Motion No. 51

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 122.

Motion No. 52

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 150.

Motion No. 53

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 151.

Motion No. 54

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 152.

Motion No. 55

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 153.

Motion No. 56

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 154.

Motion No. 57

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 155.

Motion No. 58

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 157.

Motion No. 59

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 160.

Motion No. 60

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 162.

Motion No. 61

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 164.

Motion No. 62

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 165.

Motion No. 63

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 166.

Motion No. 64

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 167.

Motion No. 65

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 168.

Motion No. 66

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 169.

Motion No. 67

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 170.

Motion No. 68

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 172.

Motion No. 69

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 173.

Motion No. 70

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 182.

Motion No. 71

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 184.

Motion No. 72

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 186.

Motion No. 73

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 187.

Motion No. 74

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 188.

● (1545)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

Motion No. 75

That Bill C-76, in Clause 190, be amended by replacing lines 16 and 17 on page 99 with the following:

"(c) the person who vouches does not reside in a polling division assigned to the same polling station as the polling division in which the other person resides or, in the"

[*Translation*]

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

Motion No. 76

That Bill C-76, in Clause 190, be amended by replacing line 17 on page 99 with the following:

"same electoral district as the other person or, in the"

[*English*]

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 77

That Bill C-76, in Clause 190, be amended by replacing line 30 on page 100 with the following:

"(b) they knowingly make or publish a false statement in respect of a candidate in that election, a registered party that has endorsed a candidate in that election or the leader of such a registered party; or".

[*Translation*]

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

Motion No. 78

That Bill C-76, in Clause 190, be amended by replacing line 30 on page 100 with the following:

"(b) they knowingly make or publish a false statement that is prohibited under paragraph 91(1)(a) or (b) in respect of a candidate in that election, a registered party that has endorsed a candidate in that election, the leader of such a registered party or the electoral district association of such a registered party; or"

[*English*]

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 79

That Bill C-76, in Clause 190, be amended

(a) by replacing line 10 on page 99 with the following:

"sections 143(3.01) and 161(2)."; and

(b) by replacing lines 18 and 19 on page 99 with the following:

"cases referred to in subsections 143(3.01) and 161(2), in a polling division in the other person's".

Motion No. 80

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 199.

Motion No. 81

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 206.

Motion No. 82

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 207.

Motion No. 83

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 208.

Motion No. 84

That Bill C-76, in Clause 208.1, be amended by adding after line 24 on page 110 the following:

"(2.1) For greater certainty, an online platform shall publish in the registry referred to in subsection (2) the partisan advertising messages and election advertising messages of a third party for which the platform has sold, directly or indirectly, advertising space for an aggregate amount of $500 or more for the pre-election period or election period, as the case may be."

Motion No. 85

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 209.

Motion No. 86

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 211.

Motion No. 87

hat Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 212.

Motion No. 88

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 213.

Motion No. 89

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 217.

Motion No. 90

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 218.

Motion No. 91

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 219.

Motion No. 92

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 220.

Motion No. 93

That Bill C-76, in Clause 223, be amended by replacing line 7 on page 118 with the following:

"-lic regardless of whether there was to be an election, unless the author or editor is a member of the Senate or the House of Commons, the leader of a registered party or an eligible party, a candidate or a potential candidate;".

Motion No. 94

That Bill C-76, in Clause 223, be amended by replacing lines 25 and 26 on page 118 with the following:

"carry on business in Canada or whose primary purpose in Canada is to in-".

Motion No. 95

That Bill C-76, in Clause 223, be amended by adding after line 29 on page 118 the following:

"(b.1) a corporation or entity

(i) incorporated, formed or otherwise organized within Canada, but no officer, director or other person who is responsible for it

(A) is a Canadian citizen,

(B) is a permanent resident as defined in subsection 2(1) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, or

(C) resides in Canada, and

(ii) whose primary purpose in Canada is to influence electors to vote or refrain from voting, or to vote or refrain from voting for a particular candidate or registered party, at an election."

Motion No. 96

That Bill C-76, in Clause 223, be amended by replacing line 17 on page 119 with the following:(C) resides in Canada, and

"349.03 No person or entity shall".

Motion No. 97

That Bill C-76, in Clause 223, be amended by adding after line 21 on page 119 the following:

(2) No person or entity shall, for the purpose of circumventing, or attempting to circumvent, the prohibition under section 349.02,

(a) conceal, or attempt to conceal, the identity of the source of a contribution from a foreign entity; or

(b) act in collusion with another person or entity for that purpose."

Motion No. 98

That Bill C-76, in Clause 223, be amended by adding after line 21 on page 119 the following:

"(2) No person or entity shall, for the purpose of circumventing, or attempting to circumvent, the prohibition under section 349.02, enter into an agreement that includes as a term the making of a contribution or the provision for payment of goods or services, directly or indirectly, to a third party."

Motion No. 99

That Bill C-76, in Clause 223, be amended

(a) by replacing line 13 on page 118 with the following:

"holders, as the case may be; or"; and

(b) by replacing lines 16 to 18 on page 118 with the following:

"al political views."

Motion No. 100

That Bill C-76, in Clause 231, be amended by replacing line 5 on page 138 with the following:

"(a) in the case of a general election in respect of which the writs are issued after the June 30 that is immediately before the"

Motion No. 101

That Bill C-76, in Clause 231, be amended by replacing line 17 on page 138 with the following:

"veys, and the geographical areas from which the sample of respondents was drawn, to which the expenses relate, and"

Motion No. 102

That Bill C-76, in Clause 231, be amended by replacing line 38 on page 138 with the following:

"veys, and the geographical areas from which the sample of respondents was drawn, to which the expenses relate, and"

Motion No. 103

That Bill C-76, in Clause 231, be amended by adding after line 5 on page 139 the following:

"(v) a list of all expenses—other than those referred to in subparagraphs (i) to (iv)—incurred during the period beginning the day after polling day at the preceding general election and ending at the beginning of the pre-election period—or, if there was no pre-election period, the beginning of the election period—that would have been partisan activity expenses, partisan advertising expenses or election survey expenses had they been incurred during a pre-election period, the date and place of the partisan activities to which the expenses relate, the date and time of the transmission of the partisan advertising messages to which the expenses relate, and the date of the election surveys, and the geographical areas from which the sample of respondents was drawn, to which the expenses relate; and"

Motion No. 104

That Bill C-76, in Clause 231, be amended by adding after line 5 on page 139 the following:

"(v) a list of all contributions received since the preceding general election by the third party from foreign individuals or entities and the date and purpose of the contribution; and"

Motion No. 105

That Bill C-76, in Clause 238, be amended by replacing line 10 on page 150 with the following:

"subsection 349.91(1) or 349.92(1);

(a.2) publish, as soon as feasible but no later than the 6th day before polling day, returns filed under subsection 357.01(1) or 357.02(2);"

Motion No. 106

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 241.

Motion No. 107

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 242.

Motion No. 108

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 245.

Motion No. 109

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 246.

Motion No. 110

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 250.

Motion No. 111

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 253.

Motion No. 112

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 256.

Motion No. 113

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 262.

Motion No. 114

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 263.

● (1600)

[*Translation*]

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

Motion No. 115

That Bill C-76, in Clause 268, be amended by replacing line 28 on page 166 with the following:

"(3) Section 437 of the Act is amended by adding the following after subsection (2):

(2.1) The Chief Electoral Officer may require the chief agent of a registered party to provide by a specified date documents evidencing any expense set out in the party's election expenses return, including invoices, bank statements, deposit slips and cancelled cheques."

● (1605)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 116

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 270.

Motion No. 117

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 271.

Motion No. 118

That Bill C-76, in Clause 271, be amended by replacing lines 7 and 8 on page 168 with the following:

"thorized by the association's financial agent"

Motion No. 119

That Bill C-76, in Clause 271, be amended

(a) by replacing line 30 on page 167 with the following:

"(3) Despite subsection (1), but subject to subsection (4), an electoral district associa-"; and

(b) by adding after line 3 on page 168 the following:

"(4) An electoral district association of a registered party for the electoral district for which that party's leader is a member of the House of Commons or is, otherwise, a potential candidate may

(a) incur partisan advertising expenses for the transmission of partisan advertising messages referred to in paragraph (1)(a) to the extent that those messages are intended to be transmitted solely within the association's electoral district; and

(b) transmit or cause to be transmitted partisan advertising messages referred to in paragraph (1)(b) to the extent that those messages are transmitted solely within the association's electoral district."

Motion No. 120

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 272.

Motion No. 121

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 292.

Motion No. 122

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 293.

Motion No. 123

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 303.

Motion No. 124

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 320.

Motion No. 125

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 322.

Motion No. 126

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 327.

Motion No. 127

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 328.

Motion No. 128

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 333.

Motion No. 129

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 334.

Motion No. 130

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 335.

Motion No. 131

That Bill C-76, in Clause 336, be amended by adding after line 22 on page 202 the following:

"(c) subsection 349.03(2) (concealing source of contribution)."

Motion No. 132

That Bill C-76, in Clause 336, be amended by adding after line 22 on page 202 the following:

"(c) subsection 349.03(2) (entering into prohibited agreement)."

Motion No. 133

That Bill C-76, in Clause 336, be amended

(a) by replacing lines 18 to 21 on page 202 with the following:

"495.21 (1) Every person or entity is guilty of an offence who

(a) being a third party, contravenes section 349.02 (use of foreign contribution); or

(b) contravenes paragraph 349.03(a) (circumventing prohibition)"

(b) by replacing lines 23 to 25 on page 202 with the following:

"(2) Every person or entity is guilty of an offence who

(a) being a third party, knowingly contravenes section 349.02 (use of foreign contribution); or

(b) knowingly contravenes any provision of section 349.03 referred to in subsection (1)."

Motion No. 134

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 340.

Motion No. 135

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 341.

Motion No. 136

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 344.1.

Motion No. 137

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 345.

Motion No. 138

That Bill C-76, in Clause 346, be amended

(a) by replacing line 32 on page 211 with the following:

"498(1) and 499(1) is, subject to subsection (1.1), liable on summary conviction to a";

(b) by adding after line 34 on page 211 the following:

"(1.1) Every candidate or official agent who is guilty of an offence under any of paragraphs 497.4(1)(g) to (l) or (s) is liable on summary conviction to a fine of not less than $1,000.";

(c) by replacing line 17 on page 212 with the following:

"497.5(2), 498(2) and 499(2) is, subject to subsection (5.01), liable"; and

(d) by adding after line 19 on page 212 the following:

"(5.01) Every candidate or official agent who is guilty of an offence under any of paragraphs 497.4(2)(i) to (n) is liable, whether the offence is prosecuted by indictment or punishable on summary conviction, to a fine of not less than $1,000."

Motion No. 139

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 350.

Motion No. 140

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 351.

Motion No. 141

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 352.

Motion No. 142

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 353.

Motion No. 143

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 354.

Motion No. 144

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 355.

Motion No. 145

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 356.

Motion No. 146

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 357.

Motion No. 147

That Bill C-76, in Clause 357, be amended by deleting lines 3 to 9 on page 220.

Motion No. 148

That Bill C-76, in Clause 357, be amended by replacing line 5 on page 220 with the following:

"-missioner may apply to a judge for an order requiring the chief agent of a registered par-".

Motion No. 149

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 358.

Motion No. 150

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 359.

Motion No. 151

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 360.

Motion No. 152

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 361.

Motion No. 153

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 362.

Motion No. 154

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 363.

Motion No. 155

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 364.

Motion No. 156

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 365.

Motion No. 157

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 367.

Motion No. 158

That Bill C-76, in Clause 371, be amended by replacing lines 15 to 17 on page 239 with the following:

"form, or in formats that include electronic form, to the registered association of each registered party that endorsed a candidate in an electoral district, and to that registered party, a statement, prepared".

Motion No. 159

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 372.

Motion No. 160

That Bill C-76, in Clause 372, be amended by replacing lines 27 and 28 on page 240 with the following:

"(a) the other elector resides in the polling division;".

● (1615)

[*English*]

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

Motion No. 161

That Bill C-76, in Clause 372, be amended by replacing lines 27 and 28 on page 240 with the following:

"(a) the other elector resides in the same electoral district as the elector;"

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 162

That Bill C-76, in Clause 372, be amended by replacing lines 34 and 35 on page 240 with the following:

"(e) except in a case referred to in subsection 143(3.01) or 161(2), the elector has not previously".

Motion No. 163

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 373.

Motion No. 164

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 379.

Motion No. 165

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 380.

Motion No. 166

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 383.

Motion No. 167

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 384.

Motion No. 168

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 385.

Motion No. 169

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 386.

Motion No. 170

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 389.

Motion No. 171

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 390.

Motion No. 172

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 391.

Motion No. 173

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 393.

Motion No. 174

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 394.

Motion No. 175

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 395.

Motion No. 176

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 396.

Motion No. 177

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 397.

Motion No. 178

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 400.

Motion No. 179

That Bill C-76 be amended by deleting Clause 401.

● (1625)

[*English*]

She said: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to discuss Bill C-76, which makes amendments to one of our most central pieces of legislation, the Elections Act.

As parliamentarians, we have a responsibility to uphold democracy and ensure that the rules surrounding it are fair and impartial. All political parties in the House came together, moving hundreds of amendments to try to improve this bill. After months of hard work on Bill C-76 at committee, and hours of testimony, it is unfortunate that only a handful of amendments by opposition parties were passed at committee.

On such a substantial bill, which covers everything from election procedures and financing to foreign interference in elections, and that would create a registrar for future electors and impact the eligibility to vote of numerous Canadians, it was disappointing not to see a bill that really holds democracy to account in Canada. As a result, this bill is deeply concerning and fails to achieve many of its objectives.

Bill C-76 attempts to introduce a pre-writ period and to regulate third parties. Part of the implementation of the pre-writ period involved invoking spending limits that, with inflation adjustments, would be $500,000 for third parties and $2 million for registered political parties in 2019. This means that it would only take four third parties to outspend a single political party. This would be feasible since third parties do not maintain the contribution limits that political parties do. We have serious concerns about the public receiving inaccurate information about candidates and platforms when political parties are no longer a primary source.

A significant motive for implementing further regulation of third parties, however, is to prevent foreign interference in Canadian elections. This is a good thing. We want Canadians determining the outcomes of Canadian elections, and not foreign entities. However, the government party is not going far enough to eliminate the possibility of foreign interference.

Canadians deserve to know where the money for elections is coming from and it is up to the government to ensure that third party entities are being fully and completely transparent. If third parties are choosing to participate in election advertising, then they should be prepared to open their books and let Canadians see exactly where the money is coming from.

At committee we suggested that third parties have segregated bank accounts for all political activity, that disclosure of foreign sources of funding for any purpose by third parties be required, and that contribution limits be established for election-related contributions consistent with those for political parties. Unfortunately, the government voted down these amendments. The problem is that only with these amendments could Bill C-76 prevent potential and actual foreign influence.

For example, say a foreign donor might donate several thousand dollars to a third party, but designates it as administrative costs. The third party could then use that money for administrative costs but would have an equal amount freed up to use for election campaigning. Since it was categorized as administrative costs, those donations will not be required to be made public.

Additionally, the regulations for third parties are not as stringent as those for political parties, so these types of foreign donations can have a serious impact on election campaigning.

The government is saying that it is addressing the serious issue of foreign influence and interference in our elections through Bill C-76, but the laws it is putting in place simply do not go far enough. Our democracy is at stake here. Canadians and only Canadians should be impacting our elections.

● (1630)

The Conservatives believe that every vote cast by a Canadian citizen matters. However, the government should be working harder to keep foreign entities from undermining our democratic institutions. Canadians deserve to know that their elections will not be tampered with by foreign influences.

The Prime Minister has said that there was foreign influence in the previous election. Even if it was not that much, the government has the capacity and the capability to ensure there will not be any future influence. However, the government is failing to do that.

Because of these shortcomings of the Liberal government, we are providing it a second chance, a second opportunity. At this report stage, we are providing several amendments to Bill C-76 that would close these loopholes. I sincerely hope my colleagues across the aisle will strongly consider and accept these amendments. Canadian democracy is at stake. Despite months at committee, there are still significant issues that need to be resolved.

We have seen the magnitude around the world of what foreign influence can do. We saw this south of the border with the United States and Russian influence, as well as in Brexit in the United Kingdom. I do not think we want Canada's election in 2019, or any other future election for that matter, to be yet another victim.

The Liberal government has decided to tackle foreign interference in the bill and should be doing so to the fullest extent possible. It should be working harder to solve all of the loopholes and ambiguity in foreign interference.

If foreign interference and influence cannot be done directly, in the public eye, why are we allowing for it behind closed doors? Canadians deserve to know and understand who is financing their elections. The bill is going to have immense impact on our elections in the future and as parliamentarians we need to work together to ensure we get it right.

Allowing voter identification cards as a form of ID to vote is another way we are failing Canadians. Nearly a million voter identification cards sent out in 2015 had errors. Canadians cannot obtain health care, welfare and many other federal services without presenting government identification.

In fact, Dr. Ian Lee from Carleton University said:

> It's been argued that the requirement for voter ID negatively affects low-income people much more, yet when you examine Ontario Works—that's the bureaucracy that administers social welfare—you will quickly realize it is vastly more onerous to obtain social welfare because of the identification. They want bank accounts. They want tax returns. They want driver's licences. They want tenancy agreements. It is vastly more onerous to obtain social assistance or welfare than it is to vote because of the identification requirements.

We need government identification for practically anything. Why should voting be different, especially when the integrity of our entire democratic system is at stake?

I am sorry to say that Bill C-76 is deeply flawed. This could be one of the last times in the House that we will have the opportunity to resolve its many issues to defend democracy in Canada. I ask my Liberal colleagues to work with us to ensure the bill better protects Canadians and our democratic system.

● (1635)

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have one question in particular, although I have a number because there are a number of flaws in my colleague's speech.

The member said that the bill had spent months at committee, and she is right. It did. The bill was taken to committee in April and just got through PROC last week. However, the reason it took months in committee was because members on that side of the House filibustered meeting after meeting. We could not get them to even start clause-by-clause. No matter how many times we agreed to witnesses, no matter how many times we agreed to extra meetings, no matter how many times we agreed to pretty much everything they asked for, we could not get them to clause-by-clause.

Therefore, could the member please tell me why, after months and months of meetings, they still continued to filibuster until we finally could get it through committee? It only took probably a week to get it through clause-by-clause once they agreed to stop filibustering.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, we were forced to have those delays because of the deep incompetencies within the bill. We had to ensure we were doing our due diligence for the Canadian public and democracy in Canada and to ensure the government was getting this bill and these electoral processes right for all of Canada and for all Canadians.

As people can tell by the list of amendments here today, we are still not pleased with the bill as it is presented. However, we can always say that we did our best to defend democracy in Canada.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that was an interesting exchange between my Liberal and Conservative colleagues, in that there was an impasse created at committee. That impasse was broken when the Liberals made a deal with the Conservatives to allow more spending to go on in our elections. The parliamentary secretary, I guess, omitted that part.

The bill only took a week in committee because that was all the Liberals gave us. In the end, they allocated time on an election act, which the Liberals promised they would never do.

My question is specifically for my friend. Much of her speech focused on foreign interference. We heard consistently from witnesses, from the Chief Electoral Officer, the Privacy Commissioner and in fact from another House of Commons Committee, the privacy and ethics committee, that having political parties have some sort of privacy rules about how we would handle the data that parties collected on Canadians was vital to protecting free and fair elections in Canada.

The NDP and the Green member moved a number of amendments to this flawed bill, and it is flawed. There were hundreds of amendments, some of them coming from the government itself. We tried to improve it to say that political parties must have some rules governing us. If the data we collect on Canadians is hacked or breached, then it is exposed to those who are trying to interfere in our elections.

The Americans and the Europeans are all testifying to us, saying that this is happening now, that it has happened in the past and that it will happen in the future. However, Bill C-76, as it exists today, still has no protections for the privacy of Canadians and no protection of our free and fair democratic elections, exposing us to foreign interference, which the member raised so many times in her speech.

I wonder if the Conservatives have moved over on this issue and will accept the idea that political parties must fall under some rules and some guidance to stop the exposure to Canadians and the risk to our democracy.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, I am actually surprised that my colleague from the NDP and I agree that the bill is deeply flawed. Certainly, privacy concerns is another area where Bill C-76 has failed to deliver, in addition to foreign influence as well as foreign interference.

I will never apologize for attempting to work with my colleagues across the aisle. This is a parliament. My constituents have sent me here to serve their best interests and, at times, that will include working with my colleagues across the aisle.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order. It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Vancouver East, Indigenous Affairs; the hon. member for Windsor West, Automotive Industry; and the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, Employment Insurance.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

● (1640)

[*English*]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today as we are at the final stages of Bill C-76. This is the Liberals' attempt to fix the attack on our democracy that came out of the last Parliament, when the Harper government moved what it called the Fair Elections Act, which was clearly the unfair elections act. It tried, in various ways, to disenfranchise a number of Canadians, particularly low-income Canadians, indigenous people, young people and people one would suspect Stephen Harper did not think supported him.

Rather than make policies that appealed to various groups, the Conservatives' approach was to write legislation in our Elections Act to make it harder for them to vote, which was quite cynical and nefarious. We have been waiting a long time for this bill from the government. It actually introduced one almost two years ago that would have undone the unfair elections act. Then it did nothing with it for 18 months. It did not move it, debate it, or talk about it. It waited until we had this bill, Bill C-76, which is much larger and takes on more issues.

For those watching, I just asked my Conservative colleague if she joined with us in agreeing with the Chief Electoral Officer, the Privacy Commissioner, the privacy and ethics committee of the House of Commons and every expert we had come before committee. They said that one of the great flaws in Bill C-76, as it is constituted right now, was it virtually said nothing about privacy. All the Liberals are requiring political parties to do is to have a privacy policy somewhere on their website.

The policy does not have to do anything. The policy is not enforceable. It does not mean anything with respect to protecting our democratic values. They just need to have a policy somewhere. We have warnings from around the democratic world, from our European allies and our American cousins, saying that we have to fix this because the attacks are coming. The disruptions, disinformation and misinformation, the fake news campaigns that we see on social media are genuine threats to disrupting free and fair elections in their countries and obviously in ours as well.

The bill is flawed, to say the least. There were hundreds of amendments at committee. We have 179 amendments here, from all parties including the government side. The Liberals took three years to get to this point and they got it wrong on many levels.

It is unfair to simply criticize legislation. We are always working to improve things, to make them better, because this should be non-partisan. We all agree that elections are vital to the health of our country and those elections must be free and fair. We must allow the parties to argue their points and let Canadians, in a free and fair way, make the decision as to who they wish to speak on their behalf. However, we know that on some of the most important aspects of our democracy, Bill C-76 made a half-hearted attempt or no attempt whatsoever.

We moved motions to include the idea of my friend Kennedy Stewart, the mayor-elect of Vancouver, to reimburse parties according to how fair they were toward women and other under-represented groups in Parliament. We know the facts and they are undeniable. This Parliament is 26% women. The last one was 25%. Under the current trend, it will take 80 years until we have a gender equal Parliament, unless we do something about it. We proposed to do something about it by amending the bill and the Liberals said they did not want to talk about it and voted against the idea.

The Prime Minister loves to talk about what a feminist he is, but he does not like to do much about it. Things like this, like pay equity, things that matter to women, the feminist across the way cannot be bothered to raise his hand in effort.

We also tried to include electoral reform changes. We all remember the famous and often repeated promise from the Prime Minister to make every vote count, to ensure that 2015 was the last election under first past the post. We wanted to help the Prime Minister keep that promise. What a radical idea. The Liberals did not want to talk about that either.

We also believed that we should talk about younger people voting. We have support from some Conservatives and some Liberals to just study the idea, to have Elections Canada look at what it would mean to our democracy if 17 year olds voted. What would the effects be? What would the impacts be, positive and negative? That would be for a future Parliament, not even this one. A future Parliament could look at lowering the voting age. The Liberals did not want to talk about that either.

We talked about Sunday voting and all the evidence from democracies around the world, including sub-national democracies in Canada, the provinces and municipalities. We know if we allow for Sunday voting, rather than a Tuesday, which is an odd day to have a vote, it can raise voter participation by 6% or 7%, particularly for marginalized voters. We have all the research on this. What do the Liberals want to do? They want to study it more, which I have begun to learn is Liberal code for "no". When we ask them to do something, they say "We should study that". We have come to learn over these past three years that "study" means "no". It is just that they can say it with a smile rather than simply reject the idea.

● (1645)

The lion's share of the work and the evidence that we heard was around this issue of privacy. Let us understand what we have learned, and these have been hard lessons over these last number of years.

Our British cousins learned through the whole Brexit episode that Cambridge Analytica and a whole bunch of dark and dangerous companies were out there micro-targeting voters through social media, through harvesting data out of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and all those accounts that people use for social interaction but also for their political and news interactions with the world. There are companies that were able to break the code of Facebook, sneak around the walls of Instagram and find out more about people than people ever wanted them to know, and not just about those people, but also about their friends and connections. Then they would target them.

This is a dangerous problem because the ability to spread the lie becomes so much more powerful. We no longer use the scattergun approach to say that a candidate is terrible, or one's friend is a terrible person, or this policy is going to lead to that. They can hyper-target particular voters they are looking to sway. The British learned this the hard way. Ask the British Prime Minister how the whole Brexit thing is going for her. Ask the Irish and the Scots how they are feeling about it. We know that the vote was not done fairly, and there was some participation of Canadian companies.

The privacy and ethics committee in this place, made up of all parties in this place, said in its conclusion that political parties must fall under privacy rules to protect our free and fair vote. In rejecting our amendments, Liberals on the committee rejected the analysis and understanding of Liberals on another committee, and not just theirs. They also rejected the opinion of the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada who said to us that if there is one area where the bill has failed, it is privacy.

The Privacy Commissioner told us that Bill C-76 contains nothing of substance when it comes to privacy. OpenMedia conducted a poll of Canadians and found that 72% of Canadians want political parties to have some sort of rules governing their management of data, their protection of the data they gather. Let us all admit; the other parties will not admit it, but we will, and one day they will join us here: Political parties are in the game of understanding voters. That has always been true. That has gone into overdrive in the last 10 to 20 years.

With the advent of the Internet and social media, the ability to gain information about voters, multiple points of data about each individual voter at the voter level and then target those voters with specific messages can be a positive thing. If someone is interested in the environment and pipelines and wants to know why the Liberals spent $4.5 billion on a 65-year-old pipeline, a political party might want to know that so it can talk to people about what a dumb idea that was, especially for a climate change fighting Prime Minister. That might be a good bit of data to know. However, we also know that parties are collecting this massive amount of data with no rules or oversight whatsoever.

Let us look at the Europeans. The justice commissioner of the European Union, which is on the verge of having elections, said that we can no longer treat this as business as usual. The threats coming from foreign governments, foreign agents and domestic folks that are looking to simply subvert our elections, to cast doubt on the democratic process is real.

The U.S. justice department, under Donald Trump of all people, has said that it is information warfare, that there is an interference in the U.S. mid-term elections going on right now that is connected back to Vladimir Putin.

All these examples are coming forward to us from our own experts, from international experts, and the Liberals said, "No, we do not care. We simply do not care." They are going to allow the bill to go through without any significant and meaningful changes to protect our democracy. What is an election bill for if not that? I am simply at a loss for words when I talk to my Liberal colleagues and say that not one witness said that we should just leave the whole privacy thing alone, that everything is good, that the status quo is fine. Every single witness, including our own Chief Electoral Officer, said it is imperative to act, and the Liberals shrugged.

Here is the question and I will leave it at this. There are challenges and tensions that exist within each individual MP, their loyalty and observation of what their party wants and their loyalty to country. This is a clear case where, if we only are here to defend Canadian democracy and make sure our elections are free and fair, the choice would be clear, that we need to approve the changes that the NDP is proposing, suggested by our Chief Electoral Officer, our Privacy Commissioner and every expert we talk to.

● (1650)

The Liberals consistently chose party over country. That is unacceptable regardless of what Canadians feel like, regardless of what their voting intention is.

Bill C-76 has to do better. We can fix it at the very last moment if people are willing to work together.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is very well versed on this subject. He is very passionate about electoral reform.

The member kept talking about privacy and how important it is and yet on his party's website the privacy policy was so woefully inadequate that it was not until the introduction of Bill C-76 that the NDP updated it and made sure it was posted in a way that was more transparent.

Saying that the posting of privacy policy is not effective I would think is not really the case, because obviously the NDP members had to do something when they saw the state that theirs was in.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, that was not a question.

Part of what we are debating here is that simply posting a policy that is not enforceable, that has no teeth to it and no meaning to it is not an exercise that is going to protect our democracy.

My friend across the way is a very smart person. She heard the same testimony we heard. The testimony was conclusive. It was 100% clear. If she believes in the opinion of the Chief Electoral Officer, if she believes in the Privacy Commissioner's opinion, if she believes in her Liberal colleagues who sat one committee over and studied the very same issue, then for goodness' sake, she should support something meaningful.

All parties need to move on this. My party was not there two or three years ago, because we did not want to have to reveal to Canadians how it was we collected data and what that data was. Those days are gone.

Here is what is going to happen. Our election is going to get hacked. Misinformation and disinformation will be spread on all of the parties and it will cause damage. It will cause damage not just to the parties but to the confidence Canadians have in our election, as the British are experiencing right now, as the Americans are experiencing right now, and then my friends will say, "Gosh, we should do something about this. Isn't it a shame that Canadians no longer trust our democratic process." I will say, "Well, why did you not do it when you had the evidence in front of you?"

What is the counter argument? That is a great example and a question for the minister after she makes her speech. I would ask her to give me one piece of evidence that says we should not do this. The minister cannot, because there is no evidence. If the government is an evidence-based government, how about looking at the evidence? I know it is a novel idea. It might be a bit radical for my Liberal colleagues, but this is the time to do it, because it is 2018.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, I am very relieved to hear about the NDP's trepidation in regard to Bill C-76. This would seem quite contrary to what we in the official opposition heard throughout the entire process, which we were attempting to ensure was done fairly, adequately and with due diligence for the Canadian public.

I have to ask the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley why, at every single stage of the process, he and his colleagues gave the government a pass, supported the government and this terrible piece of Liberal legislation, leaving us to hold true accountability in regard to this democratic process.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, that is quite a question and it also is not true.

We voted against Liberal proposals that we thought would not go the way we wanted to go. We pleaded with our Conservative colleagues to look at all the evidence in front of us with respect to privacy and maybe we should do something about it. The Conservatives sat on their hands.

The effort in this is the following. The goal for the government whenever introducing legislation that affects the rules of the game, the election that we conduct ourselves under, should not be a partisan affair. We should look at the evidence in front of us, think of the best interests of Canadians, not the interests of political parties, and ask ourselves how we can make this the best, most fair way to conduct elections in Canada.

We looked at the evidence. Nobody in the Conservative ranks nor the Liberals could point to one piece of evidence showing that Bill C-76 was sufficient on something like privacy. Nobody in here can point to the sufficient means by which we are going to have more women and under-represented groups in here because of Bill C-76, because there is no evidence pointing that way.

If we are going to do the work at committee, if we are going to be there for all those hours and invite all these really smart witnesses to come and testify, should we not listen to them? We tried. We wrote down the amendments in the best form that we could and people agreed with us, such as the Chief Electoral Officer, such as the Privacy Commissioner, such as our colleagues on the ethics and privacy committee.

For once I would love somebody to argue the other side and argue it with some testimony and some facts. That would be novel. I look forward to that moment.

● (1655)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure and privilege to rise today in the House to begin second reading debate on Bill C-76, elections modernization act.

[*English*]

I want to begin by thanking the procedure and House affairs committee for its hard work and collaboration in studying this piece of legislation.

I am incredibly proud of this important piece of legislation that will strengthen the integrity of, increase the fairness of, and protect our elections.

Bill C-76 makes it easier and more efficient for all Canadians to take part in our democratic process in the most important exercise of all: casting a ballot on election day. Importantly, it undoes the most unfair aspects of the previous government's Bill C-23. Not many people know this, but the reason I decided to run for office was precisely that legislation because I could not believe that a government of Canada would do things in its power to make it more difficult for Canadians to vote.

In Bill C-76, we are ensuring that every Canadian who has the right to vote will be able to cast that ballot. I am so proud that we are moving forward with this legislation.

We made important commitments to Canadians surrounding the use of vouching and the voter information card. Those are returned in Bill C-76. I travelled across the country and heard from people who were unable to cast their ballot in the last election because of those changes the Conservatives made previously. Statistics Canada estimates that over 170,000 Canadians were unable to cast their ballot in 2015 because of the changes made in the so-called Fair Elections Act.

For example, the CEO of Elections Canada talked about the dignity that is required when vouching is enabled, the dignity for the people who go to the polling station. He talked about the fact that it is senior women often who do not have two pieces of identification to demonstrate both their identity and their address. Using the voter information card, which will enable individuals to establish residency, will empower and ensure that those senior women, among others, will be able to cast their ballot on election day. This is also important for indigenous Canadians, for people who do not have a permanent place of residence, and also for those who are interested in casting that ballot and need that extra bit of help with respect to vouching. This is so important for the dignity of Canadians. I am so proud that this is part of Bill C-76.

I also want to talk about the fact that in section 3 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, all Canadians, by virtue of having citizenship, have the right to vote. In Bill C-76, we are ensuring that all Canadians living abroad will be able to cast their ballot on election day. Having studied abroad and lived abroad for work, I have had the opportunity to vote from abroad in previous federal elections. I know how important it is for Canadians to maintain that connection to the country they are so proud to come from. Therefore, in Bill C-76, Canadians living abroad will be able to cast their ballots too.

Let us talk about dignity and accessibility. In Bill C-76, we are also ensuring that political parties and candidates will be able to have an incentive to ensure greater accessibility to their campaign material or perhaps build a ramp to their campaign office or provide sign language interpretation at an all-candidates meeting. We heard from Canadians across the country that these measures are so important to be included in the electoral process and to ensure that they also feel included and are able to participate fully in our elections.

Let us talk about some of the important measures with respect to transparency that are in Bill C-76.

With regard to the pre-electoral period that will begin on June 30 going until when the writ is dropped, this will create greater transparency for Canadians to understand what third parties and political parties are spending with respect to advertising. There will be a cap on spending for political parties and third parties during this time period, and for third parties it will, during the writ period, also include political activities. This is so important, because we know that Canadians want to know who is spending money during an election and who is trying to influence their choices as they cast their ballot and get ready to make those choices on election day.

● (1700)

When it comes to foreign interference, I want to thank all members of the House because we stand united across partisan lines to ensure that our elections in Canada are free from foreign interference. Of note, I want to mention that members of the Conservative Party and New Democratic Party, as well as my own party, the Liberal Party, on the procedure and House affairs committee put forward really good amendments at committee stage to ensure we are doing everything we can to protect our elections from foreign interference. All members of this House have put partisanship aside, put country first and I applaud them for doing that.

When it comes to online platforms, we know that 2019 will be a different election. It will be one in which social media has a heavy presence and I am very proud to note that in Bill C-76 important measures have been taken to both protect us from foreign interference and also ensure there is a greater transparency in political advertising online.

In Bill C-76, there are two important amendments to the Canada Elections Act. The first is to ensure that social media platforms do not knowingly accept any political advertising from foreign sources and the second is to create a public registry of all political advertisements in the electoral period, something that Canadians will be able to check publicly to see who is targeting them and trying to influence them during an election.

Another extremely important aspect of Bill C-76 is with regard to the integrity of our elections. The robust election laws we have in Canada are, quite frankly, some of the very best in the world and the world looks to Canada for how to run and administer effective, free and fair elections. We are ensuring that those laws are upheld. We listened to the commissioner of Canada elections and have ensured that this office has the ability to both investigate and compel testimony. These are very important because we saw with previous scandals, whether it was robocalls or the in-and-out scandal, in which the integrity of our elections came into question, that Canadians needed to have the confidence to know who was behind these activities. The commissioner made it clear that had he had these tools, he would have been able to get to the bottom of it, and that is extremely important.

I would like to highlight the fact that Bill C-76 takes into consideration 85% of the recommendations that the CEO of Elections Canada made following the 2015 election. This piece of legislation is in direct response to ensure that Canadians have a process they can trust, that there is integrity in the electoral system, that our laws are as robust as possible and that they are as accessible and inclusive as possible.

There is no right more fundamental than being able to cast a ballot on election day, to mark down who one wants to govern and ensure that process has integrity. I am so fundamentally proud of this legislation. It is good for democracy, it is good for Canada and I am absolutely thrilled that we are debating it at report stage in the House of Commons. We can all be proud of this because it is good for Canada.

● (1705)

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister talked about transparency, which we all hope exists in the voting system, and about integrity in the voting system, which we absolutely need. She said she wanted to ensure that everyone who is eligible to vote can vote, but then, unfortunately, she referenced residents voting. That is necessary, yes, but residency is not a prerequisite for what she describes as the fundamental right to vote. In fact, citizenship is the fundamental requirement to be able to vote.

I am wondering if the minister could reconcile those two and explain how she is going to ensure transparency in making sure that the citizenship requirement in the eligibility to vote is maintained, because I have not heard that referred to yet at all and that is integral to ensuring both the integrity and responsibility of proper voting systems.

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, it is the case that being a citizen is what entitles people the right to vote. In fact, in Bill C-76 there are provisions for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to share information with Elections Canada to ensure that only citizens are on the voters list.

Absolutely, this is important, with regard to integrity. I am thrilled that this is in Bill C-76. I thank the member for the question. She can rest assured that it is citizens who will be casting their ballot on election day.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister is right to point out that Bill C-23, the unfair elections act, is much undone by this bill. We are actually moving amendments to allow for vouching to make more sense, not people just within a polling station but more broadly.

I have a question on process, because process matters, of course. It is not just what is in the piece of legislation but how we pass it through this place. Bill C-23, the unfair elections act, was time allocated by the Harper government at the time, and that means that the debate was cut off. Both ourselves and the Liberals joined in the chorus from other parts and from many Canadians who said that when it comes to election laws, we should never do so.

The Liberals, in fact, moved a motion on one of their few opposition days. It was moved, in part, by the now-Prime Minister, saying that time allocation should never apply to electoral bills.

I have just a straight question, and hopefully we will hear a straight answer. Will the Liberals commit to allowing the debate to exist over something so vital as our democracy, and to not employ the same tactics that were used by the Harper government to time allocate, to shut down Parliament's ability to discuss and debate this bill?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his hard work on the procedure and House affairs committee, specifically on this legislation and particularly for his advocacy with regard to vouching. He made some very cogent points when I was there testifying in front of the committee. I truly appreciate all of his hard work and his advocacy moving democracy forward here in Canada.

This bill has been before the House for many months. It has undergone a considerable amount of study. We have received many amendments and have entertained some of them from opposition parties, and have had an open and ongoing dialogue with regard to this bill.

I look forward to this bill's timely and speedy passage through this chamber, and hopefully through to the other place as well.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Guelph was the epicentre of robocalls in 2011. It was found that 247 ridings were targeted across Canada, out of 308 ridings.

How would this bill help to protect the citizens of Guelph from future events such as the robocalling that we saw in 2011?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, this is an extraordinarily important question, because robocalls are the exact type of activity that undermines the confidence and the integrity that Canadians have in the electoral system.

It is unfortunate that my colleagues from the Conservatives laughed when they heard that, and do not appreciate the severity of undermining the information that is given to Canadians so that they can cast their ballot on election day.

As I mentioned, this bill empowers the commissioner of Canada elections to be able to investigate, to compel testimony once he has received permission from a judge to ensure that he can get the full story and understand what is going on if an election law is being broken.

Furthermore, this also empowers the CEO of Elections Canada to inform and educate Canadians, something the previous government took away. Can we believe that? This bill brings back the ability to inform Canadians about voting.

● (1710)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of the bill that is before the House. As I mentioned in my previous comment, Guelph was the epicentre of some illegal activities during the last election. Similar to the minister, I am standing today as a candidate who ran in the election because of what I saw happening to democracy in Canada, specifically in my riding of Guelph.

When we looked at the previous government's role that it played in muzzling scientists, it also muzzled the former Chief Electoral Officer in Canada. In fact, clause 7 of the Fair Elections Act limited the topics that the CEO could speak of to just five topics: how to vote, how to register as a candidate, how to prove your identity, how to add your name to the voters list and questions of accessibility. He was not allowed to address any other questions under the previous government's legislation. That was clearly designed to prevent the CEO from carrying out his responsibility to Canadian voters, doing his job to promote democracy and to make sure that we have free and open elections in Canada.

As my colleagues are aware, as mentioned earlier, the 2011 election in Guelph was the centre of robocalls. When speaking to the previous candidate for the Liberal Party who was elected in that election, the calls came into citizens in Guelph telling them to go to the Quebec Street Mall to the voting station. Those were citizens who had been identified as likely Liberal voters being told to go a mall where there was no voting station. A lot of them were elderly people, people who had trouble getting to the station but did get to the Quebec Street Mall and then started calling the campaign office to ask why there was no voting station.

It was a very targeted and very cynical way to try and interrupt the voting process in Guelph. It happened not only in Guelph but in 247 ridings across Canada of the 308 that existed at the time, in all 10 provinces, at least one territory. Only one person was charged and convicted. It was a person who was volunteering on the campaign for the Conservative Party in Guelph. The other ridings got off scot-free.

After this blatant attempt to subvert democracy in my riding, collecting evidence proved difficult. For example, in the months after the 2011 election, the Guelph Conservative candidate Marty Burke's campaign manager, Ken Morgan, moved to Kuwait, changed his email, left no phone number, and refused to speak with Elections Canada.

Our bill grants the commissioner the power to seek judicial authorization to compel testimony. This would assist in ensuring timely and thorough investigations and, where warranted, prosecution of offences would be conducted under the new act.

Furthermore, the commissioner of Canada elections would be authorized to lay a charge under the act without the prior authorization from the Director of Public Prosecutions. The commissioner had this authority until the 2006 legislative amendments passed by the former Conservative government.

Misleading voters is a severe crime that undercuts our constitutional rights, encourages voter apathy and develops the cynicism that often voters have towards politicians.

Empowering the CEO to compel testimony in cases such as the robocalls in Guelph would allow for immediate action should there be violations of the act.

The problems do not end there. In the 2011 election, Elections Canada tested a pilot program allowing groups of voters to use their voter ID cards as proof of address. Approximately 400,000 Canadians living on reserves, in long-term care facilities or studying at post-secondary institutions used their VICs as a proof of address that year. Marc Mayrand, the former CEO, even recommended using the VICs for all voters starting in 2015.

Youth and indigenous Canadians are two groups that have low voter turnout. Voter cards offer these groups up-to-date information on the voter's address in cases where a driver's licence is out of date. Voter ID cards proved to be an effective way to get Canadians to the ballot box. However, instead of encouraging practices to increase voter turnout, the previous minister for democratic reform did not feel it useful to expand on the 2011 pilot, despite its success.

● (1715)

Instead, the previous government decided to make it harder for indigenous people, who often lack other forms of ID, to vote, as well as young people, who may annually change their addresses throughout their academic careers. Our bill would allow the voter ID card to be used and would hopefully increase turnout among young and indigenous Canadians. That ID card was discontinued for the previous election, in 2015, and we want to see it come back so that we can get more Canadians voting.

One of the most important reforms in Bill C-76 would be the return of the right to vote for an estimated one million Canadians living abroad. Canadians often choose to live abroad for various reasons, including work or living with family. Canadians are welcomed almost universally around the world, wherever we go, but for some reason, without consultation, the former Conservative government considered citizens living outside Canada for more than five years to be unworthy of a vote in Canadian elections.

According to an Ipsos poll, Canada is deemed the country with the most positive influence on world affairs. Canadians living abroad are in no small way responsible for the world's positive image of Canada. They see Canada by seeing the Canadians who live in other countries. We will return their right to vote so that as they continue to live abroad, they will maintain their voting rights and sell Canada as a wonderful place to live and raise families.

While Bill C-76 would restore the Elections Canada Act, it would be negligent to say that a restored bill would suffice. Elections have become favoured targets for foreign intelligence agencies and others who want to sow division and exaggerate partisan divisions. The majority of this kind of interference is conducted online, as it offers anonymity and is the most efficient way to spread false information. Using automated software programs or bots, malicious groups or individuals can develop hundreds if not thousands of online accounts. These accounts give the appearance of being real people, but they only exist to manipulate public opinion and exacerbate political tensions. Therefore, Bill C-76 proposes to add a prohibition regarding the malicious use of computers during an election period.

Ensuring that funds from outside Canada are not used to exert undue influence on our elections is essential to preserving the integrity of our democracy. That is why our government would tighten the rules for special interest groups outside Canada, specifically by making it illegal to knowingly sell space for the purpose of election advertising to a foreign person or entity. Bill C-76 would help prevent foreign actors and wealthy interest groups from using third parties to circumvent the ban on foreign donations and the strict regime in place for political financing, which has become easier to subvert since the introduction of fixed-date elections. This bill aims to accomplish this in a way that would preserve third party rights to freedom of expression and association.

Much has changed on the geopolitical stage, and Canada must be prepared to face these new challenges. Bill C-76 would provide Elections Canada and the CEO with the powers they need to conduct a robust and secure election.

This bill is one of the main reasons I chose to step forward to run, as I saw heavy-handed and partisan decision-making exploiting the future of our voter franchise. I saw directly how this kind of decision-making process can hurt communities like mine. Thankfully, we now have a government that would not only restore crucial parts of the act but would modernize it to reflect the challenges democracies are currently facing.

I thank the government and the committee. I substituted on the PROC committee to take part in the discussions to see what they were deliberating on, and now we are at third reading in the House. I encourage all my colleagues to support this very important legislation.

● (1720)

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, throughout the member's speech today, on at least three occasions, maybe more, he used the term “voter ID card”. There is no such thing as a voter ID card. It is a voter information card. My colleague is fully aware of that. There is an attempt, I believe, to try to mislead people to think that this little card that comes in the mail with one's information on it is for identification purposes, and it is not.

Over one million of those cards in the last election were erroneously given out. Not only that, we know that in apartment buildings and some townhouses where people get their mail at one spot, we often see these cards in the recycle bin. There is a high probability of those being misused.

How can my colleague argue for the use of the voter information card as a voter identification card?

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is around the same age as me and would know very well that before 2006, when we would go to vote, we would take the card with us and present it. The people working in the polling station would take the cards, check our names against a list and verify that we were who we said we were. That was the card that permitted people to vote in the elections.

That was taken away last time, and instead, people were having to take in two pieces of ID or bills. Elderly people were confused by the process. They grew up knowing that when they came to Elections Canada and presented their cards, they were accepted as Canadian citizens with the right to vote.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Guelph, who I have the pleasure of sitting with on the Standing Committee on Agriculture. I enjoyed the part of his speech where he noted the dangers to our democracy, particularly with respect to social media and the fake news that exists.

Earlier, my friend and colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley gave a very detailed speech on the efforts our party made to bring political parties under stricter privacy provisions, a measure that was backed up not only by the Chief Electoral Officer but by multiple witnesses at that committee. It was also supported by Liberals on the ethics committee.

Can the member explain to this House why his government failed to acknowledge that testimony and failed to act on those provisions within Bill C-76?

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Mr. Speaker, yes, we have a lot of great conversations in the agriculture committee. I was sitting on PROC when these discussions were going on about PIPEDA.

What we are looking at is a broad piece of legislation that needs to be developed around privacy. It would connect to more than just Elections Canada. It would really look at the online management of data, personal data, in all departments of the government. That piece has to be dealt with in greater detail. It needs to go through committee for a very thorough study. We are not saying that we do not need PIPEDA, but we need it in a broader context, with more study than what this legislation is looking at.

Mr. Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague across the way about media reports that people who are not eligible to vote are being urged by Elections Canada to get registered to vote. What does Bill C-76 do to prevent this from happening?

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Mr. Speaker, the real issue is getting more people to vote and working within high schools to get people registered when they are eligible to vote. Having a tighter control of all Canadians who are eligible to vote maybe includes the examples the member is presenting, but it also includes our youth and people who have become Canadian citizens recently. We want all people who are eligible to vote to get out to vote and for Elections Canada to help in the promotion of that process.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I want to inform the member for Thornhill that he will have about five minutes before we have to break for a vote. When we return to this bill, the hon. member will have another five minutes to continue.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Thornhill.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, free and fair elections are the fundamental essence of a democracy. While we know that more than half the world's population today lives under autocratic, dictatorial or otherwise democratically deficient regimes, Canadians, until recently, could be fairly confident that elections here were the gold standard in terms of freeness and fairness.

Let me assure folks who may be watching this debate that Canadian elections are indeed free in the sense that voters can be fully confident that the choices they make on their election ballots, supervised by Elections Canada, remain secret. However, when it comes to fair elections, where, by definition, all parties have an equal right to contest elections without fear, favour or interference and an expectation of a level playing field, voters may not yet be fully aware that the concept has increasingly been compromised in recent years in a variety of unacceptable ways.

Bill C-76, as with Bill C-50 earlier this year, falls far short of addressing the increasing vulnerabilities and threats, domestic and foreign, to the fairness of the federal election coming in 2019. In fact, Bill C-76 follows the Liberal government's pattern in this Parliament of introducing amendments to Canadian institutions and laws, in place for years, that are promoted as improvements but are actually regressive. We saw it in amendments to the Access to Information Act, Bill C-58, a flawed piece of legislation that was specifically condemned as regressive by the former information commissioner. Despite a significant number of tweaks, Bill C-58 remains regressive.

We saw it earlier this year in amendments to the Canada Elections Act, through Bill C-50, that claimed to end, or at least make more transparent, the Liberal Party's notorious cash for access fundraising events. The Liberals have made much of the new protocols, claiming to observe the letter of the amended law. It was passed in June but does not actually come into effect until December. Bill C-50 actually bakes into law a lobbyist cash for access loophole for Liberal fundraising, the notorious Laurier Club lobbyist loophole.

Bill C-76 makes similar false claims of strengthening and protecting the democratic Canadian electoral process. This is a bill that should have been before the House in more substantial form a year ago. It is a bill the Liberals are now rushing, actually stumbling, a more appropriate characterization, into law, with less than a year until the 2019 election. If anyone doubts the clumsiness of the Liberals' development of the bill, the government was forced to propose, and with its majority pass, in committee almost six dozen amendments. That is the definition of incompetence in government.

The Conservative Party, attempting to stiffen the legislation, proposed over 200 amendments. Regrettably, only six gained Liberal support. Major deficiencies remain. They include the use of the voter information card as acceptable voter identification and the Liberal insistence that all non-resident Canadians be allowed to vote, no matter how long they have been away from Canada, no matter whether they have paid taxes in recent years, no matter whether they follow Canadian politics or know the names of political candidates, and no matter whether they ever intend to return to Canada. As many as 2.8 million Canadian citizens are living outside the country.

I know the time is short, and I must say that I have noticed in the last few minutes a familiar stale stink wafting across the floor from the other side of the House. It smells to me as though we are about to hear the dreaded majority government democratic guillotine, the notice of time allocation. By the time the guillotine drops tomorrow, I would expect that barely three members of the opposition will have had a chance to speak to this incredibly flawed bill, Bill C-76.

I know the clock on the wall forces us to move to procedure.

● (1725)

I look forward to concluding my remarks tomorrow.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member will have five minutes remaining tomorrow when debate continues.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1730)

[*Translation*]

TRANS MOUNTAIN PIPELINE PROJECT ACT

The House resumed from October 18 consideration of the motion that Bill S-245, an act to declare the Trans Mountain Pipeline Project and related works to be for the general advantage of Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill S-245 under private members' business.

Call in the members.

● (1805)

[*English*]

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

(Division No. 902)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Allison
Arnold
Benzen
Bernier
Bezan
Block
Calkins
Chong
Cooper
Doherty
Eglinski
Falk (Provencher)
Finley
Genuis
Harder
Jeneroux
Kent
Kmiec
Lake
Liepert
Lobb
MacKenzie
Martel
McColeman
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Nater
Nuttall
Paul-Hus
Rayes
Rempel
Scheer
Shipley
Sorenson
Strahl
Sweet
Trost
Vecchio
Warawa
Waugh
Weir
Yurdiga
Albas
Alleslev
Anderson
Barlow
Bergen
Berthold
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Brassard
Carrie
Clement
Diotte
Dreeshen
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Gallant
Gladu
Hoback
Kelly
Kitchen
Kusie
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lloyd
Lukiwski
Maguire
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Motz
Nicholson
O'Toole
Poilievre
Reid
Saroya
Schmale
Sopuck
Stanton
Stubbs
Tilson
Van Kesteren
Viersen
Warkentin
Webber
Wong
Zimmer– — 86

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Amos
Angus
Arya
Aubin
Bagnell
Baylis
Benson
Bittle
Blair
Bossio
Boutin-Sweet
Breton
Brosseau
Cannings
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Christopherson
Cuzner
Damoff
DeCourcey
Dhillon
Dubé
Duguid
Duvall
Easter
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fillmore
Alghabra
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Ayoub
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bibeau
Blaikie
Boissonnault
Boulerice
Bratina
Brison
Caesar-Chavannes
Caron
Casey (Charlottetown)
Chen
Cullen
Dabrusin
Davies
Dhaliwal
Donnelly
Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Fergus
Finnigan
Fisher
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Garneau
Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Grewal
Hardcastle
Harvey
Hehr
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Jolibois
Jones
Jowhari
Kang
Khera
Lambropoulos
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier
Levitt
Long
Ludwig
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse (Windsor West)
Mathyssen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald
McKay
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Monsef
Moore
Murray
Nassif
Ng
Oliphant
O'Regan
Pauzé
Petitpas Taylor
Picard
Poissant
Qualtrough
Rankin
Rioux
Rogers
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Sajjan
Sarai
Schiefke
Serré
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sorbara
Ste-Marie
Tabbara
Tassi
Trudeau
Vandenbeld
Virani
Wilson-Raybould
Yip
Zahid– — 197
Fonseca
Fraser (West Nova)
Fuhr
Garrison
Gill
Goodale
Graham
Hajdu
Hardie
Hébert
Hogg
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Joly
Jordan
Julian
Khalid
Kwan
Lamoureux
Laverdière
Lefebvre
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Marcil
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Morrissey
Nantel
Nault
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Peterson
Philpott
Plamondon
Quach
Ramsey
Ratansi
Robillard
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Sansoucy
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sohi
Spengemann
Stetski
Tan
Tootoo
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Wrzesnewskyj
Young

PAIRED

Members

Cormier
Thériault– — 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

Private Members' Business

● (1810)

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL LOCAL FOOD DAY ACT

The House resumed from October 19 consideration of Bill C-281, an act to establish a national local food day, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at report stage of Bill C-281 under private members' business.

● (1815)

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

(Division No. 903)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Alghabra
Allison
Anandasangaree
Angus
Arseneault
Ashton
Ayoub
Barlow
Baylis
Benson
Bergen
Berthold
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boissonnault
Boulerice
Brassard
Breton
Brosseau
Calkins
Caron
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Christopherson
Cooper
Cuzner
Damoff
DeCourcey
Dhillon
Doherty
Dreeshen
Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz
Eglinski
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Falk (Provencher)
Fergus
Finley
Fisher
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Gallant
Garrison
Gerretsen
Gladu
Goodale
Graham
Hajdu
Harder
Harvey
Hehr
Albas
Aldag
Alleslev
Amos
Anderson
Arnold
Arya
Aubin
Bagnell
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Benzen
Bernier
Bezan
Bittle
Blair
Block
Bossio
Boutin-Sweet
Bratina
Brison
Caesar-Chavannes
Cannings
Carrie
Casey (Charlottetown)
Chen
Clement
Cullen
Dabrusin
Davies
Dhaliwal
Diotte
Donnelly
Dubé
Duguid
Duvall
Easter
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Fillmore
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fraser (West Nova)
Fuhr
Garneau
Genuis
Gill
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Grewal
Hardcastle
Hardie
Hébert
Hoback
Hogg
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Jolibois
Jones
Jowhari
Kang
Kent
Khera
Kmiec
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Laverdière
Lefebvre
Liepert
Lloyd
Long
Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKenzie
Maguire
Marcil
Masse (Windsor West)
Mathyssen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McColeman
McDonald
McKay
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Monsef
Moore
Motz
Nantel
Nater
Ng
Nuttall
Oliphant
O'Regan
Ouellette
Pauzé
Petitpas Taylor
Picard
Poilievre
Quach
Ramsey
Ratansi
Reid
Rioux
Rogers
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Sajjan
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Schiefke
Schulte
Sgro
Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sopuck
Spengemann
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Sweet
Tan
Tilson
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vandenbeld
Vecchio
Virani
Warkentin
Webber
Whalen
Wong
Yip
Yurdiga
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Jeneroux
Joly
Jordan
Julian
Kelly
Khalid
Kitchen
Kusie
Lake
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier
Levitt
Lightbound
Lobb
Longfield
Lukiwski
MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
Martel
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Morrissey
Murray
Nassif
Nault
Nicholson
O'Connell
Oliver
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Peterson
Philpott
Plamondon
Poissant
Qualtrough
Rankin
Rayes
Rempel
Robillard
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Sansoucy
Saroya
Scheer
Schmale
Serré
Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sohi
Sorbara
Stanton
Stetski
Stubbs
Tabbara
Tassi
Tootoo
Trudeau
Vandal
Vaughan
Viersen
Warawa
Waugh
Weir
Wilson-Raybould
Wrzesnewskyj
Young
Zahid

Zimmer– — 281

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Members

Cormier Thériault– — 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[*English*]

POSTAL BANKING SYSTEM

The House resumed from October 22 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 166 under private members' business.

The question is as follows. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

● (1825)

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

(Division No. 904)

YEAS

Members

Amos
Ashton
Bagnell
Beaulieu
Blaikie
Boutin-Sweet
Cannings
Chen
Cullen
Donnelly
Duvall
Garrison
Hardcastle
Jolibois
Kang
Laverdière
Marcil
Mathyssen
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Moore
Nault
Pauzé
Quach
Rankin
Sansoucy
Sgro
Stetski
Weir– — 55

Angus
Aubin
Barsalou-Duval
Benson
Boulerice
Brosseau
Caron
Christopherson
Davies
Dubé
Fuhr
Gill
Hughes
Julian
Kwan
MacGregor
Masse (Windsor West)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Mihychuk
Nantel
Ouellette
Plamondon
Ramsey
Rota
Serré
Ste-Marie
Tootoo

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Alghabra
Allison

Albas
Aldag
Alleslev
Anandasangaree

Anderson
Arseneault
Barlow
Benzen
Berthold
Bibeau
Blair
Block
Bossio
Bratina
Brison
Calkins
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Cooper
Dabrusin
DeCourcey
Dhillon
Doherty
Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Finley
Fonseca
Fraser (West Nova)
Gallant
Genuis
Gladu
Goodale
Graham
Hajdu
Hardie
Hébert
Hoback
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Joly
Jordan
Kent
Khera
Kmiec
Lake
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lefebvre
Liepert
Lloyd
Long
Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Monsef
Motz
Nassif
Ng
Nuttall
Oliphant
O'Regan
Paul-Hus
Petitpas Taylor
Picard
Poissant
Ratansi
Reid
Rioux
Rogers
Rudd
Rusnak

Arnold
Ayoub
Baylis
Bernier
Bezan
Bittle
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boissonnault
Brassard
Breton
Caesar-Chavannes
Carrie
Casey (Charlottetown)
Clement
Cuzner
Damoff
Dhaliwal
Diotte
Dreeshen
Duguid
Dzerowicz
Eglinski
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Falk (Provencher)
Fillmore
Fisher
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Garneau
Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Grewal
Harder
Harvey
Hehr
Hogg
Housefather
Hutchings
Jeneroux
Jones
Kelly
Khalid
Kitchen
Kusie
Lambropoulos
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lebouthillier
Levitt
Lightbound
Lobb
Longfield
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Maguire
Martel

McColeman
McDonald
McKay
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Morrissey
Murray
Nater
Nicholson
O'Connell
Oliver
O'Toole
Peterson
Philpott
Poilievre
Qualtrough
Rayes
Rempel
Robillard
Romanado
Ruimy
Sahota

Saini	Sajjan
Sarai	Saroya
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Schmale	Schulte
Sheehan	Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sikand
Simms	Sohi
Sopuck	Sorbara
Sorenson	Spengemann
Stanton	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Tilson
Trost	Trudeau
Van Kesteren	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Vecchio	Viersen
Virani	Warawa
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Whalen
Wilson-Raybould	Wong
Wrzesnewskyj	Yip
Young	Yurdiga
Zahid	Zimmer– — 220

PAIRED

Members

Cormier	Thériault– — 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bills: Bill S-203, an act to amend the Criminal Code and other acts (ending the captivity of whales and dolphins); Bill S-238, an act to amend the Fisheries Act and the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act (importation and exportation of shark fins); and Bill S-240, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (trafficking in human organs).

[*English*]

It being 6:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business, as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

RECORD SUSPENSION PROGRAM

The House resumed from May 7 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great honour to rise today to speak to Motion No. 161. I thank the member for Saint John—Rothesay for bringing this motion forward.

The motion before the House today asks the House to direct the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security basically to examine the record suspension program. It wants to do several things. It wants to examine the impacts of a record suspension and its ability to help those with a criminal record to reintegrate into society, look at and examine the impact of criminal record suspension fees and additional costs associated with the application process, especially for low-income applicants, and identify what the appropriate fees and service standards might be for those record suspensions, and also identify improvements to better support applicants for a criminal record suspension.

To cover the topic of criminal record suspension, we have to roll back a little bit and look at what the previous Conservative government did, especially in raising the cost of pardons. At one time a pardon cost $50. That rose to $150 and then climbed to an astonishing $651.

When we look at the corrections system, I have to underline the phrase “corrections system”. Our ultimate goal for the entire judicial criminal system is to have people who have served their time, who have paid their debts to society and demonstrated good behaviour, fully reintegrate into society. It is in society's interest to help those people do that. That means they get a job and are able to travel and to rent an apartment, because we want to reward good behaviour. There are some statistics.

I know there has been some fearmongering in this place about siding with a person who is guilty of a crime over the victims. This has really nothing to do with that because we are talking abut someone who has been released from the prison system. They have paid their debt. They have made their amends to the victim of their crime. Furthermore, when they become eligible for what was once called a pardon, or what we now call a record suspension, they have to wait five years, and in some cases 10 years, to demonstrate to the Parole Board of Canada that they have committed no crimes since and have lived a good life and followed the rules.

By waiting that time, by demonstrating they are willing to make amends for what they once did, they are then eligible to apply for a record suspension and, if granted, the record is set aside. It is not completely wiped out. It basically just sets that aside. It does not get rid of it. However, it can be of great assistance to someone who is trying to reintegrate their lives.

I do not think we should hold people accountable their entire lives for the mistakes they made in their past. I think it is within us to forgive, it is within us to recognize someone who has taken responsibility for the crime they have committed, who has paid their debt and who has demonstrated a sincere willingness to move on and to try to become a better person.

Also, according to the Parole Board of Canada, 96% of pardoned Canadians never reoffend and are less likely to commit a crime than the average Canadian. This statistic was known prior to the previous Conservative government greatly restricting Canadians' access to pardons.

Let me talk about the $651 fee. I know the member for Saint John—Rothesay talked about it in his speech back in May. A lot of people in communities across this country suffer from debilitating poverty. They are looking at meeting their day-to-day necessities, trying to keep a roof over their head and to know where their next meal will come from, and some of them do have criminal records. They either have suffered from trauma in their past, which has led them to commit crimes, or they suffer from substance abuse, which unfortunately still is addressed with a criminalized approach in this country. It is an unfortunate fact that there are countries around the world like Portugal where a decriminalized approach for the possession of small amounts of drugs has met with great success, yet we cannot take that evidence and apply it here in Canada.

● (1830)

Nevertheless, the point I am trying to make is that people who would greatly benefit from accessing a record suspension are often people who are on the lowest rungs of our society. They are already suffering so much, and to put a $651 barrier in front of them is just cruel and unusual punishment in my regard. It seems to me like we are kicking someone who is already down.

Six hundred and fifty-one dollars may not sound like a lot of money, but to a person living on social assistance who needs rental supplements and needs to visit the food bank, $651 is an absolute fortune. If they are ever able to acquire such a sum, they are certainly not going to spend it on trying to get a record suspension. It is going to go to the necessities of life. When the record suspension program went from $50 to $150 and then up to $651, I really felt that was just striking people when they were already at their worst.

The government has conducted some studies into the record suspension program. It has sought advice from Canadians. It is now well past its third year in its mandate, and still the public safety minister has yet to bring any real reforms to the record suspension program. What I want to know, and I hope the member for Saint John—Rothesay will answer this when he closes the debate on this motion, is whether the Liberals are really all the way behind this. The member who brought forward this motion sits in caucus with the public safety minister. Surely he has had the opportunity to bring this topic up with the public safety minister to discuss it, and yet we still see no action from the Liberal cabinet.

Instead, it is left to a member of the Liberal backbench to bring forward a motion to instruct the public safety committee to conduct a study. That leads me to my next point. First of all, I am wondering whether the Liberal government is really serious about moving ahead with reforms. Second, why is this House spending a couple of hours debating a motion of instruction when there are five Liberals who sit on the public safety committee who could very well have brought this motion forward then and there? It just seems to me that this is a motion that is not very necessary for this House to be deliberating on when the Liberal members of the public safety committee could very well have taken the initiative and done it, if they were serious about actually implementing the reforms.

The clock is running on this Parliament. We are left with about a year until the 2019 election. It makes me wonder, the Liberals being the masters of the long promise, whether we are actually going to see meaningful reform in the record suspension program within the timeline of this Parliament.

I see my time is running out, but I want to say that I am going to support this motion. The reasoning behind it is genuine and it reflects a desire on the part of the member to see some actual change. I know he talked very passionately in his speech about the troubles his constituents are going through. However, I question whether the Liberal cabinet is fully behind this, given its lack of action on the program so far. I question whether this might have been better served at the public safety committee.

I really do think that it is a pretty cumbersome application process that is costly. It does not allow those in the lowest rungs of society who have criminal records an easy process for getting forward in life. It is within our society's interest to reward those who have demonstrated good behaviour and a dedicated willingness to reform their ways.

Also, the public safety minister did launch a consultation, and overwhelmingly, the responses by Canadians favoured the record suspension fee going down. As well, for certain offences, low-key offences that were non-violent, maybe drug-related, they favoured automatic expungement after a certain amount of time if that person has demonstrated a willingness to rejoin society. I will end by saying that I will support this motion, and I thank the House for the opportunity to lend my voice to it.

● (1835)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Saint John—Rothesay for his motion. I support his proposal for the Standing Committee on Public Safety to undertake a study of the record suspension program, formerly known as the pardons program. Specifically, the committee would examine the impact pardons have on people with criminal records who have lived crime-free after serving their sentence. It would also look at the fee required to apply for a criminal record suspension and the potential impact on employment opportunities for people with criminal records, and it would identify ways to improve the system.

● (1840)

[*Translation*]

I agree with my colleague that the committee's study is essential to understanding the current rehabilitation process. This will be an opportunity for all stakeholders to come together to hear from experts and listen to former offenders who want to fully contribute to society. The additional information will help us get a clear picture of the situation, allowing us to act fairly and appropriately.

[*English*]

When past offenders have paid their debt to society and are sincerely seeking to reintegrate into our community, it is important in the interests of public safety to ensure that they can be productive members of society. The more obstacles we create, the less likely they are in life to succeed. The more obstacles we create, the less safe our communities become. Past offenders who are unable to find work are much more likely to interact with the criminal justice system again.

The Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness has been undertaking a review of the pardons program. This review included examining research on the links between the time an individual spends crime-free and the rates of reoffending, as well as research demonstrating that criminal records can be barriers to reintegration, particularly employment.

[*Translation*]

As members know, this review of the rehabilitation process also stems from public consultations on the Criminal Records Act and the cost of getting a record suspended.

Our government started this review process to fulfill our commitment to Canadians to look at the changes the previous government made to the criminal justice system.

As my colleagues have already done, I want to stress the importance of rehabilitation as a key step towards successful reintegration into society.

Because of the long wait times and significant costs associated with record suspensions, former offenders face real challenges finding work, as they struggle to find their place in society again.

These challenges also make it difficult to find adequate housing. They make it harder for former offenders to volunteer and give back to the community and limit opportunities to travel abroad. As members of Parliament, we are certainly familiar with how many jobs require travel outside the country. I have heard these criticisms many times.

In my riding of Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, some constituents have come to my office to get help submitting their application to the record suspension program. They shared with me the difficulties they face.

These are people who have reformed and turned their lives around. They are mothers and fathers who need to work and who want to contribute to our society without feeling hounded by their employers or those who vouch for them. They are young adults who made mistakes and who have shown good will.

We must encourage them to become our community leaders and to not turn their backs on society. Our system must foster, not prevent, the social reintegration of those individuals who have demonstrated that they are law-abiding citizens.

[*English*]

Canadians agree that the situation is problematic. The consultations, led by the Department of Public Safety, received about 1,200 online submissions and input from over 70 stakeholders. A further consultation on fees, led by the Parole Board of Canada, received about 1,600 responses.

Here are some of the key findings from both consultations: 96% of participants indicated that the record suspension application fee is too high and that the current waiting periods are too long; the application process is unnecessarily complex; and the purpose of the program should be to help people move forward, making it easier for them to gain employment, and not be a barrier.

A study of the record suspension program by the standing committee would complement the work already undertaken by the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

Law-abiding people with criminal records do not want their records removed so they can slip under the radar; they want them removed so they can be productive members of society, starting with obtaining a job. Having a criminal record can be a major barrier to making that transition.

As the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness has said, the current user fee of $631 appears to be punitive.

● (1845)

[*Translation*]

Moreover, the record suspension fees and waiting periods are particularly onerous for women. We know that, in 2011, Canadian women earned almost $14,000 less than Canadian men, plus they paid for most family and household expenses. Such figures are all the more alarming considering that people with a record often earn less than the Canadian average.

Barriers to record suspension also have a disproportionate impact on visible minorities, especially indigenous people. Compared to the rest of the Canadian population, indigenous people already face more barriers to housing and employment. That goes double for those with a record, not to mention that indigenous individuals often earn less income than the average Canadian.

Furthermore, although indigenous people account for 3% of the Canadian population, they make up more than a quarter of the admissions to federal correctional institutions. I should also note that one-third of the women in federal penitentiaries are indigenous.

[*English*]

Currently, approximately one out of 10 Canadians has a criminal record. That is 3.8 million people. Since 1970, when the pardon program began, there have been over 500,000 pardons or record suspensions. According to the Parole Board, more than 95% of them remain in effect. In other words, the vast majority of people who receive pardons go on to lead crime-free lives.

However, since the high user fee and longer wait periods were implemented following changes in 2010 and 2012, applications for pardons have decreased by 61%, from 32,000 to 12,400. That is a problem for all of us, because we are all safer and better off when people who have served their time and are living as law-abiding members of society are able to fully reintegrate into their communities.

As the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness has stated:

> Our priority is to protect Canadians, and we will do that by implementing evidence-based criminal justice policies that support rehabilitation, prevent crime and victimization, and keep our communities safe.

[*Translation*]

Once again, I would like to thank the member for Saint John—Rothesay for this motion, and I am proud to support his initiative. If this motion is adopted, I sincerely believe that the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security will conduct a careful and comprehensive study of the record suspension program. The results of that study will enable us to base future recommendations on carefully vetted, pertinent information. It is our duty to work together to better understand the programs within the pardon system so we can help people reintegrate and keep everyone safe.

[*English*]

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Motion No. 161, which seeks a review of the record suspension program as amended in Bill C-10, the Safe Streets and Communities Act, enacted by the previous Conservative government. I would like to thank the member for Saint John—Rothesay for introducing the motion and providing me the opportunity to recall some of the excellent work done in the realm of justice and law and order by the previous government.

The Safe Streets and Communities Act introduced many important and necessary changes to how our criminal justice system worked and focused on protecting victims of crime. The bill was thoroughly vetted, with over 200 hours of debate between committee and the House. By the time Bill C-10 was introduced, Conservatives had done much to reform the justice system. We passed mandatory minimum sentences for gang-related murders and drive-by shootings. We eliminated the shameful practice of giving two-for-one credit for time served in pretrial custody. We strengthened the national sex offender registry and passed legislation ensuring that drug dealers were not let out of prison after serving a mere one-sixth of their sentences, not to mention the outstanding track record our government had on crime prevention.

Bill C-10, as just one of the over 25 bills we passed to reform our Justice system, continued in the tradition of those Conservative measures to crack down on crime by legislating many new and improved measures. Some of those measures included increasing the penalties for sexual offences against children. lt targeted organized drug crime by toughening sentences for narcotics trafficking. lt protected foreign workers who were at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking or exploitation. Notably, Bill C-10 enacted the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act, which allowed the victims of terror attacks to sue both the individual responsible and those who supported that individual. lt granted broader leeway for the Minister of Public Safety to decide if someone who committed crimes overseas, including acts of terror, should be allowed to come back to Canada.

These are points of particular interest now as a comparison to the Liberal government's record on terrorists, their victims and the victims of crime overall. The Liberal government has sought to bring ISIS fighters back into Canada. The Liberals willingly wrote a cheque for $10.5 million to convicted terrorist Omar Khadr. Where is the respect for the victims of terrorist attacks? Where is the respect for their families, for Tabitha Speer?

Compare and contrast the record of the previous Conservative government to the Liberal government on any of these issues and it quickly becomes clear that the previous Conservative government was focused squarely on protecting the rights of victims, while the Liberal government is focused on protecting the rights of criminals. I understand this is a bold statement to make, but I have a hard time seeing the changes the government is making to our justice system in any other way. While the previous Conservative government ensured that criminals faced the consequences of their actions, the Liberal government has introduced Bill C-75, a bill that opens the door to shockingly lenient sentences for crimes such as abducting children, advocating genocide, impaired driving causing bodily harm and even engaging in terrorist activities.

I am bringing these issues into focus in this debate today to make a point. The Liberal government has an appalling track record on this file. It has continually weakened the protections for victims of crime, while making life easier for criminals. I believe it is crucial to remember the government's record while discussing the question underlined in the motion.

There are certain individuals who would be greatly pleased to use this motion as an opportunity to call for the wholesale repeal of Bill C-10. Engaging in that discussion would be a mistake. I am always willing to discuss and debate the merits of particular and fine points of the legislative track record of our former government; however, Bill C-10 was clearly a step in the right direction in that it placed the emphasis on the role of the victim in our justice system and ensured that criminals faced the consequences for their actions.

● (1850)

Let me be clear. I believe it is important to review the impacts of changes to a law. ln fact, I welcome reviews of legislation, as too often governments of all stripes pass laws with the very best of intentions, which may result in an end very different than what the government had in mind.

Given the bill became law nearly six years ago, it may be a good idea to ensure that the changes made to the record suspension program are accomplishing that which they were intended to do. ln fact, my hon. colleague for Saint John—Rothesay states it very clearly in the early part of the motion before us today, which reads:

> That the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security be instructed to undertake a study of the Record Suspension Program to: (a) examine the impact of a record suspension to help those with a criminal record reintegrate into society;

There is the line “reintegrate into society”.

The ideal outcome of a prison sentence is not merely for offenders to face the consequences of their bad actions, but for them to reform into productive members of society. However, there must be a clear litmus test to ensure offenders have indeed reformed their ways.

We have a system of criminal records to protect citizens from the possibility of becoming unwitting victims of a previous offender. However, in a just society, a society founded on Judeo-Christian principles, there ought to be an opportunity for redemption. This is why the record suspension program exists, to give another chance to those who have proven themselves reformed.

ln order to access this program, however, the litmus test I alluded to earlier must be met. Bill C-10 set the standard as 10 years lived crime-free for serious crimes or five years for summary offences. lt also disqualified those who proved themselves too dangerous, by including those convicted of sexual offences against children and those convicted of three indictable offences, from ever being eligible to apply. Bill C-10 ensured that offenders would pay their own way through this system and increased the record suspension application fee to reflect that belief.

ln crafting the bill, the previous government believed that this standard would best protect the community, respect the rights of victims and provide those who had proven themselves deserving a second opportunity. Now, perhaps enough time has passed for the results of the these changes to be reviewed.

I am sure that all of us in this place wish to ensure that the process of the record suspension program is not hindering long-rehabilitated individuals from becoming productive members of society. However, let me again state the importance of retaining the focus on this aspect of Bill C-10. The Safe Streets and Communities Act placed the focus squarely on the rights of victims.

Listening to those who wish to repeal the bill would be a step backward for our justice system. I remain cautiously optimistic that the motion before us today will provide the opportunity to further strengthen our justice system.

* * *

● (1855)

ELECTIONS MODERNIZATION ACT

BILL C-76—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the report stage and third reading stage of Bill C-76, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other acts and to make certain consequential amendments.

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

* * *

RECORD SUSPENSION PROGRAM

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Motion No. 161, which calls for a study of the impacts on people with a criminal past who seek a record suspension, formerly known as a pardon. It is a term perhaps more familiar to those who are watching the debate at home, but a term that the previous Conservative government removed to reflect that this was not a purging of their past, but rather a recognition of their efforts to change and live productive lives within our communities.

More specific, the motion, if passed, will instruct the public safety committee to undertake an examination of how record suspensions can help those reintegrate into society, to look at the fees associated with the application for record suspensions and whether they should be changed and, finally, a catch-all directive to identify any improvements to better support applicants through this process.

lt is interesting that the motion is being debated in the House rather than being simply moved to the committee itself, which could be a much quicker option.

lt is also interesting that this comes on the heels of the debate on Bill C-83, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act.

While Bill C-83 and the motion we are discussing today are different in substance, at the heart of these two items is the watering down or perhaps the repeal of the previous Conservative government's Bill C-10, the Safe Streets and Communities Act. Bill C-10 enhanced victim's rights and enhanced the safety of Canadians, which lengthened the crime-free waiting period to 10 years before a serious offender could apply to suspend indictable convictions and to five years from three for summary offences. It disqualified anyone with more than three convictions for an indictable offence from ever being able to apply and disqualified those convicted of child sex offences from ever being able to apply.

A review of the fees associated with the applications for record suspensions is in order, particularly if the fees are hindering the rehabilitation of individuals back into their community, as the hon. member for Saint John—Rothesay has indicated. However, if this is another attempt by the Liberal government to prioritize the rights of criminals ahead of the rights of victims, that is something Canada's Conservatives will not accept.

Motion No. 161 instructs the public safety committee to look at how suspending a criminal's record would assist in the reintegration into society. The hon. member for Saint John—Rothesay included this in his speech. He also included references to people convicted of minor offences, like theft under. The member mentioned that these people were having difficulty finding jobs because of their criminal records and that they could not afford to apply for record suspensions. This in effect hindered their ability to reintegrate into their community and effectively raise themselves out of poverty.

As I indicated earlier, a review in this narrow context at committee I feel is more appropriate. However, I say narrow because the examples used by the hon. member in his speech are narrow in scope as well. The motion does not say those convicted of minor offences, as we might believe from the examples the member for Saint John—Rothesay has used in his speech.

I refer to the speech by my hon. colleague, the member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, which he gave in the House a short time ago. He said, "Record suspensions should not be something that anyone with a criminal past can get. Some crimes can and should remain forever on someone's record." He continued, "serious criminals and repeat offenders that are generally the concern, not one-time shoplifters. The fact is that one-time shoplifters are usually dealt with by means of alternative measures."

Let me be clear. Canada's Conservatives do not want criminals like Terri-Lynne McClintic getting their records suspended for their heinous crimes. We must ensure that those who commit crimes against children will never be able to volunteer at a children's day care centre, for example. The shocking indifference for victims and a disturbing compassion for criminals that the Liberal government has demonstrated over the past weeks needs to be re-examined by the Prime Minister.

● (1900)

As I mentioned earlier, it is interesting that the member chose to raise this matter through a motion in the House, rather than the more expeditious route of presenting a motion to a committee, for example. Obviously, I am not a member of that standing committee. I sit on the natural resources committee. I do not know the public safety committee's agenda, what studies are being conducted and what studies it plans on doing in the future. The committee members themselves are best placed to determine how the study fits within the current pressing public safety or national security issues of, say, gang violence, illegal border crossers, cybersecurity, threats by foreign states or extremist attacks, and yet we are being asked to set the agenda for this committee.

Also, considering this draw, not every MP in this House will have the opportunity to bring forward such legislation. for the benefit of those watching at home, I am referring to the procedure by which we choose the order in which private members can bring private members' business to this House. While I recognize that this motion would impact the hon. member's constituents, it could, as I have said earlier, more appropriately have been dealt with at committee, which would have allowed the member to raise another substantive legislative concern for his constituents.

While it may raise questions for the constituents of Saint John—Rothesay, the member is perfectly within his right to do so. As a result, I have some recommendations for the committee during any review that it may have down the road.

I would encourage the members of the public safety committee to remember that they are the public safety committee, when reviewing this motion.

I recommend that the committee consider the difference between someone who steals a pair of jeans and someone with a record of a serious crime, like sexual assault, child abuse, trafficking, homicide and other violent crimes. It may come as a shock to some of my Liberal colleagues, but there is a difference.

I also recommend that the committee consider the concept that deterrence is also an important factor that could be considered in the prevention of crime. The last message we want to send is that when people steal a pair of jeans and get caught, all they need to do is pay a pittance and there will be no record of their crime. Having a record creates a deterrent and reminds us that crime is not welcome in our communities.

Let us not forget that with every crime there are also multiple victims. I strongly urge the committee not to recommend a reversal of important provisions found in Bill C-10 that put community safety first, and were grounded in a philosophy that victims matter. I recommend not allowing criminals like child predators and repeat offenders with three or more indictable offences to be eligible to receive record suspension. I recommend not altering the required number of years that people with serious criminal convictions, like violent and sexual crimes, have to demonstrate their rehabilitation, before they can apply.

I ask the committee to consider the balance Bill C-10 struck between recognizing the role record suspensions play in facilitating reintegration, ensuring the protection of our communities, particularly the most vulnerable, and placing victims rights at the forefront. We need to ensure that record suspensions do not become a right for criminals. We need to ensure that criminals cannot buy a pass on their criminal behaviour. We need to ensure that a record means something, and we need to ensure that rehabilitation is still the overarching factor in the record suspension process.

The Liberals have demonstrated, in the past few weeks, a concerning preference to coddle criminals rather than champion the safety of the public and respond to the victims. Whether it was giving a convicted cop killer Chris Garnier veterans benefits, despite spending not one second in the Canadian Armed Forces and, something Chris Garnier openly claims, despite the fact that he contracted post-traumatic stress disorder in the process of committing his crime when he murdered a female police officer; whether it was deciding to move a child killer from behind bars to a healing lodge with no fence and with children living inside; or whether it is a lack of transparency in the Liberals' plan on dealing with returning ISIS terrorists, the trend must stop there.

● (1905)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Saint John—Rothesay has a five-minute right of reply.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise tonight with great pride on behalf of my beautiful riding of Saint John—Rothesay to cap off the second hour of debate on my private member's motion, Motion No. 161.

I can say as the member of Parliament for Saint John—Rothesay, a riding that is on the front lines of the war on poverty, that we need to do everything we can to advance polices that will help us tackle poverty reduction in my riding and across the country. It is my number one priority. That is why I used my opportunity to introduce Motion No. 161, a motion that will allow me to move us as close as I can as a member of the House to my goal of eradicating poverty and creating a more just society.

As I stated at the outset of this debate, we have all made mistakes in our lives. I believe in second chances when they are deserved. I would like to believe we live in a society that can forgive past transgressions when such forgiveness is shown to be merited.

Sometimes mistakes that happen early in life can lead to a criminal record. When a mistake is properly addressed, it is best for everyone, both the offender and society, to move on. As a society, we need to be able to give deserving citizens a second chance.

I know the vast majority of my colleagues across the aisle agree with me on this. Indeed, my colleague from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan asserted that they do when he said in the first hour of debate of this motion, "We recognize the important role that record suspension plays in allowing people to move on from that phase of their life if there is clear indication of rehabilitation".

As we have heard over the course of this debate, it is unfortunately the case that the criminal justice system often fails to provide this second chance for many deserving Canadians, especially those in low-income situations.

Approximately 3.8 million Canadians have a criminal record, but very few eligible Canadians apply for a record suspension, and less than 11% of those convicted of crimes have been granted a pardon or record suspension.

In addition, over 17,000 fewer Canadians have been able to successfully reintegrate into society and join the workforce as a direct result of the changes made to the pardon system by the previous government, including the quadrupling of the application fee. This represents a 57% drop in applications since the previous government's changes came into effect. Is this fair? Does this show compassion? I think not. It also represents thousands of Canadians who are unable to secure employment and successfully reintegrate into society.

However, this is not only about giving those who have atoned for their past mistakes an opportunity to escape poverty; it is also about keeping our streets and communities safe. When those with criminal records are unable to secure employment because they are unable to overcome the barriers to securing a suspension of their record, they are far more likely to repeat the mistakes of their past than they would be if they were able to acquire gainful employment.

Breaking down these barriers to reintegration erected by the previous government is not just the right thing to do from a moral and public safety perspective, it is the right thing to do from an economic perspective. It costs taxpayers over $117,000 a year to incarcerate an individual, not to mention the hit our economy takes as a result of lost productivity.

In order to be tough on crime, we must be tough on poverty. In this sense, a vote in favour of this motion is a vote for addressing the root causes of poverty and crime. A vote against it represents nothing more than a partisan virtue signalling that does nothing to address poverty or crime.

It is time to put partisanship aside. We must all roll up our sleeves and work across the aisle to tackle the scourge of crime and poverty head-on.

I truly hope my colleagues across the way will vote with their conscience on this. If they truly care about getting tough on crime, they will.

● (1910)

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 yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 31, 2018, immediately before the time provided for Private Members' Business.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

● (1915)

[*English*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, when the Prime Minister makes the decision to bankroll a Texas oil company and purchase its 65-year-old leaky pipeline for $4.5 billion despite indigenous opposition, he has made a choice. He has decisively picked a side. The Prime Minister has picked corporate welfare over representing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples. It is a very clear message from the Prime Minister and the farce of the rhetoric about the new nation-to-nation relationship that the Prime Minister claims is the most important relationship for his government.

In May, 230 international organizations wrote to the government criticizing it for treating free, prior and informed consent of impacted indigenous communities as a mere afterthought in this process. We know that criticism was absolutely correct.

On August 31, the Federal Court of Appeal nullified the certificate approving construction and operation of the Trans Mountain expansion project, putting a halt to further construction and operation of this project. The Federal Court of Appeal found that the National Energy Board's review failed to include the increase in tanker traffic and the negative impact that would have for endangered killer whales and failed in its duty to engage in meaningful consultations with first nations before giving the green light to the project. It said the NEB's review was so flawed that the government cannot rely on it as a basis to approve the project.

Incredibly, the Prime Minister is still saying firmly that he will approve the project, that it is a *fait accompli*, but with the decision made, he will still manage to somehow meaningfully consult with indigenous peoples. He is blind to this double-talk.

What is clear is that he is announcing to indigenous peoples that their opinion does not matter and he does not care about what their views are. What is equally concerning is that the Prime Minister does not seem to get why indigenous groups are opposed to this pipeline. It is about our duty to care for our planet as stewards for our grandchildren's grandchildren.

The IPCC report was clear. Without serious action right now, we will not achieve the emissions reductions necessary to limit global temperature increases to 1.5°. The carbon tax alone will not do it either.

We need serious investments and action now. The Prime Minister can take action on energy efficient housing and buildings in our northern communities and the territories. He can put forward stricter emissions standards and regulations for large vehicles. He can put in stronger regulations for controlling methane. We can aim higher for emissions targets than those brought forward by the Harper government and apply pressure to put measures in place to achieve them.

All of these initiatives need to be done now and they need to be done with investments in ensuring just transitions for Canadians impacted. That means programs and training for impacted energy workers to move into the clean energy sector. It means helping small businesses to go green and to contribute to the green economy. It means investing in Canada to build a green economy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Vancouver East for the question. Unfortunately, I disagree with the premise of her question for a number of reasons.

● (1920)

[*English*]

First and foremost, I disagree with the member's claim that our government has picked a side on the Trans Mountain expansion project, unless she is suggesting that she is against creating good jobs, opening new markets for Canadian resources, and ensuring that Canada receives a fair price for them, because that is the opportunity we support.

Nor do I agree with any suggestion that respecting indigenous rights is just a formality. Our government has been very clear: no relationship is more important to Canada, and this government, than the one with indigenous people. The Prime Minister has said it countless times. It was a central tenet in our throne speech. It has informed and inspired everything we have done since, including our consultations on a framework for respecting and implementing indigenous rights that would fundamentally redefine that relationship, replacing confrontation with collaboration.

That is why we also implemented an interim approach for reviewing resource projects that includes supporting meaningful indigenous engagement and taking indigenous knowledge into proper account.

We introduced Bill C-69 so that good projects go ahead in Canada. It is legislation that would create new partnerships by recognizing indigenous rights up front and confirming the government's duty to consult. It is legislation that would not only require the consideration of indigenous knowledge but respect the need to properly protect it. It is legislation that would consider the impact of resource development on indigenous rights and culture in the decision-making process. It is legislation that would build capacity and enhance funding for indigenous participation, and it is legislation that would aim to secure free, prior and informed consent. That is our record.

Now we are building on it by respecting the Federal Court of Appeal's decision on the TMX project and following its direction for enhancing indigenous consultations. That way forward includes relaunching phase 3 consultations with all 117 indigenous groups affected by the project. It also includes working with first nation and Métis communities and seeking their views on how to get phase 3 right; doubling the capacity of our consultation teams; ensuring that our government representatives on the ground have a clear mandate to conduct meaningful consultations and empowering them to discuss reasonable accommodations with indigenous groups on issues important to them; and, of course, appointing the former Supreme Court Justice, the Hon. Frank Iacobucci, as the federal representative to oversee the consultation process.

The evidence is overwhelming. We are committed to moving forward in the right way.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, when will the government finally realize that the duty to consult with indigenous communities is not just a box to check off in the process? The government just does not get it.

Climate leaders do not spend $4.5 billion purchasing pipelines to cover bonuses for executives. Governments should take their duties to indigenous communities seriously. They should not announce that they have already made a decision before engaging in consultations.

Two hundred and thirty international organizations got it. The Federal Court of Appeal got it. Indigenous communities impacted by the proposed pipeline get it.

Will the government recognize the consequences of its statements and actions and not proceed with the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Madam Speaker, I think that Canadians know our government's position on indigenous rights and reconciliation. They know that our position starts at the top, with the Prime Minister. In fact, the Prime Minister wrote out our position in the mandate letter of each cabinet member:

> It is time for [Canada to renew its] nation-to-nation relationship with indigenous peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.

Our government has committed to leaving the old paternalistic relationship behind in favour of a fundamentally new approach based on partnership and shared responsibility. That is what we are doing.

[*English*]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to continue debate on auto policy in the House of Commons. The member for Essex and I raised the issue in the House, and I am eager to hear the parliamentary secretary's response with regard to the second largest manufacturing capacity in Canada. It used to be the largest, but has shrunk over the last number of decades because of trade agreements and policies that have not addressed what Liberal and Conservative governments have called for, because supports for the industry have not been delivered. What I am talking about is an auto policy.

The auto manufacturing sector in North America is certainly part of the industrial development of Canada. In fact, out of Windsor we see a legacy from the past that has led to the production of vehicles of the future. It is not only the technology that has changed, but also the people. There have also been a number of different work-related changes in ingenuity, workplace safety and benefits, and in employment that have affected all sectors of the Canadian economy.

To this day, even in my own office, my one staffer Melanie and her children Toby and Lucie, are part of an extended auto family who see the benefits of their heritage coming from the auto sector in the Windsor area. Its footprint carries all the way up Highway 401 and Highway 417 into this region.

What we asked about were the issues related to the Trump tariffs and the NAFTA negotiations, and how in the past our lack of preparedness has cost us. Prior to the original NAFTA, we had the Auto Pact, which was a trading agreement between the Canadian and U.S. governments. In fact, it was a favoured agreement that Canada did very well under. However, when we signed onto the original Free Trade Agreement with the United States, the Liberals did not backstop the program and it was lost through a trade challenge at the WTO.

Ironically, at that time this country did not even have the guts or wherewithal to take this to the final chapter of negotiations. We backed down and folded like a cheap tent and lost our Auto Pact trade agreement, which cost us. We went from number two and number three in the world in auto assembly to number eight and number nine. Subsequent governments have not followed through with a national auto strategy, despite several reports calling for targeted measures to make sure we do not slide any further.

I would like to hear a specific response to my question. The largest support for auto manufacturing by way of a loan went to Volkswagen in the United States, through EDC. How can we make loans to auto companies in the United States when we have not provided the same supports here in Canada?

● (1925)

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government is taking concrete steps through several key policy initiatives to secure and strengthen the automotive sector in Canada, in particular by securing its footprint, supporting technology development, and building the ecosystem for Canada to lead in the design and manufacture of the car of the future. We have a plan that builds on and leverages the experience in the industry and the expertise in technologies shaping the industry's future.

Our innovation and skills plan helps position Canada as a leader in the global economy, with our commitments to grow Canada's automotive footprint, support digital innovation and invest in clean technology. The strategic innovation fund, a $1.26-billion program, has provided funding to support innovative projects in the automotive sector. For example, we provided $49 million to create 1,500 new jobs and to maintain another 8,000 jobs, and to help Linamar launch a new innovation centre in Guelph, Ontario, dedicated entirely to research and development. We provided $110 million for Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada in Cambridge, which will help retain 8,000 jobs, create 450 new jobs and provide 1,000 more co-op placements, making Toyota's Canadian plants the largest producers of Toyota hybrid vehicles in North America.

[*Translation*]

As part of the innovation superclusters initiative announced earlier this year, as much as $950 million will be invested in supporting superclusters led by businesses that are most likely to stimulate the economy and drive growth. Our global skills strategy makes it easier for businesses to recruit the talent they need across Canada.

We launched a new agency called Invest in Canada to attract international investments and make it easier for businesses to set up shop in Canada.

We are working closely with our partners, namely industry, the provinces, municipalities, unions and all other stakeholders, to protect and grow Canada's auto industry.

As the second largest manufacturing sector in Canada, the auto industry generates roughly 130,000 jobs and contributes $18.1 billion to the GDP.

● (1930)

[*English*]

As technology is rapidly transforming the future of mobility to one that is connected, automated, zero-emission and shared, our government continues to amplify Canada's automotive manufacturing strengths, innovative research capabilities, technological expertise and talent. Together with a robust supply chain comprised largely of small and medium-sized enterprises, these strengths contribute to the ecosystem that makes Canada a location of choice for the design, development and manufacturing of the car of the future. The measures we are taking increase our economic prosperity and the opportunity for well-paying, quality jobs for the middle class.

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, I did not get a response. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources mentioned certain measures, I guess from notes provided by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, who did not show up tonight to debate something that is very industrially important in Ontario.

We are at a crossing point with regards to the industry. I mentioned before the family of Melanie, who is on my staff, and her children, who have a grandfather in the auto industry. They may be the one of the last families to continue in the industry, because with the recent agreement with the United States and the lack of auto policy, our footprint is shrinking and the sun is setting on the industry.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member that he is not allowed to indicate who is not in the House.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Madam Speaker, we remain committed to increasing our economic prosperity and the opportunity for good-paying jobs for Canadians by taking measures that address the new realities facing Canada while upholding Canadian interests and values.

[*Translation*]

We are seeing results. Since 2015, Canada's auto sector has received major investments totalling more than $5.6 billion, including recent investments from Toyota and Linamar, which I mentioned earlier. It seems my colleague was not really listening, because there are plenty of great jobs and great things happening in the industry.

Our measures are helping us ensure that the right people, technologies and businesses are positioned just right to design and build the cars of today and tomorrow right here in Canada.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, the “black hole”, or spring gap, problem still has not been fixed. Like a broken record, the Liberals keep assuring me that a pilot project is under way. However, this pilot project only involves 13 of the 62 regions. Such a measure is unacceptable.

Case in point, the people of Saint-Hyacinthe and Acton Vale do not have access to any such measure.

It frustrates me that the government has only half measures to offer, because seasonal workers need help right now, today, to deal with the EI spring gap. The government is suggesting training, qualifications, pilot projects, targeted economic regions, short-term measures and all kinds of other ideas, when all seasonal workers want is to be able to feed their families.

By choosing training over funding, the Liberals are deliberately failing to recognize the value of a sector that is actually a driver of our economy.

As the member representing the agri-food technopole of Saint-Hyacinthe, I understand how important these workers are to our regional economy.

I want to remind the Liberal government about one thing. Jobs may be seasonal, but workers are not. We need action, meaningful, definitive action, to help the thousands of workers who will be struggling to get by this winter, facing long stretches without a job or income.

Landscaping and lawn maintenance business owners in my riding are worried. If you can believe it, some of them have had to give their employees personal loans, while this government boasts about having solved the spring gap problem.

The eligibility threshold needs to be returned to 360 hours immediately and at least 35 weeks of benefits must be provided for all manufacturing workers in order to fix the EI spring gap.

Seasonal workers are taking action. In September workers from Quebec and Acadia came together to take a united stand against the EI “black hole”, or spring gap. Some 400 seasonal workers gathered in Inkerman on the Acadian peninsula.

Pierre Céré, a spokesperson for the Conseil national des chômeurs et chômeuses, or CNC, attended the meeting and called for seasonal workers be protected as well.

His call echoes our own. We in the NDP are calling for better eligibility and a minimum of 35 weeks of benefits, so that these workers do not have to face the spring gap year after year.

He also wants the regions affected by the spring gap to receive a special designation to help them get by.

Mr. Céré reminded the government that seasonal workers in the Gaspé, on the north shore and in Charlevoix, in Quebec, face the same realities as those in Acadia.

In August, following repeated calls from the NDP, the government announced a pilot project that will give workers an additional five weeks of benefits. However, this does not meet the needs of seasonal workers. Advocacy groups for the unemployed are saying that this government appears to be indifferent to the demands of workers.

On their behalf, I will ask the question once more. When will the government solve the problem of the EI spring gap once and for all?

● (1935)

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to respond to my colleague's important question.

Our government understands the concerns of seasonal workers who find themselves without any source of income after exhausting their regular EI benefits before they go back to work.

[*English*]

Earlier this year, people in some regions across Canada were hit hard by this income gap, referred to as the "*trou noir*". Faced with this challenging and stressful situation, seasonal workers needed our help, and with the help of the provincial governments involved, we responded. First, we provided immediate support by reallocating $10 million from existing resources to the most affected provinces: Quebec, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

[*Translation*]

It should be noted that the provinces will determine how to distribute these funds based on their needs. They are in the best position to do that.

[*English*]

Also, in August, we announced that we would be investing approximately $189 million to implement a new pilot project to provide up to five additional weeks of EI regular benefits to eligible seasonal claimants in 13 EI regions. It is estimated that 51,500 seasonal claimants will benefit from these extra weeks of EI each year.

Finally, they are also making available an additional $41 million over two years for all provinces and territories through their labour market development agreements. This funding will enable provinces and territories to provide skills training and employment supports for workers in seasonal industries.

[*Translation*]

We believe that skills development and training are also important. This is not because our seasonal workers are not skilled, far from it. Our workers are already trained for the industries they work in. It is not because they are leaving seasonal industries. We need seasonal workers in these industries.

[*English*]

However, that is because training aims to strengthen seasonal workers' ability to support seasonal businesses.

We are doing this because we are committed to reducing the difficulties that too many families and workers in seasonal employment are facing.

[*Translation*]

While working with stakeholders and the provinces affected, we will continue to look for solutions to the challenges faced by workers in seasonal industries.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Madam Speaker, I have no problem with working with the provinces. We are always the first to say, "Let's work together".

I would like to remind the House of what I said earlier. It is not the workers who are seasonal; it is the work. However, it is the workers who are penalized. I am not the one who said that. It was the Prime Minister himself who said it during the last election campaign.

In spite of the Liberal government's actions, seasonal workers are angry because they know that, in a few months, despite the training they have received, they will still have to go without income for several weeks. Imagine what it is like to be without income in a region where there is only seasonal work.

I am speaking out on behalf of those workers who have no money to feed their children for several weeks or even several months.

● (1940)

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Madam Speaker, we all know that the spring gap remains a big problem for seasonal workers across Canada. That is why we will continue working with our partners to find sustainable solutions.

Our investments will have a positive impact on workers in seasonal industries, and they will bring us one step closer to solving the spring gap problem.

We are reviewing and updating the employment insurance system to make sure more workers have a safety net should they become unemployed.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to order made Monday, October 15.

(The House adjourned at 7:41 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, October 24, 2018

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

ORAL QUESTIONS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS