



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 148 • NUMBER 355 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, November 21, 2018

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 21, 2018

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

● (1405)

[English]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of *O Canada*, led by the hon. member for Edmonton Centre.

[Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

GURU NANAK

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is Guru Nanak's birthday, or Gurburab, as Sikh's call it, and the beginning of the 550th year celebrations around the world.

Guru Nanak was a founder of the Sikh faith. His message was simple: Remember the creator and connect with him, share your time and earnings with those in need, and work an honest living. He spread his message through music and verse. He walked across continents from Sri Lanka to China, from Bangladesh to Saudi Arabia. His message was always simple: equality, religious freedom and social justice.

This year Sikh's will plant over one million trees around the world as part of the eco-Sikh initiative to commemorate his 550th and to protect the environment.

A happy Gurburab to everyone.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in a little over an hour, the finance minister will be releasing his fall economic statement updating Canadians on the state of the government books.

Over the last three years, the Liberals have raised taxes across the board. Families are paying \$840 dollars more today, on average, than they were in 2015. Young families in the riding I represent, Flamborough—Glanbrook, just cannot get ahead.

The Prime Minister has recklessly squandered the surplus that was left to him and has spent the cupboards bare. Now our federal debt is skyrocketing, with no end in sight. Canadians are realizing that it is the future of the next generation the Prime Minister is mortgaging for his own electoral gain, and that is just not right.

We may not know yet what is going to be in the minister's statement, but I can hazard a guess that there will be lots of sunny ways words, and there will not be any real initiatives to make life more affordable for struggling families and those most vulnerable. There will not be any help for our steel fabricators, who are being crippled by tariffs, and there most certainly will not be a plan to bring the budget back to balance.

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MEDICAL RESEARCH

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the house today to recognize an organization located in my riding, BioPharma Services, which was founded by two surgeons dedicated to advancing medical science. BioPharma Services is truly a global leader in medical research.

In recent news, BioPharma Services was proud to announce the completion of a successful assessment by the World Health Organization. The assessment included the review of two clinical studies performed at BioPharma's Toronto site, located in my great riding of Humber River—Black Creek. These studies were found to be in compliance with WHO good clinical practice and guidance for in vivo bioequivalence studies. BioPharma received a status of compliance, valid through January 2021. It is a huge accomplishment.

I would like to extend my good wishes and thanks to all the amazing employees at BioPharma Services for continuing their excellent work through growth and quality, and last but not least, special—

The Speaker: The hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

*Statements by Members***TIM BOUTIN**

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday I attended a meeting of community leaders in Trail, B.C. I arrived to a room full of sombre faces and some people quietly crying. They had just learned of the sudden passing of retired fire chief Tim Boutin. Tim passed away after a brief battle with kidney cancer, a cancer that is considered an occupational disease for firefighters, likely caused by the toxins firefighters encounter almost daily.

Tim had become a career firefighter in 1986, was promoted to captain in 2000, and retired in 2013. I did not know Tim, but it was obvious that his community loved him.

I want to extend my sincere condolences to Tim's family and to his co-workers and many friends, who have lost a father and a friend, and lost him far too early.

Fire chiefs from across Canada will be here in Ottawa next week. I hope everyone here will have an opportunity to meet with them and thank them all for their service and for the service of all firefighters who risk their lives every day to keep us safe.

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GURU NANAK

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, very soon Guru Nanak Sahib Ji's birth will be celebrated across the world. He founded the Sikh religion by walking this earth to unearth humanity and love. He brought enlightenment to people who lived in darkness, where women were considered impure and less than human.

Baba Nanak condemned those who committed abuse and discrimination against women. To him, this was one of the most shameful of deeds. Guru Nanak asks in his hymns how a woman can be called inferior, from whom kings and saints are born, and says that the reproductive strength of women is in itself a symbol of divine supremacy.

Over 500 years ago, Guru Nanak Sahib Ji illuminated generations to come by making hymns on women's rights part of the Sikh holy scripture. Guru Nanak recited in one hymn, "In the earth and in the sky, I do not see any second. Among all the women and the men, the Light of the Divine is shining."

I wish a happy Gurburab to all.

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FIREARMS

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has proven time and time again that they are soft on crime and do not prioritize the safety of Canadians. Rural crime in communities across Canada has been steadily increasing, and law enforcement has been unable to mount an adequate response.

With Bill C-71, the Liberals doubled down by going after law-abiding firearms owners while doing nothing to make communities safer or to reduce gun violence. Now they are proposing a blanket handgun ban, which will do nothing to curb gun violence and will instead only make criminals out of law-abiding firearms owners.

Yesterday the leader of Canada's Conservatives committed to getting tough on criminals who use guns to commit violence, while respecting law-abiding firearms owners. This Conservative plan will get illegal guns out of our communities and put criminals behind bars for a long time. These common sense proposals—tackling straw purchases, creating a firearms smuggling task force, having a firearms ban for violent and gang criminals and giving more tools to police to solve gun crime—will make a real difference in our communities, both rural and urban.

Unlike the soft-on-crime Liberals, the Conservatives have a real plan for a safer Canada.

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● (1410)

GLENFOREST SECONDARY SCHOOL STEM PROGRAM

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to rise today to congratulate the students of the Glenforest Secondary School STEM program. They organized and hosted the third Xplore STEM conference in Mississauga East—Cooksville this past week, the biggest science, engineering, technology and math conference in Canada. I was amazed by what these young people were able to achieve, bringing speakers and students with a passion for STEM from across the country.

I want to congratulate teacher and STEM leader Diana Wang-Martin, the entire organizing team and all the presenters and speakers. This conference attracted not only some of our best and brightest students but some of Canada's best employers to mentor the students, and I am sure, recruit their future talent.

* * *

RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to pay tribute to someone who has been a fixture in Newmarket for the past 18 years. Mayor Tony Van Bynen first ran for municipal office as a councillor in the year 2000 and was elected as a regional councillor in 2003. He ran successfully for the mayor's chair in 2006 and was re-elected in 2010 and 2014.

Tony has always been guided by his love and passion for Newmarket, working hard every day to make our town a better place. He spearheaded projects such as the Magna Centre, the revitalization of Main Street, the creation of Riverwalk Commons, and increased partnerships with Southlake Regional Health Centre.

Statements by Members

As he heads into retirement, I want to wish Tony congratulations and thank him for his dedication and service to the town of Newmarket. I also want to give a special thanks to his wife, Roxanne, for sharing Tony with us for all these years. He is all hers now.

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UKRAINE

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Ukrainians helped build Canada, especially Lakeland. In 1891, they first came to Lamont County, where I grew up, the cradle of Ukrainian settlement in Canada, which celebrates the arrival of the first 125 families.

In 1903, my father-in-law's family came by train to Innisfree to clear land and plant crops, likely before they built houses, like so many others. By 1930, over 50,000 Ukrainians called Alberta home, the biggest community outside Ukraine.

This fall, Lloydminster and Nikopol became sister cities to observe and advance their shared past and future. From churches, festivals, the Ukrainian village, the Victoria Settlement near Smoky Lake and the “garlic dome” in St. Paul to the world's largest pysanka in Vegreville, a giant perogy in Glendon, and kolbassa in Mundare, symbols of Ukrainian food, faith, family, language and culture dot Lakeland.

We remember the Holodomor, the communist genocide against Ukrainians, and the people of Maidan, who began a movement for a just and free democracy five years ago today. Canada can and must fight with Ukraine against ongoing threats and for its sovereignty

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[*Translation*]**OPERATION RED NOSE**

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on December 14, I will have the pleasure of participating in a volunteer event hosted by Operation Red Nose, an amazing organization that is celebrating its 35th anniversary this year. Drugged and drunk driving claims victims every year, including, sadly, during the holidays.

That is why 600 volunteers in my region step up every year to make sure the people of Vaudreuil—Soulanges get home safely. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage people in my community to get in touch with the organization, which they can do through the Red Nose app, when they or their loved ones need a ride.

[*English*]

I invite all members of our community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges to join me on December 14, at six p.m., for an opportunity to volunteer for *Nez rouge*. When we know that our friends and family will return home safely, we all enjoy a more pleasant holiday season.

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BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, two years ago I rose to shed light on a baseball player worthy of induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame, Tim Raines. While he made it to

Cooperstown, there is another former Expo who deserves to be there. Larry Walker played 17 seasons, winning the batting title three times, and was the national league MVP in 1997. Undoubtedly, he is the greatest Canadian hitter to ever play in the game. Walker had speed, power, incredible patience at the plate and a cannon of an arm in right field.

His case is hurt because his best years were played at Coors Field, but ultimately his case into the hall should be based on his worth to his team. His 72.7 wins above replacement is higher than Tony Gwynn, Dave Winfield, Vladimir Guerrero or even Tim Raines, and as such, Walker deserves enshrinement in the hall of fame.

Though he aspired to be an NHL goalie, Walker's statistics compare well to right fielders throughout baseball history. I call upon the Baseball Writers' Association of America to do the right thing and elect Larry Walker into the hall of fame.

* * *

● (1415)

NOVEMBER 20

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a historic day. November 20 marked the 56th anniversary of the Soviet Union's pullout of its missiles from Cuba, ending the greatest nuclear threat to civilization. It also marked the 73rd anniversary since the Nuremberg trials began, where high-ranking Nazis faced justice for their crimes. In 1989, it was the start of the velvet revolution in Prague where half a million people rallied to call for an end to Communism.

November 20 also marked 34 years since the search for extraterrestrial intelligence institute, SETI, was founded, and so far, no E.T. Just as the search for alien life continues, so does the search for the year the budget will balance itself, after the Liberals voted down our Conservative motion to reveal this cosmic mystery in the fall economic statement.

Mr. Speaker, the truth is out there.

* * *

MEMBER FOR CARDIGAN

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to honour my friend, Lawrence MacAulay, as today marks his 30th year as the hon. member for Cardigan. For those wondering, that is nine straight election victories, and he is gearing up for a tenth, but who is counting? Over the three decades he has represented Cardigan, he has served our country as secretary of state for veterans affairs, minister of labour, solicitor general and currently as minister of agriculture.

Oral Questions

On behalf of his friends and colleagues in the House, I thank him for his three decades of tireless work for his constituents, as well as all Canadians. I would also like to take a moment to recognize Frances, his wife of 46 years, who we all know is the real campaigner in the family, as well as his daughters Carolyn, Rita and Lynn.

[*Translation*]

Thank you for your excellent service, Lawrence. I wish you good health and all the best in the future.

[*English*]

The Speaker: I remind the hon. member for Egmont that we do not use personal names in this place. Of course, the purpose for that is to avoid conflict, and there was no apparent conflict in that case. However, generally speaking, it is to be avoided. We have seen it when someone is retiring, but I do not think the hon. member for Cardigan is retiring.

The hon. member for Hochelaga.

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OTTAWA CITY COUNCILLOR FOR BAY WARD

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the woman I want to honour today you know well. In fact, quite a few people on the Hill know her, because this great woman, Theresa Kavanagh, has been working here for almost 30 years, including more than 20 in the NDP whip's office. If someone needs information about just about anything, she knows who to call.

She worked with MPs, and you and me, Mr. Speaker, to set up a family room for young parents in this building. She organized events and jogging groups, found just the right offices for our MPs and organized skits for the Christmas party. That is just a small sample of her accomplishments. I am not sure how we will survive without her skills, but we have no choice. She was just elected city councillor for Ottawa's Bay Ward.

[*Translation*]

We are so proud of her and extremely grateful for the many years she spent looking after us, as capably and devotedly as she looked after her husband and two sons.

Thank you, Theresa. Now we will follow you on Twitter.

* * *

● (1420)

[*English*]

AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals continually brag about their use of the long-form census and their use of evidence, methodology, analytics and data. According to the Auditor General of Canada, they have absolutely nothing to brag about. In fact, they are just plain wrong.

In report after report, the Auditor General has criticized various government departments and agencies saying they had unclear methodologies, they did not establish targets, they did not define performance indicators, they did not use the necessary important and complete data, they did not adequately use data, they did not

maintain data, they did not include data, they did not analyze program data.

While the Liberal government allows Statistics Canada to dangerously reach into Canadians' private banking information, Canadians rightfully question what their personal banking data will be used for. That is a good question.

* * *

[*Translation*]

WOMEN IN HOUSE

Mr. Marc Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every year a group of young women taking part in McGill University's Women in House program come to Parliament Hill to meet with our female MPs in an effort to encourage civic engagement and political participation among women.

[*English*]

Although there is a record number of women running for office, there is still much work to be done and I sincerely hope this experience helps convince some of the women here to put their names on the ballot. The under-representation of women in politics is a long-standing issue, but it is one we can overcome through effort and with the help of opportunities offered by programs like McGill's Women in House.

[*Translation*]

I want to welcome all the women from McGill University taking part in the program this year and wish them every success.

[*English*]

As the product of three generations of women who attended McGill, it gives me great pleasure to say to these women that this House is theirs. I hope to see them in one of these seats, those seats, soon.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

FINANCE

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am again rising in the House today to provide the Prime Minister the opportunity to give Canadians the date by which he will be balancing the budget.

He made many commitments throughout the past number of years, indicating that he would return the budget to balance in 2019. Canadians relied upon that when casting their ballot, and it has been proven that they have been taken for granted.

Will the Prime Minister take the chance now and indicate when the budget will be balanced?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no government in Canadian history ever added more to our national debt than the Conservatives under Stephen Harper. That is a fact.

After 10 years of Stephen Harper, Canadians made a different choice, a better choice, a choice for a government that was there to invest in them, invest in their communities, and grow the economy the way we have so that unemployment is at its lowest in 40 years and our growth was the strongest in the G7 last year.

We are investing in Canadians and their future. The Conservatives do not have a plan.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government does not have a clue, quite frankly.

The reality is that it is incredibly important to have a budget that is balanced in order to withstand any future issues. The Prime Minister recognized that this was a selling feature for Canadians. He, himself, said, in his own Liberal platform:

After the next two fiscal years, the deficit will decline...will return Canada to a balanced budget in 2019.

I will give the Prime Minister another chance. Will he tell us when they will balance the budget?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for 10 years the Conservatives racked up deficit after deficit after deficit.

We made a commitment to invest in Canadians, and—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, order. Most members on all sides are able to sit through question period without reacting to what they hear and do not like. One can expect to hear things one does not like during question period. The rest should remember that they have to wait their turn before speaking.

The hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives still, stubbornly, do not get it.

Every year, we decrease the debt-to-GDP ratio, while at the same time grow the economy and create jobs for Canadians. We are living up to the commitments we made to Canadians. They are stuck in Stephen Harper's past.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is true, we are stuck on the fact that Canadians were told that the budget would be balanced in 2019, and we are here to ask questions of the government.

If we are stubborn, then the arrogance being displayed by the Prime Minister with respect to breaking promises to Canadians is absolutely shameful. The reality is what he said several times, including to Mr. Mulcair in a debate, was that he was:

...looking straight at Canadians and being honest the way I always have. We said we are committed to balanced budgets, and we are. We will balance that budget in 2019.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to have an opportunity to remember the 2015 election campaign, where Canadians were given a clear choice of a government that was willing to cut, to balance the budget at all costs versus the Liberal Party that was willing to invest in

Canadians, to grow the economy in ways that the Conservatives had not been able to over the longest time.

Under Conservatives, wages were stagnant; under our government, wages are rising at a rate of 3%. Under Conservatives, GDP growth was 1%; under our government, GDP growth is 3%. We are delivering.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton seems to think that he can speak and even bellow in this place without being called upon. I would ask him to reconsider that opinion, or else he will not be speaking for a while.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, page 12 of the Liberal Party's election platform states, "...our investment plan will return Canada to a balanced budget in 2019."

Today is November 21, 2018, and they have so far racked up \$80 billion in debt. Our children and grandchildren are the ones who will end up paying.

I have a simple question for the Prime Minister. Can he rise and tell us when we will return to a balanced budget?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear the member talk about our children and grandchildren, because in his riding of Richmond—Arthabaska we are helping 20,490 children with the Canada child benefit, for a total of \$6.5 million a month in his riding.

We are investing in families across the country, and we are growing our economy, which the Conservatives never managed to do.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is this.

While this government spends Canadians' hard-earned money, while it plays the same old tune, our energy sector is stalling. Liberal decisions are driving away foreign investment, which has declined by 50% so far, businesses are less competitive because of bad tax reforms, and 80% of Canadian families are paying more taxes today than three years ago under the previous government.

The question I want to ask the Prime Minister is simple and the answer was in his election platform: when will we return to a balanced budget?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, \$6.4 million are sent to his riding, Richmond—Arthabaska, every month to help more than 20,000 children.

We are investing in Canadians and in their future by investing in public transit and support for businesses, families and seniors. We are contributing to economic growing, which the Conservatives were unable to do, by investing and putting our trust in Canadians.

Oral Questions

• (1430)

*[English]***CANADA POST CORPORATION**

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, here is a quote from 2015: “the Harper Conservatives have rolled back many fundamental labour rights that affect workers’ ability to organize freely, bargain collectively in good faith, and work in a safe environment.”

That was said by none other than the Prime Minister during the campaign back in 2015, the same Prime Minister whose government is now musing about legislating workers back to work. Why does he not realize that his actions are the ones that are emboldening Canada Post executives not to bargain in good faith?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have faith in the collective bargaining process and believe that the best deals are reached at the table. For nearly a year, we have been supporting and encouraging both sides to reach a negotiated agreement. We have provided conciliation officers, appointed mediators, and offered voluntary arbitration. Legislation is not a step that we take lightly. We reappointed the special mediator to work with the parties over the next two days to reach an agreement. We encourage both sides to reach a deal, but we are prepared to act if there is no significant progress.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Tough words, Mr. Speaker, and he says them without laughing.

[Translation]

If I were a progressive Liberal, I would seriously begin to wonder how I could support a special law that would take away any leverage workers have, that is currently allowing Canada Post to not negotiate in good faith because it knows full well that the government will come and help it out of this mess, and that shows that the government is prepared to do anything to please web giants such as Amazon and eBay.

Where are the Prime Minister's fine words when the time comes to defend free collective bargaining?

Where is the Prime Minister's backbone when it comes to compelling Canada Post to negotiate in good faith?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the friendship and relationship we have with organized labour across this country. We have faith in the collective bargaining process and believe that the best deals are reached at the table.

For nearly a year, we have done everything in our power to encourage the two parties to negotiate an agreement. Legislation is not a step that we take lightly. We reappointed the special mediator to work with the parties over the next two days to reach an agreement. We encourage both sides to reach a deal, but we are prepared to act if need be.

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada Post has greatly exaggerated the amount of mail that has accumulated.

In Toronto, there are 70 semi-trailers of mail, not hundreds as Canada Post is claiming in the media. There is one truck in London,

six in Hamilton, two in Halifax, and 15 in Moncton. All this mail can be delivered in a matter of days. Canada Post fabricated a false crisis and the government took the bait.

Why is the Minister of Labour not protecting workers' safety? Why did she side with management instead of protecting postal workers' rights?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been working with organized labour across the country for three years now to show that a government can respect them. We believe that organized labour is essential for growing the middle class and helping those who want to join it.

We will always respect unions. We will always work with unions. We know that the best solutions for resolving disputes are often found at the negotiating table and we will continue to encourage people to reach an agreement. However, we are prepared to take action if they cannot reach an agreement.

[English]

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, despite its being unconstitutional, the Liberals placed back-to-work legislation on notice yesterday, thereby destroying any incentive for Canada Post to negotiate seriously. The Prime Minister rationalizes this by saying that Christmas and important shopping days are coming. What message is he giving to thousands of CUPW workers whose physical and mental health and families are compromised because Canada Post refuses to negotiate fairly? How is the Prime Minister any different from Stephen Harper?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have transformed the relationship between the Government of Canada and organized labour across this country. We have engaged in a thoughtful, positive way. I have been proud to attend many, many meetings with a broad range of labour groups over the past years. We continue to build on this important partnership, important for us, important for labour, and important for Canadians as well. We will continue to respect and work with organized labour. We will continue to ensure there is every opportunity to solve these challenges at the bargaining table, which is the right place for them, but we are ready to act if necessary.

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• (1435)

*[Translation]***FINANCE**

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, three and a half years ago, before he became Prime Minister, the Liberal leader posited, shall we say, a novel economic theory. He said, as you know, the budget will balance itself.

Of course, no one on earth bought into the Prime Minister's economic theory, and for good reason. He is not much of a theoretician, but for the past three years, he has been putting his theory into practice and seeing what his vision for balancing the budget amounted to.

We still have to face reality though. When will the budget be balanced?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we will take no lessons from the former Conservative government, considering that it added more billions to the national debt than any other government in the history of this country. When that government was in power, it ran deficit after deficit.

Not only that, but the Conservatives had precious little economic growth or job creation to show for it. We have invested in Canadians and communities. We have created jobs and economic growth. Our plan to help the middle class is working.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no one on Earth buys into the Prime Minister's theory that a budget balances itself. Why? Because it is not true.

When he was elected in 2015, he talked about a small deficit of \$10 billion for the first two years and then \$6 billion after that. The deficit is two or three times that amount. He also committed to balancing the budget in 2019, which is only about 40 days away.

Can the Prime Minister tell Canadians when the budget will be balanced?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very true that our economic approach is the complete opposite of that of the Conservatives. They had a hard time generating economic growth. Why? They were giving tax breaks and benefits to the wealthiest, whereas we are investing in the middle class. We have helped children, we have helped families, we have helped seniors, we have helped our entrepreneurs, and we have cut small business taxes. Our investments in the middle class are working and generating economic growth. The Conservatives do not have a plan for creating economic growth.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there he goes again insulting the people whose taxes he wants to raise. Of course, he said soccer moms and hockey dads were too rich and that is why he needed to take away their children's fitness tax credits. He said farmers and small business owners were rich tax cheats and that is why he needed to attack them, meanwhile protecting his own trust fund and the family business of the finance minister. Despite all of the revenue windfall from his higher taxes, the deficit is three times what he promised it would be this year. Will he tell us in what year the budget will be balanced?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, \$4 million a month. That is how much money this government is sending for the kids in the riding of Carleton, over 17,000 kids, who are receiving more money every year than under the Conservative government. Why did the member not invest in the families in his riding?

We are seeing record levels of growth across this country. We are seeing record low levels of unemployment. We are investing in Canadians' future, and our plan is working.

While they continue to try to pretend that deficits are something they have no experience with—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when we introduced the child care benefit we had a balanced budget, and when we boosted the child care benefit we had a balanced budget. Furthermore, we did so without raising anyone's taxes.

The Prime Minister targeted middle-class families with higher taxes, generating more money for the government to spend. And he has spent. However, he has spent all of it, and now he is spending more. The deficit is three times what he promised it would be this year, and next year, when the budget was supposed to balance itself, we will still see no end in sight.

Will he finally answer the question: when will the budget balance itself?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite contrasts their approach to family benefits and the Canada child benefit. Well, let us look at that.

The Conservatives' approach was to continue to send child benefit cheques to millionaire families. We stopped sending them to the wealthiest Canadians so that we could give more to the ones who actually needed this approach. The other thing is that they made their child benefits taxable, and so families would spend every month and then have to give back to the government at the end of the year. That made no sense.

Our proactive, means-tested Canada child benefit is lifting hundreds of thousands of kids out of poverty.

● (1440)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only millionaire who is getting taxpayer-funded child care benefits is the Prime Minister who is sitting right in front of us. He gives himself tens of thousands of dollars a year in free nanny services that every other Canadian has to pay for out of their own pocket. Those families understand, because they know how to balance their family budgets and know that budgets do not balance themselves.

The Prime Minister has never had to worry about money and so he does not worry about Canadians' money. Well, Canadians are worried. Tell them when the budget will be balanced.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is from a member of a Conservative government that added more billions of dollars to the national debt than any other government in Canadian history. What do they have to show for it? The worst record on growth since R.B. Bennett in the depths of the Great Depression.

Oral Questions

What have we done? We have invested in Canadians, the way we promised in the last election. We have invested in infrastructure, we have given more money to families who need it, and it has delivered real growth for the Canadian economy, growth in wages and growth in jobs. We are delivering on what we committed to do for Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, actually, the previous Conservative government paid off over \$30 billion of debt before the great global recession drove all G7 countries into deficit, and throughout the Liberals said that we should spend more, spend faster, that we could never spend enough. We ignored them, and as a result we balanced the budget, led the G7 in growth and in job creation and had the best economic performance of all of our peers.

Back to the question. When will the budget be balanced, Mr. Prime Minister?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after adding record amounts to the national debt, after running deficit after deficit, the Conservatives finally created a phony balance just in time for the election. How did they do it? They did it on the backs of our veterans, nickel and diming them and shutting down veterans' service offices. They did it by ramming through changes to the Phoenix pay system and booking those changes in advance. They phoned up a budget so they could try to run on it. They do not know how to manage a budget, and their record is proof of that.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Doug Ford's decision to abolish the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner and cancel the project to build a French-language university in Ontario has sent shockwaves through the country. The Prime Minister said he was disappointed and concerned, but he should be doing something about this instead of staying in his corner.

The Liberals keep saying that they are there for Franco-Ontarians.

Will they prove it by contributing their fair share of the funding for the French-language university in Toronto and by calling Doug Ford to convince him to change his mind, as the NDP has been asking for?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that our Minister of Official Languages will be having a conversation with the Ontario minister to encourage her to reverse these irresponsible cuts.

Protecting official language minorities in Canada is what we, as a party and as a government, are all about. We will always support and defend minority communities. We are very disappointed with this decision, and we encourage all members of the House to put pressure on the Ford government to change course.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Doug Ford and the Conservative Party have shown their ignorance of the Franco-Ontarian community's history of resistance and its

struggle for rights. Their attack on the French-language university in Toronto is an attack on francophone rights across Canada.

Will the Prime Minister call Doug Ford personally to stand up for this institution and guarantee federal funding to build a French-language university in Ontario?

• (1445)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot think of advocating for Franco-Ontarians and other francophone minorities in Canada without thinking about our dear friend Mauril Bélanger. He was a lifelong champion of French-language minority communities.

If he were still with us today, he would be one of the first to speak up for francophone rights. He lives on in our hearts as we fight each day to protect and advocate for francophone minorities in response to the Conservatives' cuts.

* * *

PRIVACY

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on another issue, the law is clear. The chief statistician at Statistics Canada must inform the minister of any new program that is implemented. However, the Minister of Innovation says that he learned about this intrusion into Canadians' bank accounts via the media.

The Prime Minister must act and instruct his minister on what to do to ensure that Statistics Canada obeys the law.

Will his government commit to stopping this collection of personal information?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we take Canadians' privacy very seriously, as does Statistics Canada.

In fact, Statistics Canada has been in contact with the Privacy Commissioner about this pilot project, which has not yet been launched.

We also understand the importance of reliable data for Canadians. For 10 years, the Conservatives governed only through ideology, and we witnessed the consequences of that, namely historically low economic growth. We will continue to protect the privacy of Canadians and promote evidence-based policy.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is serious. The government is snooping around in the bank accounts of thousands of honest Canadians, and the Prime Minister is doing nothing about it.

I would remind him that federal institutions are required to notify citizens any time they collect personal information. The Prime Minister must do everything he can to protect the privacy of Canadians.

When will the Prime Minister shut down his project to collect the personal data of Canadians?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will always protect the privacy of Canadians, as this is a priority for our government. That is why we are working with the Privacy Commissioner to ensure that all data are collected appropriately.

Before we launch this pilot project, we need to ensure that all personal data are fully protected. The Conservatives claim they care about privacy, but Canadians see right through them.

The Conservatives continue to oppose the work done by Statistics Canada. The opposition House leader even indicated recently that the Conservatives still oppose the long-form census.

We will—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us recap. A letter was sent from Statistics Canada to the banks, ordering them to provide the personal financial information of Canadians. This letter went out before any notification was made or any plans were made public.

Statistics Canada appears to have broken the law, and the Prime Minister needs to step in and fix it. Will the Prime Minister fix this mess and cancel this program?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we take the privacy of Canadians very seriously, and we expect Statistics Canada to do so as well. In fact, Statistics Canada has been engaged with the Privacy Commissioner in regard to this pilot project, which has not yet been launched.

We also understand the importance of quality and reliable data to Canadians. During 10 years, the Conservatives ignored data and governed only through ideology. We witnessed the consequences: historically low economic growth while they were in power.

We will continue to protect the privacy of Canadians and promote evidence-based policy.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he says that we are ignoring the data, but the fact is he is ignoring the question.

The law says that the minister must be told of any mandatory request for data by Statistics Canada 30 days before it is made. It also says that any new request must be made public. According to the minister, he found out about this scheme to surveil Canadians from media reports. It looks as if Statistics Canada violated the law.

Will the Prime Minister finally listen to the concerns of Canadians and cancel this unauthorized scheme?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have heard this approach before from the Conservatives. It is the same kind of fearmongering and politicization they used in order to justify their cancellation of the long-form census.

We understand how important it is to protect Canadians' privacy. We work with the Privacy Commissioner to ensure that Statistics Canada always complies and protects Canadians' privacy.

However, this war on data and on facts that continues to come from the Conservatives was rejected in 2015, and I know Canadians are going to reject it again.

* * *

• (1450)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, the international community criticized Canada for human rights violations. The UN committee against torture made it clear that the forced sterilization of indigenous women constituted torture. The committee also demanded an explanation for the lack of reparations and sanctions.

Let us be clear. This is what genocide looks like. How could Canada let this happen on our watch? Will the Prime Minister take immediate action, put a stop to this horrific act, and bring justice to the indigenous women and their families that were violated?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the coerced sterilization of some indigenous women is a serious violation of human rights.

We know that indigenous patients can face systemic barriers in accessing services, including discrimination and racism. We all have a role to play to ensure that indigenous patients receive quality health care free of prejudice, including ensuring health workers receive cultural competency training as laid out in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.

We will continue working with partners to ensure all indigenous peoples have access to culturally safe health services, no matter where they live in Canada.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Germany has permanently stopped selling arms to Saudi Arabia. That is what leadership looks like.

Nearly a month ago, our Prime Minister announced that the government was reviewing existing export permits—not future permits, but existing permits.

Can the Prime Minister update the House on the status of the review of existing permits to export arms to Saudi Arabia and tell us when we can expect a decision?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we strongly demand and expect all Canadian exports to be used in a way that fully respects human rights.

That is why we are committed to a more rigorous arms export system and to the Arms Trade Treaty.

Oral Questions

As I have already said, we are reviewing existing export permits to Saudi Arabia.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many amazing Canadian women have helped shape this country's history. It is great that we are recognizing Viola Desmond's contributions by putting her on the new \$10 bill.

Personally, I was delighted to see the children of the West Island Black Community Association put on a play that celebrated Viola Desmond's story.

Would the Prime Minister tell the House when Canadians can expect to see these new bills in circulation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Pierrefonds—Dollard for his question and for his hard work.

Two years ago, we announced that a Canadian woman would be featured on a regularly circulating bank note. Following extensive consultations across the country, we proudly announced that the brave Viola Desmond would be featured on the new \$10 bill. The new bill went into circulation this week. All Canadians will be able to find Viola in their wallets, and we can all be proud of that.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Australian F-18 fighter jets will be a burden on the Royal Canadian Air Force and on all taxpayers. The Liberals invented this capability gap. It never existed.

According to the Auditor General, the Liberals' plan to buy the used Australian jets will have a small effect on fighter force operations. The Prime Minister must cancel this completely useless purchase.

When will he do so?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Auditor General for his recommendations.

The report confirmed what we have known all along, that the Conservatives mismanaged this file and misled Canadians. The report confirmed that a capability gap exists, having started under the Conservatives. We will not compromise our ability to meet our NATO and NORAD commitments. This is why we launched an open and transparent competition to replace our aging CF-18 fleet, which the Conservatives did not manage to do in the decade they were in power.

•(1455)

[English]

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no one believes the Prime Minister for a second. That is a guy who pulled our CF-18s out of the fight against ISIS. Now he wants them to fly around like we are dealing with the Cuban missile crisis.

The Auditor General trashed the Prime Minister's fighter jet plan. Instead of following the Auditor General's recommendations and scrapping his outrageous plan to buy old, obsolete Aussie jets, the Prime Minister betrayed our air force by rushing out to finalize the deal.

Will the Prime Minister stop spending billions to keep our aging fight fleet on life support, cancel this asinine Australian deal—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Auditor General for his important recommendations, which actually confirm what we have always known: The Conservatives mismanaged the jets file and misled Canadians for more than a decade. The report confirms the existence of a capability gap, which started under the Harper Conservatives.

Unlike the Conservatives, we will not compromise our ability to meet our NATO and NORAD commitments. That is why we launched an open and transparent competition to replace the aging CF-18s, something the Conservatives could not get done in a decade.

* * *

ETHICS

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians must have confidence in the security of the nation. To earn that confidence, the government must reassure Canadians that the highest authorities in the country, ministers of cabinet, protect the information with which they are entrusted, and Canadians need to know when that trust has been breached.

Will the Prime Minister confirm that no members of the current or previous cabinet have unlawfully released cabinet confidence information?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member well knows, because this is an issue of a current ongoing court case, it would be inappropriate for me to comment.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was not commenting on an ongoing case. I was asking a very important question of the Prime Minister.

Canadians need to know that the secrets of the nation are protected at the highest levels and that the Prime Minister will react swiftly and appropriately when Canada's security has been compromised.

Did a current or former cabinet minister unlawfully release cabinet confidence information?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite well knows, these exact questions are at the centre of an ongoing court case. We respect the independence of the judiciary on this side of the House. We will ensure that we continue to respect that by not commenting on this ongoing court case.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for three years now, the Prime Minister has been telling us, with his hand on his heart, that he is working on implementing a fairer and more equitable tax system. However, according to the Auditor General's report, the Canada Revenue Agency is more lenient with wealthy multinational corporations and those who conduct suspicious transactions abroad than it is with ordinary citizens. Surprise, surprise. The Liberals are maintaining a two-tiered tax system, one for the Liberals' wealthy friends and another for everyone else.

Will the Prime Minister finally recognize that he did not keep his promise and that the Auditor General's report shows that his government's attempts to achieve tax fairness have been a complete failure?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we thank the Auditor General for his report. We are committed to ensuring that all Canadians are treated fairly and that they all pay their fair share.

The CRA will review internal processes to ensure that compliance work is consistent. Since we took office, the CRA has completed twice as many offshore compliance audits than it did under the previous Conservative government. Thanks to our investments, the CRA can now identify those involved in tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance and ensure they face the consequences of their actions.

* * *

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Immigration has left families and caregivers in the dark for months on what will replace the current caregiver program.

This week, migrant workers' rights groups released a report calling on the minister to ensure caregivers would finally be given the respect and security they deserve. Experts and caregivers have been clear for decades. If they are good enough to work here, they are good enough to stay. There should be no more delay tactics.

Will the Prime Minister do what is right and commit to providing caregivers permanent resident status on arrival?

• (1500)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the improvements and reforms we have made to the immigration system to make it fairer, to make it better and to respect the rights and protect the rights of anyone coming to Canada.

We recognize there is more work to do, but we also need to make sure we are maintaining the confidence that Canadians have in our immigration system. That is why our immigration minister is working so hard with a broad range of immigration and advocacy groups to respond to their concerns to make Canada's immigration system continue to be the example to the world that it is.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, borders exist for a reason. They keep Canadians safe and require planned, orderly immigration.

The Conservative Party does not support Canada signing the UN's global compact for migration since the Prime Minister is allowing nearly 38,000 people to enter Canada illegally from the United States, thereby undermining the integrity of our borders and our asylum system.

Will the Prime Minister commit to fixing the problem with the safe third country agreement and withdraw from the UN's global compact for migration?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are not going to withdraw from the UN's global compact on migration. It is essential that we continue to show our respect for immigration systems and show that we understand the need to increase immigration and take in even more refugees from around the world.

We built our country by accepting those who came here seeking to build a better life. Canadians are positively inclined toward immigration because they know we have a robust and secure system. Even in the case of irregular arrivals, we continue to enforce every law to the letter and apply our immigration principles.

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, people who have reached the safety of upstate New York are not the world's most vulnerable people. The UN global compact on migration directs the countries to "sensitize the media" on what to say with regard to immigration.

Given that the Prime Minister disparages, name calls, bullies anyone who dares to question his severe inability to manage Canada's borders or manage the integrity of our asylum system, the Conservatives oppose the signing of this agreement.

Will the Prime Minister withdraw Canada from this agreement and close the loophole in the safe third country agreement?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the world is seeing unprecedented levels of men, women and children displaced by war and by persecution. Our government is proud to have taken a leadership role on the global compact.

This is the first time the international community has worked together to develop a comprehensive set of principles to better manage this phenomenon. It is disappointing to see the Conservatives engage in peddling Rebel Media conspiracy theories, while we work with the international community to protect our robust immigration system.

* * *

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General confirmed what Canadians have known for years, that tax rules are not applied fairly. He said:

...the Canada Revenue Agency did not consistently apply tax rules...even though the Taxpayer Bill of Rights includes the right to have the law applied consistently.

Oral Questions

The report also said that those with offshore transactions were given special breaks that were denied to ordinary Canadians.

Why is there one set of rules for regular Canadians and another set of rules for people like the Prime Minister's rich Liberal friends?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we thank the Auditor General for this report. We are committed to ensuring that all Canadians are treated fairly and that they all pay their fair share. The CRA will review internal processes, definitions and procedures to ensure that compliance work is consistent.

It is interesting to note that the Auditor General's report also covered the last years of the Conservative Party in office. That is why, since we took office, the CRA has completed twice as many offshore compliance audits than under the Conservatives. Thanks to our unprecedented investments, the CRA can now identify those involved in tax evasion and aggressive avoidance and ensure they face consequences better than they did under the Conservative government.

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[Translation]

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our space sector gives us good middle-class jobs and innovations that improve Canadians' day-to-day lives.

Over 100 space-related businesses and organizations contribute \$2.3 billion to the economy and employ nearly 10,000 Canadians.

A clean environment and a strong economy go hand in hand. Satellite images are important to Canada's fight against climate change.

Would the Prime Minister tell the House how the government is investing in the future of space technology?

• (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): I thank the member for Alfred-Pellan for his work and for supporting industries in his region.

We are proud to have announced a \$13-million investment in NorthStar Earth and Space. The funding will help NorthStar revolutionize the way we see the world. Better satellite images will improve weather forecasting and tracking of events on Earth such as industrial and ecological disasters. NorthStar is an exciting example of an innovative Canadian company. Our investment will ensure that Quebec remains at the forefront of advanced information technology.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the safety of the food that Canadians eat should be a top priority for any government.

Cases of E. coli have been occurring for over a month in Canada by people who consume romaine lettuce. Just now, the Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention in the United States has ordered grocery stores to pull this contaminated product.

It took over a month for the Liberals just to inform Canadians that the lettuce they were eating might not be safe. Why have the Liberals not issued a recall to protect Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, protecting the health and safety of Canadians is our government's top priority.

We are collaborating with provincial health authorities, as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the FDA in the United States, to investigate the outbreak of E. coli infections linked to romaine lettuce in Ontario and Quebec.

People in Ontario and Quebec should avoid eating romaine lettuce and salad mixes containing romaine lettuce until the cause of contamination is known. We will continue to keep Canadians informed as new information becomes available.

* * *

[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister visited my riding, several stakeholders explained to him how crucial it is that overnight services be maintained at the Rouyn-Noranda flight service station, even though Nav Canada has already recommended shutting down those services.

The Minister of Transport said he has asked Nav Canada to do another study, but it seems that Nav Canada has already made up its mind and will confirm only that it is doing additional consultations.

Will the Prime Minister stand in favour of safety and side with local residents and maintain the airport's overnight services?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to visit Rouyn-Noranda and hear directly from citizens about their concerns.

The safety and security of the transportation network remains a priority for our government. The minister and his department are working with Nav Canada on this file to ensure the safety of operations at that airport. No decisions have been made, but no one is talking about cancelling night flights.

* * *

[English]

POVERTY

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I represent a riding where many constituents are working hard to join the middle class, but are finding it difficult. The cost of everything from food to rent continues to rise, and wages do not always keep pace. They need to make difficult choices every day. They work hard, but find it challenging to get ahead.

Could the Prime Minister please explain how the government's poverty reduction strategy will help families like those in Scarborough Centre?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Scarborough Centre for her hard work and for speaking up on behalf of Canadians working hard to join the middle class.

We have invested \$22 billion in the fight against poverty. Programs like the Canada child benefit and more generous benefits for seniors have helped lift 650,000 Canadians out of poverty. We know there is still more to do. We indexed the CCB. We are introducing the Canada workers benefit and the Canada housing benefit. We have a plan for achieving the lowest level of poverty in Canada's history.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is playing fast and loose with Canadians' health. For the third time in under a year, the Canadian Public Health Agency is telling Canadians to avoid romaine lettuce. After the second time in one year, the government should have been monitoring the situation more closely. Now we have learned that there have been 18 confirmed cases of E. coli in Canada since mid-October.

It took one month for the Liberal government to issue a new alert. The United States decided to recall the contaminated romaine lettuce to protect Americans.

Why is Canada not recalling the lettuce?

Why is the Prime Minister playing fast and loose with Canadians' health?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will always protect Canadians' health and safety. We are working with provincial health officials and with American authorities to investigate an E. coli outbreak connected to romaine lettuce.

Ontarians and Quebecers should avoid consuming romaine lettuce and lettuce mixes containing romaine until we know the cause of this contamination. We will continue to keep Canadians informed about the situation.

* * *

• (1510)

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, PPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has been unable to solve the illegal migrants crisis. It plans to increase, by 40%, the number of immigrants we accept, and it is about to sign the global compact on regular migration, a United Nations plan to make mass migration normal and easier.

Will the Prime Minister tell us if he still believes that Canada is a sovereign country that must protect its borders and its identity, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is extraordinarily fortunate to be one of the few places in the world these days whose citizens are, for the most part,

Routine Proceedings

positive toward immigration. We know that immigration is a source of strength and resilience and has indeed created this country and its economic growth over the past decades.

We know that continuing to defend a strong immigration system that follows the rules, that imposes our rules and our expectations, is important to Canadians. That is what we are doing. Whether people arrive regularly or irregularly, all the rules around our immigration system apply and are enforced.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[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 response to 16 petitions.

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, a report of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the 13th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, and the meeting of the Standing Committee of the Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region in Inari, Finland, from September 16 to 19, 2018.

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[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages entitled, "Issues Related to French-Language Training in the Field of Nursing".

I want to thank Christine Holke, our clerk, Lucie Lecomte, our analyst, and all my colleagues from all parties for the extraordinary chemistry within our committee, which seeks to support minority language communities across Canada. I also want to commend my colleague from Yukon on getting involved with minority communities in Whitehorse.

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

• (1515)

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 12th report from the Standing Committee on National Defence in relation to supplementary estimates (A), 2018-19.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Dan Ruimy (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology in relation to its study of supplementary estimates (A), 2018-19.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 77th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs in relation to its study of supplementary estimates (A), 2018-19.

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 20th report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, entitled "Canada's Engagement with East Asia". Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 21st report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, entitled "Strengthening the Canadian Consular Service Today and for the Future". Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

* * *

[Translation]

PETITIONS

LOCAL FOOD

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present today, all signed by citizens of Salaberry—Suroît.

The first concerns local food. Canadians promote purchasing local foods in order to support our farmers and the local economy. This helps reduce transportation of food and therefore greenhouse gas emissions.

They are calling on the Government of Canada to ensure that the Department of Public Works and Government Services has a local food procurement policy for all federal institutions.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my second petition concerns climate change.

The petitioners are calling on the government to not purchase pipelines. With Canada spending several billions of dollars on pipelines and expansion projects, which will increase greenhouse gas emissions, it will be difficult if not impossible to meet international climate change targets.

They are calling on the government to invest in clean, renewable energy that creates sustainable, good quality jobs for the workers of

today and of the future, instead of spending billions of dollars on fossil fuel infrastructure and subsidies.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the last petition calls on the government to establish a national strategy to combat plastic pollution.

Whereas plastics in our oceans, lakes, rivers, streams, and other bodies of water pose a dire threat to ecosystems, wildlife, communities and individuals with sensitivities, the petitioners call on the government to work with the provinces, municipalities and indigenous communities to develop a national strategy to combat plastic pollution in aquatic environments.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first was initiated by a constituent in my riding who then collected signatures of her fellow constituents. It calls on the government to condemn the unlawful arrest of a Canadian citizen for practising Falun Gong and is asking for the immediate and unconditional release of Ms. Sun Qian, a Canadian citizen.

VISION CARE

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls on the Government of Canada to recognize eye health and vision care and to develop a national framework for action that would help reduce vision impairment resulting from preventable conditions and the modification of known risks.

[English]

MENTAL HEALTH

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to table e-petition 1736, initiated by Carol Todd in my constituency. The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to designate October 10 of every year as World Mental Health Day in Canada.

World Mental Health Day is observed on October 10 each year to raise awareness of mental health issues, advocate to end the social stigma of mental health and mobilize efforts in support of mental health.

Mental health affects all Canadians at some time in their lives, through a family member or a friend. In any given year, one in five Canadians experiences a mental health illness or addiction problem and by the time Canadians reach 40 years of age, one in two have, or have had, a mental illness.

Almost one in 10 adults will have gone through a major depression at some point in their lives and the total number of 12- to 19-year-olds in Canada at risk for developing depression is a staggering 3.2 million. Canadian youth who experience early adversity such as childhood trauma are more likely to develop mental health problems of all severity.

• (1520)

FISHERIES

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to enter a petition to the House of Commons called Save Wild Salmon.

The petitioners, mostly from Vancouver Island, point out that Canada, and British Columbia in particular, is well positioned to become a world leader in closed containment salmon aquaculture.

They also point out that Canada needs to invest in a safe, sustainable industry to protect Pacific wild salmon, maintain employment and develop new technologies, jobs and export opportunities.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to immediately transition this industry to safe, land-based, closed containment.

ANIMAL CRUELTY

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House today to present a petition from residents within my constituency.

The petitioners call on the Minister of Justice to take steps to protect animals in laboratories to bring Canada in line with other industrialized countries that require licensing and regulations for scientific laboratories and other centres in which animals are held to move toward eliminating cruelty towards animals.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS INITIATIVE

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present a petition today from Canadians who highlight the fact that the Canada summer jobs program applications are about to be sent out by the government. They ask that this year their charter rights under section 2 of the freedom of religion be protected, that there not be an attestation requirement this year and that the government act like a democratic government.

CANADA POST

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions. The first is from petitioners who are in support of postal banking. They point out to the government that nearly two million Canadians desperately need an alternative to payday lenders because of the crippling lending rates that affect poor, marginalized, rural and indigenous communities most. We have 3,800 Canada Post outlets already in rural areas where there are few or no banks and these outlets have the infrastructure to make a rapid transition to include postal banking. Therefore, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to create a committee to study and propose a plan for postal banking under Canada Post Corporation.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is in support of the Thames River system. As the House will recall, the previous government stripped environmental regulations covered in the Navigable Waters Protection Act, leaving hundreds of rivers vulnerable. The ecology of the Thames River is very much at risk and because the Liberals failed to keep their promise to reinstate environmental protections gutted in the original act, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to

Routine Proceedings

support my bill, Bill C-355, which commits government to prioritize the protection of the Thames River by amending the Navigation Protection Act.

[*Translation*]

SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by a number of petitioners calling on the Government of Canada to maintain supply management in its entirety. Dairy production is an essential economic driver in the riding of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot and in all of Quebec. The industry generates nearly 85,000 direct and indirect jobs. It is crucial that we maintain supply management, so the petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to make sure that supply management will be maintained in its entirety in the various trade agreements the Government of Canada enters into.

* * *

• (1525)

[*English*]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURN

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if a revised response to Question No. 1952, originally tabled on November 19, 2018, could be made an order for return, this return would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 1952—**Mr. Charlie Angus:**

With regard to the Department of Indigenous Services and the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs: (a) do the departments collect data about incidence and impacts (health, social, etc.) of mold in on-reserve housing; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, (i) which First Nations communities, listed by region, reported incidents of mold in housing, (ii) how many such incidents did they report, (iii) what were the reported or assessed impacts; and (c) if the answer to (a) is negative, why do the departments not collect this information and do they plan to do so in the future?

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Government Orders***MOTIONS FOR PAPERS**

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

ACCESSIBLE CANADA ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-81, An Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

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

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, Lib.) moved that the bill be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Motion agreed to)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Accessibility, Lib.) moved that Bill C-81, An Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada, be read the third time and passed.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to stand in the House of Commons for the third reading debate of Bill C-81, the proposed accessible Canada act.

Bill C-81 is, without any doubt, a game-changing piece of legislation for Canada, especially for Canadians with disabilities. It sends a strong message that our government is taking action to advance accessibility and inclusion. We are leading the way to make Canada a barrier-free country for everyone.

I am very proud of all the work we have done getting Bill C-81 this far. We have seen from the debate at second reading that everyone is wholeheartedly invested in presenting the best piece of legislation on accessibility for Canadians. I would like to thank the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities and my distinguished colleagues for the work they have done to move this much-anticipated bill forward and for providing their valuable input to make it even better.

I am particularly thankful for the deliberate efforts of the committee to make their hearings accessible, both in person and through televised broadcasts. In addition to the standard captioning, sign language interpretation in ASL and Langue des signes du Québec were consistently available. This allowed more Canadians to have the opportunity to participate in hearings in real time and signalled Parliament's capacity to better incorporate accessibility moving forward.

Perhaps most importantly, I want to recognize the efforts of the disability community to make Bill C-81 happen. More than 55 witnesses testified and many more made written submissions. Groups like the Federal Accessibility Legislation Alliance, which began in 2018 as a partnership of 56 organizations, have shown remarkable inclusive and intersectional leadership.

● (1530)

In particular, I refer to the valuable support and engagement of the alliance's leadership team, Spinal Cord Injury Canada, the British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society, Communications Disabilities Access Canada, the Native Women's Association of Canada, the Canadian Association of the Deaf, the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association and the Council of Canadians with Disabilities. These organizations have been with us every step of the way since the beginning of this process. Their continued dedication to help us bring this historic legislation to life knows no bounds. I hope they see themselves in this bill, because it is truly theirs.

From the very first day of consultations right up until our recent committee meetings, we have heard informed and moving testimonies about the struggles that Canadians with disabilities face on a regular basis. We have also consistently heard the same key themes of what our legislation should cover, though sometimes with differing opinions on the approach. These key messages are that this legislation should be ambitious, that it should lead to more consistent experiences of accessibility, that it should apply to all areas of federal jurisdiction, that it should be enforceable, including penalties for non-compliance, and that it should have a mechanism for complaints and oversight.

Each of these key messages serves as the backbone of the proposed act. Bill C-81 creates a framework for developing accessibility standards, establishing and enforcing accessibility requirements and monitoring implementation. This framework is an effort to address barriers to accessibility. The proposed act strikes a balance between bolstering compliance and enforcement measures of existing agencies, such as the Canadian Transportation Agency and the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, and creating new roles such as the accessibility commissioner and the chief accessibility officer. This would ensure broader accountability through complaints mechanisms, compliance and systemic monitoring and oversight.

[*Translation*]

This bill is designed to strengthen the system, better regulate accessibility, and bolster each sector's enforcement capacity and ability to manage complaints. This will help develop a system in which the Government of Canada and the industry are required to anticipate barriers before they can limit access to persons with disabilities.

[English]

Our government's objective moving forward is to get Bill C-81 passed. We know that we need to make this bill a law as soon as possible so that we can all get to work on building a truly accessible future for all Canadians.

There are certain things we can all agree on, one being that the realization of a Canada without barriers is long overdue. We all agree that Canadians need this legislation.

The proposed accessible Canada act would enable the creation of three critical new roles that would drive the advancement of accessibility in Canada: the Canadian accessibility standards development organization, the accessibility commissioner as part of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, and the chief accessibility officer. I have been pleased to hear the overwhelming support for their creation, as these roles will allow for a Canada without barriers to be realized in an unprecedented way.

The new Canadian accessibility standards development organization, CASDO, would be a forum for technical experts, industry and Canadians with disabilities to come together to develop accessibility standards that would work for everyone. Once accessibility standards are developed, the Government of Canada would adopt them into regulations to make them law. Having regulations based on standards rather than enacting regulations directly in the proposed act would ensure that rules could be changed more fluidly over time to reflect new advances and best practices.

[Translation]

We want to make the Canadian accessibility standards development organization available to the provinces and territories, and even other countries, so that they can create and adopt standards in their respective jurisdictions. We want to show that Canada can be a world leader in accessibility and that we are prepared to work as a team to accomplish that goal.

[English]

The accessibility commissioner within the Canadian Human Rights Commission would be responsible for complaints, compliance and enforcement measures in areas other than those currently regulated. Finally, the chief accessibility officer would serve the important role of systemic monitoring and oversight. Responsible for producing a report each year, the chief accessibility officer would be able to identify trends and emerging issues across all agencies and areas of government.

We expect that CASDO, the accessibility commissioner, and the chief accessibility officer would be up and running within 12 months of the legislation's coming into force. We also plan that the first set of regulations under the legislation would come into force in 2020-21.

The significant and sustained culture change on accessibility that we need depends on getting everyone involved.

Here I would like to recognize the important testimony, debates and discussions that took place in committee. I am happy that the discussions initiated on the accessible Canada consultations continued throughout the parliamentary process.

Government Orders

Since the introduction of Bill C-81 in Parliament back in June, we have received over 120 proposals for amendments. Throughout this process, we have heard from dedicated community activists, experts and industry leaders. Each brought unique and thought-provoking perspectives about their concerns and wishes for Bill C-81.

Bill Adair of the Federal Accessibility Legislation Alliance spoke inspiring words about the disability community's perspectives during his committee testimony. Bill said:

We are counting on you to make changes that will have a significant impact on our lives. This is a huge responsibility. We've opened up, we've advised and we've taken a lot of time to present the right recommendations. Listen to us. This is your opportunity to be the change.

I am very eager to see Bill C-81 pass so that we can get to work on advancing the accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities in Canada. I am also aware that there is a clear and sincere desire to move this bill quickly, and we will need everyone in the House to collaborate to get this proposed legislation through. Accessibility clearly transcends partisanship and clearly transcends any one government.

• (1535)

[Translation]

The changes made to Bill C-81 in committee advanced the vision we had for the law. The suggestions of stakeholders were incorporated into the bill in a spirit of collaboration and co-operation, the same spirit that has guided the evolution of the bill to date.

[English]

The testimony from witnesses and written submissions informed the 74 amendments accepted at committee. I am supportive of the changes not only because they came from the community, but also because I believe they have made this good legislation into great legislation.

I would like to highlight four key changes that were made at committee to strengthen Bill C-81.

First, the current purpose clause was amended to add communication as a priority area. We heard compelling testimony in committee that spoke to the impact of barriers to communication, particularly for persons with communication and language disabilities. This amendment prioritizes the barriers experienced by people with communication and language disabilities that can be caused by conditions such as cerebral palsy, autism spectrum disorder and learning disabilities.

[Translation]

By making communication a priority in and of itself, we can guarantee a consistent, harmonized approach to addressing the barriers to accessibility faced by people with communication disabilities in every federally regulated sector.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Second, while legislation applies to federally regulated entities, we know that achieving a barrier-free Canada means that accessibility needs to extend beyond federal jurisdiction. Accessibility is an area of shared federal, provincial and territorial responsibility, and realizing a truly accessible Canada would require working with our provincial and territorial partners. Stakeholders have echoed the sentiment, stressing the need for collaboration to harmonize accessibility practices across the country and the importance of making sure that the minister responsible for these are required to work with provinces and territories.

Third, the disability community has made it very clear that accessibility is everybody's responsibility. The community asked for increased accountability and transparency on exemptions. Like stakeholders, I agree that exemptions should never provide a loophole from accessibility. This would be counter to the spirit of Bill C-81. That is why I am pleased that Bill C-81 has now been changed in two key areas: first, by placing a three-year limit on all exemptions; and second, by requiring that the rationale for any exemptions be published. We must bolster transparency in the exemptions process, and in doing so we would ensure that the public and the disability community can hold authorities accountable on exemptions.

[Translation]

I believe that stricter provisions regarding accountability and transparency strengthen Bill C-81.

[English]

Finally, I want to make clear that our intent with this bill has always been to hit the ground running on day one. I am pleased to see that an amendment was made to reflect this intent in the bill. It requires all bodies with authority to make regulations under this act to make their first regulations within two years of the act's coming into force. The establishment of these regulations would also trigger the clock for the five-year review of the act by Parliament. This will ensure that the review would begin by 2025. In like manner, there is no end date for accessibility. Accessibility requires consistent, conscious and continual effort. The bill also provides mechanisms that require people with disabilities to be at the table to monitor implementation and support meaningful progress, independent of the government of the day.

● (1540)

[Translation]

We listened to people in the disability community who told us that accessibility in Canada has been long outdated, and I know that we need to take action right away. That is why I want to reiterate that we are strongly committed to ensuring that this bill translates into significant progress in terms of accessibility in a timely manner. We are determined to do what it takes to accomplish that.

These approaches will help to ensure that we are operational as soon as the bill is passed. Encouraging a spirit of collaboration between our government and all people with disabilities was fundamental to informing the development of this bill.

[English]

For too long, Canadians with disabilities have had to fight on their own when it came to advancing their rights. By bringing in new measures to improve accessibility, with a focus on accountability and transparency, we are moving toward a new culture of accessibility. The accessible Canada act would work to put an end to the practice of exclusion. With Bill C-81, we can have a system where our institutions, not individuals, are responsible for enabling change. We can move on from the principle of “nothing about us without us” to simply “nothing without us,” because everything is about us.

As Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, and as a person with a disability, I could not but I know that with this proposed legislation, our goal of building a Canada without barriers, where people with disabilities participate fully and equally in their communities, is within reach.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to ask the minister questions about Bill C-81. First, I appreciate very much the minister bringing this legislation forward. I think it is a very important document and is something we worked very hard on at committee.

However, what I want to focus on is that almost every single stakeholder who came to committee said that Bill C-81 would do nothing. In fact, if the bill is given royal assent, the minister probably will not be able to point to a single thing that will change, because there are no timelines, no standards and no definitive regulations in it.

I would like to bring to the minister's attention one really quick quote from Professor Michael Prince, who said, “There are...areas of concern with this bill... these include the absence of measurable targets with specific deadlines; the permissive language...; the extent of exemptions”.

I would like to ask the minister this: The day Bill C-81 is given royal assent, how will it change anything for Canadians with disabilities?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Mr. Speaker, on day one, Canadians with disabilities will know that there is a system there for them that will proactively address barriers to inclusion. We know, as a matter of fact, that the best way we can develop standards is with the community and with industry and by putting in place the mechanisms that will be established by this law so that we will not have to wait until Canadians are discriminated against before we can help them.

Each standard will be developed in concert with the disability community and through the board of the Canadian accessibility standards development organization, or CASDO. We will decide. We will let the community decide which standards and what the priorities of the community are as we move forward with them to ensure that everyone comes along for this journey.

Government Orders

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in listening to the minister describe her expectations for what is going to happen with Bill C-81, I have to say that it is very disconcerting to know that there is a misunderstanding about the lack of language in the bill that will actually ensure the things she has described. Canadians have waited long enough. There is no language of resilience or legacy within what we have now.

In one presentation after another, the committee heard that the bill needed implementation timelines. One such expert was none other than the Ontario minister who was responsible for shepherding in the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. We heard again and again that we needed implementation timelines. We heard again and again that all the exemptions for obligated organizations needed to be removed. We also heard again and again that we needed enforcement measures and to be looking through a disability lens in all our federal jurisdictions.

The lack of language within this legislation is more than just an oversight. I would like to hear the minister talk about some of the concrete steps that would be taken so that we can hear about some of the language that even today she aspires to have this legislation attain.

• (1545)

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Mr. Speaker, with the amendments brought forth at committee, the obligated entities would have to create their first set of regulations within two years. Thus, the CRTC, the CTA and the accessibility commissioner would have to put forth their first set of regulations within two years. Out of necessity, quite frankly, this means that these organizations would have to be up and running. That first regulation being created would trigger the five-year review timeline in the act.

There definitely would be timelines. We are looking at timelines to begin. This is a journey. We cannot put an end to this.

Let me give my colleagues an example of how the life of a Canadian with a disability would change because of this. Right now, as someone who is legally blind, I walk into a bank, and I cannot access an ATM. What do I do? What are my options? I have to file a complaint with the Human Rights Commission. I file that complaint. I say that this particular ATM is not accessible. Two years from now, someone may tell me, “You are right. That wasn't accessible. You were discriminated against”, and order that this one ATM in that one bank be changed.

With this new regime we would be setting up, the accessibility commissioner would set up a standard for ATMs so that every ATM and every bank in this country would be accessible. We would not be relying on the individual to fight these fights alone. It is our system that we are acknowledging is broken, not the people.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for her speech and her contributions to this bill, and certainly for bringing it forth to the House after it was finally tabled, about three years too late, at the end of the spring session.

As we look down the road, after the bill receives royal assent, we know that nothing will change on day one. We now know that within two years, the Liberals would commit to a single regulation. It could

be with respect to the ATMs the minister has been talking about. Maybe ATMs would have different regulations for accessibility by then. At that point, there would be a five-year trigger on a review, meaning that it could be seven years before a regulation actually hit the books in a specific market sector that had been outlined.

Can the minister please outline this for Canadians? If she says that it has been too long, how is it acceptable that they would have to wait another seven years?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Mr. Speaker, I am very happy that we took the time we did to consult with Canadians, particularly those with disabilities, on what their accessible Canada would look like to them. I will not apologize for the efforts we took to do a nationwide consultation to ensure that the voices of these Canadians, who have never been heard before on these issues, were heard and were heard to the fullest extent possible.

I can assure the member opposite that we are committed to hitting the ground running with respect to the creation of these standards and organizations. We know that there are existing standards that will be easy to adopt, but I am not going to compromise on ensuring that the voices of Canadians with disabilities continue to be heard through these processes and that they continue to have places at our tables as we move forward with the creation of standards. If it takes a year or two to get this started, it will be worth it.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister will know that I was very pleased and excited when the no-barriers bill came forward, but I remain disappointed that despite over 200 amendments being submitted, and over 75 being passed, those amendments came primarily from government members of the committee. We would still have no unified complaints bureau. We would have no unified standards bureau. We would not have a backstop. By that I mean that the bill, as constructed, would give cabinet permission to appoint a minister to be in charge of the act, but it would not say that this must happen. Of course, the government cannot compel the Governor in Council to do anything in a bill, but it could say that if there was no appointment, there would be a de facto appointment to another minister so that there would never be a gap. Therefore, I am concerned that the bill does not begin to meet our early expectations. I do not doubt the minister's good intentions, but I am very disappointed.

I know that we do not usually do this in this place, but I wonder if we could perhaps consider encouraging the Senate to identify, from the government side, what amendments the minister could live with when it comes back to this place.

• (1550)

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question and her passion on issues related to people with disabilities.

Government Orders

We built the system contained in Bill C-81 on the existing system. This system was not drawn up on a whiteboard. We have existing regulators. We are trying to be efficient. We have expertise within government organizations. We have complicated regulatory frameworks within the CRTC and the CTA. We have a Canadian Human Rights Commission that is very well respected and that does very good work. Building on those existing entities, we had to fill in the gaps. We knew that there were areas within federal jurisdiction that were not covered, so we would create the position of the accessibility commissioner.

We would enshrine in this law, and we would have agreements between these organizations, that there would be no wrong door. Wherever people went to state their concern or file a complaint, they would be pointed in the right direction. Canadians can be assured of this.

[*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 Drummond, Agriculture and Agri-Food; the hon. member for Vancouver East, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; and the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, Public Safety.

[*English*]

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly an honour to rise today on a subject that is incredibly important to Canadians and that is certainly important to me as a member of Parliament and as the son of someone who was disabled in a car accident in 1996.

As we look across our country, we know that there is a broad set of regulations that govern accessibility, that govern improving the lives of persons who are living with disabilities. When Canadians heard that the Liberal government was going to introduce a bill within six months of taking power in 2015, they were excited, because this was not just any bill; this bill was the accessibility bill.

Here we are, three years later, and we are debating the bill. It was actually introduced about two and a half years after the government took office. Liberals say that they consulted and are not going to apologize for that consultation. I agree, in some sense, that it is actually better to do things right and do them slowly rather than rush and do them wrong.

However, the reality is that it has been two and a half to three years at this point. They consulted, we were told, across the country with stakeholders. After that entire process, when the bill was finally brought forward, there were still 260 amendments moved at committee. Those amendments were not just concocted in some partisan backroom office where they come up with amendments to slow things down. They were actually brought forward by stakeholders who had apparently been consulted the entire time.

When those amendments were actually brought forward, it was not the New Democratic amendments that were adopted by the committee. It was not the Green Party amendments that were adopted by the committee, when the member who does not sit on the committee showed up and was able to actually contribute, which I thought was very meaningful to the process. It was not the

amendments brought forward by the Conservative Party that were adopted, even though many of these were the same amendments.

The amendments that were adopted, almost 100% of them, were brought forward by the Liberal members. When I heard the minister talk about co-operation, I remembered that there was a similar pitch in the speech when debate on the subject was launched. That co-operation never came. In fact, we had the opportunity to speak over the phone. I think we had a couple of quick chats in the hallways of Parliament, but we were not actually given the opportunity to contribute. When it came down to it, it was about partisanship. It was not about helping Canadians when it came to the committee.

These amendments were not partisan amendments. They were things like putting a timeline on when to report back or putting a timeline on when we were going to achieve measurables so that Canadians could understand how this accessibility bill would actually help them. Some of the amendments put specific regulations or specific timelines for reporting back on specific regulations. These regulations were designed to help Canadians, perhaps with hearing impairments, visual impairments, other physical impairments or perhaps cognitive impairments of some kind.

There was no co-operation from the Liberal government on this bill. As a result, this bill is not perfect. I would venture to say that it is not great. It is a first step towards recognizing that we need to do better for persons with disabilities.

I have to say that the one piece of co-operation this minister actually managed to achieve was co-operation among the Green Party, the New Democratic Party, and the Conservative Party of Canada, and that should be recognized, because that is a job well done.

We know that when this receives royal assent, nothing will change from day one, except that there will be a huge price tag and 250 new employees for the Government of Canada. We know that new office space will be found. We know that the office space, hopefully, will be either 100% accessible or as accessible as possible. We also know that within two years, there will be a single regulation adopted by Canadians. All of this will be for a price tag in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

• (1555)

When I talk to stakeholders across the country, they tell me that if we are going to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on them, and they want us to do that because they need it, they want to see something for that money. They would like to see a more accessible environment in the sectors that matter, whether in airlines, government services offices, Service Canada or even these Parliament buildings. They want to see the effect of those dollars spent. It is incredible that the accountability of this bill became the thing that actually stopped co-operation.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[English]***WAYS AND MEANS**

NOTICE OF MOTION

When we asked the minister or the minister's designated staff members whether it was at an information panel in the Wellington building or at committee, we were stonewalled. We asked questions like whether they recommended that the minister put timetables on this legislation. They responded that this was confidential between the minister and his staff. I do not understand what is being withheld, because I think we all have the same goals at hand. Those goals are to help Canadians living with disabilities.

We do a lot for people around the world who are going through very difficult times. What I want to see, and what Canadians would like to see, is for the Government of Canada to take care of those who are most vulnerable in our society, those people living with disabilities. Unfortunately, the minister and the Liberal Party did not listen. They did not even listen to their own legislation. They did not listen to their own throne speech, in which they said that each member of the House would be respected and that partisanship games would not be played in committee. However, we have seen that happen time and again.

When groups and stakeholders from across the country came forward and asked us to do something about the exemptions, not to leave these massive holes in the legislation, the real result was no change. The result was “No, we're not going to listen”. The result was “We'll come up with regulations later on”. The result is that nothing is going to change upon royal assent.

As we move forward on this subject, consultation certainly needs to continue. The minister is actually correct about that. Consultation cannot stop. The barriers that we see in places throughout our society will continue to be there. They will be forever changing, but that does not mean that we do not create a starting point, a line from which we can measure going forward. Unfortunately, this accessibility bill as it stands is literally just the paper. It does not make any of those changes or create those lines or measurements so we can measure against them going forward.

We tried at committee to amend the bill. When I say “we”, I think I speak for the entire opposition. This was such important legislation, affecting so many people, that we needed to ensure we got it right. When we asked for a timeline to come back so we could really monitor and measure what was happening, the answer was no. The result of that is that not even future governments will be held to account on the legislation. There is, unfortunately, a hole the government could drive a bus through that would leave it by the wayside.

•(1600)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte will have 11 minutes and 15 seconds when the House next considers this matter. I thank him for his willingness to allow me to go on with other matters.

It being 4:02 p.m., pursuant to order made Thursday, November 8, I now invite the hon. Minister of Finance to make a statement.

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I wish to table a notice of ways to amend the Income Tax Act, the Income Tax Act regulations and explanatory notes.

I ask that an order of the day be designated for consideration of the motion.

* * *

FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, three years ago, Canadians made a choice. They chose to turn their backs on the failed austerity policies of the past, policies that produced stubborn unemployment and the worst decade of growth since the Great Depression. Instead, they embraced a more confident, optimistic and ambitious approach, one that would invest in Canadians again and in the things that mattered most to them, good, well-paying jobs, more help for hard-working families and an economy that would offer every Canadian a real and fair chance at success.

In the years since, we have delivered real progress to the middle class and for people working hard to join the middle class.

We started by asking the wealthiest to pay a little more so that we could lower taxes for the middle class. We introduced the Canada child benefit to help families with the high cost of raising kids. These two measures alone have made a tremendous difference in the lives of Canadian families.

[Translation]

Next year, middle-class families of four will get about \$2,000 more each year to invest in the things their families need, whether it is nutritious food or new winter boots for growing kids. The Canada child benefit means that, today, about 300,000 Canadian children no longer live below the poverty line.

To ensure that more Canadians have a safe and affordable home, we introduced the first ever national housing strategy. These investments will remove more than half a million households from housing need and help cut chronic homelessness in half.

To help Canadians have more confidence in their future, we strengthened the Canada pension plan. Younger Canadians can now be certain that more retirement income will be there for them when it is their turn to retire.

For our seniors, we have increased the guaranteed income supplement top-up, thereby improving the financial security of close to 900,000 seniors. We have also reversed the Conservatives' move to raise the eligibility age for old age security and the guaranteed income supplement.

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All of these policies were specific promises we made. They are now promises kept.

• (1605)

[*English*]

We made these investments because they were the right thing to do for Canadians, for new jobs, better wages and a stronger economy.

As we are seeing, when we invest in Canadians, when we give them the tools they need to succeed, Canadians combine it with their own hard work and deliver some of the best economic results we have seen in a generation.

Today, Canada's economy is strong and growing. At 3%, Canada had the strongest economic growth of all the Group of Seven countries last year, and will remain among the fastest growing economies this year and next.

Our plan is working because Canadians are working. Our definition of a strong economy is one that provides real results for people. That means jobs, good, well-paying, middle-class jobs, jobs that one can raise a family and build a future on.

[*Translation*]

In the last three years, hard-working Canadians have created more than 550,000 new full-time jobs, pushing the unemployment rate to the lowest level we have seen in the past 40 years.

Canadians are also earning more. For the average Canadian worker, wages are growing faster than inflation. If current trends continue, this year will be the strongest year of wage growth in close to a decade. These are positive results all around. They prove that when we invest in Canadians, Canadians grow the economy for everyone.

We know that there is more work to be done. As the Prime Minister would say, we can always do better. However, Canadians should be happy with and proud of the work they have done to create jobs and kickstart the economy.

Every responsible manager knows that a good plan must have enough room to respond to inevitable changes in circumstances. Canada has had to deal with a new administration in the United States. This situation posed some interesting challenges, if I can put it that way. One of the most important things we have accomplished since the previous fall's economic statement is the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

• (1610)

[*English*]

This was important for the millions of Canadians whose jobs relied on North American trade and also important for Canadian businesses who told us time and again that the most meaningful thing we could do to ensure stability and confidence in Canada's economy would be to successfully renegotiate NAFTA. That is exactly what we did. We have preserved access to our most important market and have provided certainty for the millions of Canadians whose jobs depend on it.

I want to take a moment here to thank Canadians, from all walks of life and all political persuasions, who put differences aside to stand up for our country. To business and labour leaders, members on all sides of the House, mayors from some of Canada's biggest cities and smallest towns, local entrepreneurs and artists from all across our great country, on behalf of the Prime Minister and my colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, we thank them. We were able to stand our ground because we stood on their shoulders.

However, just because we share a trade agreement with the United States does not mean we will always agree with its approach. The current administration has moved forward with an aggressive package of tax cuts for large corporations. That is its rights as a sovereign nation. However, some on the right have lobbied us to match those measures. If we were to do that, it would add tens of billions of dollars in new debt. It would do more to worsen income inequality than to improve it. It would make the services that millions of Canadians depend on less affordable.

Lets us be blunt. Managing a federal budget calls for some tough choices—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, order. I remind hon. colleagues that we are going to have equal time for speakers from each party, and we are going to want to hear them all. People may hear things we do not like from other sides. It is normal and entirely appropriate that we not agree in here all the time, but it does not mean we should not be able to behave like adults and listen.

The hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands has intervened many, many times already during the last few minutes. I would ask him to remember the rule against interruption. I am sure if he is not able to sit quietly here, he could sit quietly somewhere else.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that when the members opposite push for an aggressive elimination of the deficit, what they really mean is aggressive cuts in services, cuts that would make life harder for people and for families. That is not what we want for Canada, and it is not what Canadians want for themselves.

[*Translation*]

We choose a different path: one that is targeted, measured and fiscally responsible; one that encourages businesses to invest in growth, and create more good, well-paying jobs for middle-class Canadians; one that makes it clear to businesses that if they have a choice to invest on either side of the border, Canada is the smart and sensible choice. This path ensures that our federal debt-to-GDP ratio continues on a steady downward track.

Routine Proceedings

It is worth remembering that we already have the best balance sheet among our key allies, and that our government has made an absolute commitment to maintaining that competitive advantage in a volatile world.

I will tell you why it is important to get the fundamentals right. As much as we are taking positive actions today to help grow the economy and invest in middle-class jobs, the reality is that there are challenges all around us.

[English]

The challenges range from the uncertainty about the global economy to concerns about lingering trade disputes to the challenges facing the oil and gas sector in Alberta, which is contending today with very low crude oil prices. The market prices are so low compared with international benchmarks. That is why we are matching our words with actions, to ensure that we can achieve greater market access for our resources in the right way.

Let there be no mistake. We could have ignored the concerns of business leaders, decided not to make the investments and the changes that are part of the fall economic statement, and we would have had a lower deficit as a result. To have done so would have been neither a rational response nor a responsible one.

•(1615)

[Translation]

We are choosing, once again, to trust Canadians—the people who put their trust in us. We know that if we give Canadian businesses more opportunities to succeed and grow, they will do just that. One of the greatest opportunities for Canada's economy is connected to the global shift toward clean growth.

In 2016, our government worked with provinces and territories, in consultation with indigenous peoples, to reach Canada's first ever national clean growth and climate action plan. It is a comprehensive plan that invests in public transit, phases out coal power, invests in clean energy, prices pollution and supports energy efficiency across Canada.

[English]

Conservative politicians here in the House and in some provincial capitals want to bury their heads in the sand and ignore what is happening to the climate and to the economy. They want to make pollution free again and let our kids and grandkids deal with the consequences. We are not going to let that happen. Pollution was free, so we had too much of it. This is the root of the problem, and we are going to fix it.

After three years of strong action, Canada is now poised to lead and succeed in the global clean growth economy, an opportunity that is estimated to be worth \$26 trillion in the next dozen years. To help get us there, we are announcing our intention to create an advisory council on climate action that would give our government expert advice on how we can further reduce pollution and encourage economic growth in two crucial areas: the transportation sector and the building sector.

We intend to name two Canadian clean growth leaders, Steven Guilbeault and Tamara Vrooman, to help lead that work.

It is not enough to simply clean up the economy. We need to make a cleaner economy more affordable to middle-class Canadians. That is why our government will not keep any of the revenues from pricing pollution. We will return every single penny to provinces and territories where we collect it, and 80% of Canadian families will be better off as a result.

Our government is confident that if we give Canadian businesses more opportunities to succeed and grow they will meet and exceed all expectations.

To encourage businesses to invest in their own growth and create more good, well-paying jobs, our government proposes to allow businesses to immediately write-off for tax purposes the full cost of machinery and equipment used in the manufacturing and processing of goods.

We will also allow specified clean energy equipment to be eligible for an immediate write-off of the full cost. This will help achieve climate goals and boost Canada's global competitiveness.

In response to requests from the business community, we are also introducing a new accelerated investment incentive, an accelerated capital cost allowance for businesses of all sizes and across all sectors of the economy. This incentive will encourage more businesses to invest in assets that will drive business growth over the long term, setting the stage for more good middle-class jobs across our country.

•(1620)

[Translation]

Our government is also setting an ambitious agenda to make Canada the most globally connected economy in the world. We are already well on our way. With the successful conclusion of the new NAFTA, as well as the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, we now have comprehensive free trade agreements with countries representing two-thirds of the world's GDP.

Canada is now the only G7 country to have free trade agreements with all other G7 countries.

We want to give Canadian businesses more opportunities to grow, succeed and create good, well-paying jobs. That is why we are launching an export diversification strategy, to directly support Canadian businesses to grow their overseas sales by 50% by 2025.

[English]

Here at home we are going to work with our provincial and territorial partners to remove barriers to internal trade within Canada. Specifically, we will work to find ways to ensure that businesses can transport goods more easily, to harmonize food regulations and inspections, to align regulations in the construction sector and to facilitate greater trade in alcohol.

Routine Proceedings

We will also take steps to modernize regulations so that it is easier for Canadian businesses to grow, and we will do that in ways that continue to protect Canadians' health and safety as well as that of the environment.

We intend to move forward with additional investments that will help Canadian innovators add value, succeed and grow.

[*Translation*]

Because our economy is doing well, we also have the fiscal room to continue to follow through on the commitments we made to Canadians.

We know that the best solutions for Canada's big challenges come from Canadians themselves. When charities, non-profit and social enterprises have access to capital and investment, they can innovate and go further than government can do alone. That is exactly what we are doing today by launching a new social finance fund.

[*English*]

We have also been working with local residents to reform the Nutrition North Canada program so that this program ensures better access to affordable, nutritious traditional food and is transparent, effective and accountable to northerners and other Canadians.

[*Translation*]

A key part of Canada's digital and creative advantage is our francophone culture. The protection and promotion of that culture unlocks enormous economic opportunity, not just in Canada but around the world. That is why we are helping to create a new francophone digital platform, in partnership with TV5MONDE public broadcasters.

[*English*]

To protect the vital role that independent news media play in our democracy and in our communities, we will be introducing measures to help support journalism in Canada.

To help sustain Canada's wild fish stocks and the communities that rely on them, we will invest in efforts to rebuild fish stocks. We will also introduce two new funds: a British Columbia salmon restoration and innovation fund and a Quebec fisheries fund to support the fish and seafood sectors in those two provinces.

What these and the other measures in the fall economic statement all have in common is this. They are all part of our government's plan to follow through on the commitments we made to Canadians to strengthen and grow the middle class and to offer real help to people working hard to join it; to grow the economy and invest in the middle class; and to give Canadians the help they need to succeed, by making smart investments to grow our economy for the long term, while we bring the books back toward balance.

That is what Canadians expect of us. That is what we promised, and that is exactly what we are doing.

• (1625)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister has demonstrated that he can do two things at one time. He can give a speech while adding almost a million dollars to our national debt, in the same half-hour. I congratulate the minister, and we know that Canadians will get the bill for that new debt.

Our government has told us, under the leadership of this Prime Minister, that budgets balance themselves. He predicted that this self-balancing budget would manifest in the year 2019, barely a month from today.

Today, the finance minister has presented a fiscal update, in which the deficit is three times the size the Liberal Party promised in the last election and in which the deficit will not only be in place next year, when it was promised to be gone, it will actually be bigger than it is right now. In fact, this economic update reports that the deficits for the next five years will all be larger than the Liberals projected just six months ago in the 2018 budget.

None of us on this side is surprised that the finance minister and the Prime Minister failed to take responsibility for these promise-shattering deficits. Like most Canadians, we have come to accept that these Liberals never take responsibility for anything, but what is startling about this particular statement is that they just go on doing more and more damage to the fiscal situation of this country, without any concern or hesitation.

What we learned in this document that we did not already know is that not only do the Liberals break their promise, not only will they fail to balance the budget next year as they said, but they now admit that under their plan the budget will never be balanced. There is no time period into the future when they are even committing to returning to a situation where the debt stops growing. That is effectively the election platform they are running on today, that there will be deficits forever and that there could never be an occasion where the government would live within its means.

These two gentlemen of great privilege have inherited enormous fortune: balanced budgets from the previous government; booming U.S. and world economies; a roaring housing sector in Vancouver and Toronto, which has poured more revenue into government coffers; record low interest rates, which make debt more affordable temporarily. All of these factors are out of the government's control but have, through the goddess Fortuna, rained money on the current government, \$20 billion of additional revenue, I am pleased to report to the House.

The Prime Minister took that \$20 billion and did the responsible thing. He put it against our national debt. He saved it up for a rainy day. He reinforced our foundation against forthcoming storms. I am kidding. He blew every single penny of it, and it was not enough. On top of that windfall, he had to spend \$20 billion more.

Routine Proceedings

We are told to take comfort in the debt-to-GDP ratio. All ratios have numerators and denominators. With the Prime Minister lecturing us all about the need to teach us all in the House, as his pupils, he should actually know that. The reality is that the only way for that debt-to-GDP ratio to decline is if inflation and GDP are constantly going up. I just pointed to the factors that the government admits have led to the windfall of revenue before us. That can only continue as long as the world factors, which are out of the government's control, continue on at this pace.

● (1630)

In other words, if a crisis of any kind, another international financial recession, a massive problem with international security, a natural disaster or any other such kind of difficulty, led to the compression of the denominator, then we would face a crisis in the nation's finances. In that crisis, the Liberal government, if it were to keep its promise, something that none of us believe it would ever consider doing, would then be in a position where it would have to raise taxes or cut spending at a time when the economy needs the opposite. Therefore, the Liberals are putting our future in a reckless state of danger by spending our tomorrow on their today.

The second consequence of these growing deficits is this. When governments spend more than they have, they compete for scarce goods and services, which drives up inflation, making the cost of living more and more expensive. We have seen inflation reach nearly 3%, the upper end of the Bank of Canada's range of acceptable levels of consumer price index increases. That is in part, I believe, because the current government is overspending, increasing demand with unnecessary government spending, pouring money into the purchase of the same goods and services that Canadians have to compete for.

Furthermore, when governments borrow, they have to sell bonds. When those bondholders purchase the bond, they get interest in return for it. Why would they lend money to a Canadian homeowner for 2.5% when a rapidly borrowing government will give them 2.75% or 3%? The answer is they would not. That is the reality of the credit markets. When governments borrow, they compete with Canadian consumers and homeowners and drive up the cost of interest on those same people. In other words, while Canadians face record household debt, the government's insatiable appetite for debt is actually making that problem worse, not just in the future but here in the present.

Speaking of the future, we all know that debt today means higher taxes tomorrow. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has indicated that the cost of borrowing for the Government of Canada will rise by two-thirds, to almost \$40 billion, over the next four to five years. That is almost as much as we transfer to the provinces to fund our entire health care transfer. In today's update, the government admits that the cost of borrowing is going up. For the first half-year, the increase in the borrowing cost has been 14.3%. That is the combined result of growing deficits and higher interest rates. In other words, at this pace, there will be a massive wealth transfer from working-class Canadians, who will pay higher taxes so that wealthy bondholders and bankers can collect more interest. Even socialist economists recognize that interest on national debt represents a wealth transfer from the working class to the wealthy, because those who own bonds are those who can afford to buy them. One cannot lend money if one does not have money. Therefore, those with money benefit when

governments go out and borrow. Instead of the government favouring the have-nots, it once again favours the have-yachts, something we have come to expect from it for a very long time.

We were told that this economic update was going to respond to the attempt by the U.S. President to take our money, business and jobs. So far, the Prime Minister has been prepared to help the President in all of those objectives. His carbon tax, his decision to block pipelines and his massive regulatory state that prevents businesses from functioning here in Canada have driven money out of our country. Canadian investment in the U.S. is up two-thirds and U.S. investment in Canada is down by half, and when money leaves, jobs leave.

● (1635)

A senior at the Business Council of Canada says that the result of this imbalance could lead to half a million jobs lost in this country. What is the government's response to that? Liberals tell us they are going to be bringing forward something called the centre for regulatory innovation. I think that for most people who have dealt with the red tape the government has put forward, the last thing they want to see is more regulatory innovation because so far, that regulatory innovation has meant blocking the northern gateway pipeline. They came up with innovative ways to make it impossible for Trans Canada to build the energy east pipeline. Of course, their most innovative stroke of genius has been to drive Kinder Morgan out of this country by giving them \$4 billion of Canadian tax money in order to buy a 65-year-old pipeline that we already had, money that the Texas oil company is now using to build pipelines in the United States of America.

When the Prime Minister took office, three of the world's most respected pipeline companies were ready to put shovels in the ground. Kinder Morgan was going to build Trans Mountain. Enbridge was going to build northern gateway and Trans Canada was going to build energy east. They had the financial commitments, the applications in and they were ready to go and all three of those companies have now left. What does the government offer? A centre for regulatory innovation.

However, that is not all. I should give the Liberals credit for another very exciting announcement they have made in regard to regulation. They are going to make the building code available to all Canadians for free and just in time for Christmas. That is if Canada Post is not on strike and unable to deliver the building code to those Canadians who are anxiously waiting to receive it.

That is the plan that the Liberals have to unwind the massive regulatory obstacles that have driven our oil, our money, our businesses and our jobs right into the arms of Donald Trump and nothing in this announcement today will reverse that direction. In fact, the government has backed down on NAFTA, giving President Trump everything he asked for and getting nothing in return that we did not already have.

Routine Proceedings

We on this side of the House will stand up for the common sense of the common people, the people who understand that budgets do not balance themselves because those people, unlike our leader, have actually had to balance a household budget. A future Conservative government would recognize that we cannot spend what we do not have and we cannot borrow our way out of debt.

I conclude today by challenging the government. I know how painful it is for the Liberals to hear the truth, the painful truth from which they have for so long tried to turn away their eyes. Unfortunately, they have to face up to the fact that they shattered their promise to balance the budget next year, they have built up massive new debt not only for future generations, but for present-day Canadians, the cost of government is driving up the cost of living and that is leading to a serious crunch on the backs of everyday Canadians, Canadians who know what it is like to live within their means.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

This is why a Conservative government will make sure that the budget will be balanced in the medium term, to deal with the massive deficits accumulated by the Liberal government and previous governments.

The Conservatives recognize that Canadians work hard for their money and they must balance their own budgets. As a government, we will help them and will not make things harder for them, like the current government is doing.

As the official opposition, we are calling on the government to meet Canadians' demands, tell them how the budget will be balanced, create a plan to do so, and lower taxes so that Canadians can keep the money they earned.

[*English*]

We will put forward a government in the future that will stand with those who know how to balance a budget, because they do so in their own households and they expect the very same of the Government of Canada. Under a Conservative government, they will get no less.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start out by saying how very disappointed I am in the mini budget that the Minister of Finance just presented.

[*English*]

I would like to start by saying I am startled at how rapidly the government has fallen completely out of touch with the needs of Canadians. The verdicts are already coming in. Kevin Page, the former parliamentary budget officer, who is respected by all Canadians, says that “We're deficit-financing the corporate sector”. That is just one of the reactions to this mini budget.

There is nothing in the mini budget that addresses the profoundly unequal tax system that we have in place. Real corporate tax rates are estimated to be less than 10%. Nothing addresses that. Nothing addresses the web giants and the fact that they are simply allowed to do business in Canada and get off scot-free. There is nothing that addresses some of the priorities that Jagmeet Singh, I, and the

member for Sherbrooke presented just a few days ago to the finance minister.

If the Liberals are saying that they want to see Jagmeet Singh in the House of Commons, all they have to do is call a by-election. That is what the people of Burnaby South are asking for.

There is nothing in this mini budget that deals with pharmacare and the Canadians who are struggling with the lack of pharmacare and the businesses that are having to pay billions of dollars a year to finance pharmacare. There is nothing in this mini budget that deals with the profound housing crisis we are seeing in our country. I will give a few examples later on, but the reality is that housing is in crisis. There is a shortage of affordable housing in this country, but this mini budget does nothing to address it. There is nothing that addresses the profound inequalities facing indigenous children, who are often going to schools that are financed up to \$10,000 less per pupil, per year than schools for other Canadian children. Nothing in the budget addresses that.

However, there are gifts. There is a billion dollars' worth of gifts to Bay Street. Unbelievably, given the times we live in and the record levels of family debt Canadians are experiencing—the worst family debt crisis in the industrialized world—it is incredible that in the mini budget papers just circulated, there are big tax incentives to buy things like plush corporate jets and limousines. I confirmed this with the ministry of finance officials. Unbelievably, if one buys a corporate jet, one would get a more accelerated tax write-off. If one buys a plush limousine, according to the Liberal government, one would get an accelerated write-off. The question I have for the finance minister that I hope he will answer over the next few days is why is he acting like Santa Claus to Bay Street and like Scrooge to everyone else in this country?

For regular Canadians, they see nothing in this mini budget, and I am talking about people like Jim who is right outside the House of Commons. Any Liberal member can go down the street and see him. Every day he is on the bridge between the Château Laurier and the East Block. He begs for money, because there is no pharmacare in this country. His medication costs him about \$500 a month. He cannot work and so he has to beg, because he does not want to burden his children, and there is no pharmacare for him. There is nothing in this mini budget that addresses the challenges Jim faces.

There is nothing in this mini budget that in any way addresses the challenges that Heather in my riding faces. Heather has a child, a daughter, and lives with both her daughter and her mother in a one-bedroom apartment while rents keep going up. She works for minimum wage and does not know how much longer she can keep the apartment. If she loses her apartment, she does not know where she and her family will go. There is nothing in this mini budget that addresses that housing crisis in this country.

Routine Proceedings

There is nothing in this mini budget that helps John, a senior who is homeless now, because with the rising rents, his pension just did not keep up. For a time he lived with a friend, and when that did not work out, he ended up on the street. There is nothing in this mini budget that addresses the challenges he is facing. He is not facing a challenge with lack of access to corporate jets and limousines. He is facing the challenges that many people in Canada are facing, and this out-of-touch government has done nothing to respond to his needs and concerns.

• (1645)

There is nothing in this mini budget that addresses the concerns of Paul, a local businessperson. He wants to compete but has two problems. He is paying for a medical plan, a drug plan, for his employees, because he wants to treat them well. He hopes for universal pharmacare in this country, because it would make a difference to his bottom line. He also says that it is very difficult to get workers now because of the lack of affordable housing. He says that if he wants to have workers, they need to have access to housing. However, nothing in this mini budget responds to his needs.

As well, nothing in this mini budget responds to the needs of Rajinder and Rah, who are among the many Canadian families experiencing the record level of family debt, the worst in our history and worst in the industrialized world, caused by Liberal policies.

Nothing in this mini budget addresses any of the needs of the people I have just mentioned. Therefore, we say in this corner of the House that it is time to put the private jets and the limousines aside and time for a government that prioritizes, in its budgets and in the House of Commons, the people of this country.

[*Translation*]

That is our priority, but the government seems to have totally different priorities.

Réjeanne is a person with a disability who sometimes experiences homelessness. Last year, she told me she needs a government that meets her needs. She is on medication and has housing issues, but nothing in this mini-budget addresses those needs.

Then, there is Ronda. Her two children go to school in an indigenous community so she has to live with the fact that her two children receive far fewer services than other students. The government spends about \$10,000 less on them on average. She would like her children to have a better future than she did, but she has a hard time with the federal government's failure to provide adequate funding for schools. Nothing in the speech we just heard suggests that the government intends to meet those needs.

All of these people seem to have been forgotten. In contrast, people on Bay Street can now buy cheaper planes because taxpayers will be subsidizing that. They can even buy limousines because apparently the Liberal government again wants to use taxpayers' money to subsidize limousine purchases.

The priority should have been to create a fair tax system, since our system is deeply flawed. While about \$20 billion is invested every year in offshore tax havens, the government just added another \$5 billion in tax loopholes for next year. We in the NDP believe that investments should stay at home.

After having to fight the Conservatives for two years and the Liberals for three years, the Parliamentary Budget Officer finally got the information he needed from the Canada Revenue Agency to begin a study next spring. The Parliamentary Budget Officer's first study shows the discrepancy between the amount of corporate taxes that should be collected and how much is actually coming in.

A fair tax system is a priority for us, because that would allow us to invest in people and balance the budget.

• (1650)

Large corporations, which, since the Second World War, have been paying about 50% of all taxes in Canada, will now pay only 20% of the federal government's revenues, based on the speech we just heard. This shows how important it is to have a fair tax system. This economic statement does absolutely nothing to change that.

[*English*]

What should this mini budget have contained? We would have applauded the finance minister if he had stood up and announced a universal single-payer pharmacare plan for all Canadians and that he was going to make sure that all businesses would benefit as a result, because that would help the competitiveness of Canadian businesses. Our businesses are now paying \$6 billion for pharmacare.

Tommy Douglas fought in the House of Commons for medicare. Medicare was not just good for every Canadian, but also for Canadian businesses. The average advantage per employee, per year is \$3,000 for a Canadian business compared with an American business. Each employee that a Canadian business hires because of our universal medicare system has a \$3,000 advantage. American companies have to pay into those plans; Canadian companies do not.

Imagine if the finance minister had stood and announced universal single-payer pharmacare. We all would have applauded, as the business community would have also.

Routine Proceedings

This mini budget should have contained an announcement that the government would now take seriously the affordable housing crisis we face in this country. If the finance minister had stood up and said the government was going to put money into affordable housing instead of \$5 billion into a variety of tax incentives that can go, unbelievably, for plush corporate jets and limousines, as if those were a priority, we would have applauded. We would have applauded if he had stood up and said the government was going to put \$3 billion to building affordable housing, as was done after the Second World War. Within 30 months, 300,000 housing units were built across this country because governments at that time understood the importance of having a roof over every single Canadian's head. The finance minister should have stood up and announced an emergency housing plan right across this country to make sure that all Canadians have a roof over their head as soon as possible. He should have said that was what the government was going to do. He should have said that was the government's priority. If he had said that, we all would have applauded, but he did not.

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

He could have demonstrated an interest in green energy. We know that it will take a lot more than an advisory panel on climate change to shift Canada toward green energy and the new economy.

Even if Jagmeet Singh influenced the minister with regard to one of these criteria, he should have announced a real plan to implement green energy and ensure a transition toward green energy in Canada. Not only would that have been good for Canadians and for combatting climate change, but it also would have stimulated the economy. The countries that are investing in green energy are the countries that are currently benefiting from it, and Canada is doing virtually nothing.

The finance minister also could have announced that the government would put an end to the inequalities that exist in indigenous communities with regard to funding for education and ensured that every indigenous child in Canada receives the best possible education, the same education and the same funding for education as every other Canadian. He could have announced that, but he did not.

The basic income pilot project in Ontario was cancelled by a Conservative government that seems to want to attack all the programs that really help people. The finance minister could have announced that the government would fund the last year of the study on basic income so that we would know the results of the study. He could have done that, but he did not. That is the problem.

In his speech, the minister spoke about private planes and limousines and he addressed the need for major corporations to have greater access to these items. However, he forgot about ordinary Canadians, and yet they are the ones who should always be our priority.

[*English*]

I mentioned earlier Tommy Douglas, who fought lobbyists. Lobbyists were always saying not to put in place medicare because they really wanted that money for themselves. However, Tommy Douglas stuck with it. He pushed and pushed, and today we are all

proud of his accomplishments. This was why Canadians, just a few short years ago when they had the chance to vote on the greatest Canadian of all, chose Tommy Douglas as the greatest Canadian. He always kept in mind people. He always kept in mind the needs of real people.

Jagmeet Singh is like that. He grew up in an environment where he had to push to succeed. He lived with racism and he had to take over when his father fell sick. He had to ensure his family was taken care of. He was not born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He had to work hard for what he accomplished.

That is the story with most Canadians. They push forward. However, most Canadians also occasionally need a government that reflects their interests. They need a government that realizes we need things like universal single-payer pharmacare; that when there is a housing crisis, the federal government responds, it does not give more corporate tax breaks; that when there is huge inequality, as we see with indigenous communities and education systems, the federal government actually steps forward and addresses it. That is what Canadians expect.

We need a plan to bring Canadians out of the worst family debt crisis and the worst housing crisis in our nation's history. We need a government that is actually going to respond to the kinds of needs that are being expressed right across the length and breadth of our vast land, and being expressed very effectively and coherently. However, seemingly, all of those concerns are not listened to by the government.

At the beginning of my speech, I said that it was startling how rapidly the government had fallen out of touch. There is no better evidence of that than this mini budget today, which deals with the kinds of incentives at which most Canadians will be shaking their heads. If we ask Canadians, and I will be asking my constituents, my bosses, when I go back to New Westminster—Burnaby in the next day or so, if they think the priority should be more corporate jets and more limousines for Bay Street, I do not think too many of them will tell me that they should be the priority. However, if I ask them if they think universal single-payer pharmacare, addressing the housing crisis and addressing inequality in indigenous children's education should be priorities, I know they will tell me that they should be.

The government has lost its way. It does not seem to understand what the priorities of people are, and I find that saddening. However, I also think it is a clear message to all of us as Canadians. Since the government has lost its way, has become stale and really is out of touch, it is time for a new government. Next year, in October, Canadians will be able to make that choice and elect Jagmeet Singh as Prime Minister of Canada.

• (1700)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today's statement is somewhere between an economic statement and the Speech from the Throne. It is heavy on the blah-blah-blah, and light on anything tangible. We were treated to many lovely images, fine words and slogans, but that is about it. It is like an Easter egg: it is nice on the outside, but completely hollow on the inside.

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People say that the federal government is out of touch and the Minister of Finance just gave us an excellent example of that. It is out of touch with Quebec, out of touch with Quebecers, disconnected from the real world and unaware of the real needs. The statement is full of rhetoric and utterly meaningless. The needs and challenges remain. The truth is that Ottawa is completely disconnected.

An economic statement is supposed to do three things. First, it should provide an update on the actual state of our finances in terms of problems and solutions.

Second, it should complete the budget, fill the gaps and correct the omissions. There was no shortage of those. The government being out of touch is certainly nothing new.

Third, it should allow for adjustments when the situation has changed and requires realignment.

An economic statement is those three things. It is not complicated, but in this case the government is zero for three.

First, the economic statement does not tell the real story. A few weeks ago, \$2 billion in expenditures magically appeared in the public accounts because the government wrote off a loan to Chrysler in Ontario. It will soon be GM's turn, to the tune of another \$2 billion. Then, the loan to the Muskrat Falls dam of almost \$10 billion will magically appear there as well, since everyone knows that Newfoundland will never be able to repay that debt.

We never see or vote on loans and guarantees, we just pay for them. That does not give us the real story. These three loans alone represent a charge to taxpayers of close to \$15 billion. Quebecers will pay their share but get nothing in return. The government is keeping quiet about this and is therefore not proposing any solutions to the problem. There was not one word about this in the economic statement. There was nothing about going looking for the money where it really is by cutting subsidies for fossil fuels.

It is high time the government honoured the promise made ten years ago to close the tax haven loophole, which has, in fact, become a sinkhole that is swallowing public funds.

The Conservatives are outraged by the deficit. Oddly enough, when they are told that eliminating tax havens and oil subsidies would cut the deficit in half, they no longer protest quite so loudly. Neither does the government.

Today's statement has no substance.

Second, the economic statement should have filled the gaps in the latest budget. Quebec just had an election. Poll after poll invariably concluded that health and education are the priorities, but neither is mentioned in the budget. Transfers have been capped at 3% since last year. However, in Quebec, health care costs and system costs continue to rise. Ottawa is simply reducing its share.

Our nurses, our patients and our health network end up paying the price. Wait lists are growing. When people opt for private care because the public system does not meet their needs, Ottawa threatens to make more cuts, which just makes things worse. Everyone knows this is not sustainable.

Everything I just mentioned about health care could be said about education. Teachers are also exhausted. This sector has the same problems, except education transfers have been capped at 3% for nearly 15 years. Health and education are where Quebecers have a real need. These are the priorities, but this statement made no mention of either. The government seems to be too highfalutin to see the needs and understand the priorities.

Third, an economic statement is meant to allow the government to adapt throughout the year to changing situations. Once again, we all have reason to be disappointed.

I would now like to say a few words about the recent tax cuts made by Donald Trump. I am not bringing that up because it is important. The Parliamentary Budget Officer said that it would not have any impact. I am bringing it up because the Conservatives would have us believe otherwise. Let us be frank. Our corporate tax rates are already competitive.

● (1705)

Here is something no one ever talks about. In the United States, employers pay for medicare. In 2017, that accounted for a mere \$14,900 U.S. per employee. The lack of social safety net in the U.S. is costing them a fortune, so no, we do not have any problems in that regard.

In any case, a race to the bottom approach is not the way to remain globally competitive. We need to develop the sectors in which we are strong. In Quebec that is the clean energy sector. If Ottawa would support our electrification of transportation efforts, we would have clean cars, but the government preferred to spend our money on a pipeline.

The government indicated in the economic statement that it is going to implement a tax credit with regard to the production of clean energy. I am not against that. It could be worthwhile for paper mills and biomass enterprises. However, we need to be aware of one thing. In a number of provinces, private companies produce electricity. If they start generating clean energy, then Ottawa would give them a tax writeoff, and Quebec would have to pay for part of that.

Quebec has Hydro-Québec. Since it is a government-owned corporation, it will not be entitled to the tax credit. If that is all Ottawa does, it will be subsidizing the "bad guys" so they are not quite as bad, and Quebec, a world leader in green energy, is back at square one, without a penny, for doing the right thing. What a great deal. Let's face it, that is an odd way to promote the green economy.

Our high-tech sectors could use some support, but Canada invests very little in business-led research and development. The innovation fund will not help our high-tech companies. Instead, that federal money will just make up for the lack of innovation elsewhere.

As for agriculture, the government signed a new trade agreement that creates another breach in supply management. We were expecting a firm commitment in terms of compensation, as the Prime Minister had promised, but once again, nothing.

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Then there is Davie. Davie did not get anything from the naval strategy, and only a few crumbs after that. Whenever we asked the government when Davie would get a fair share of the contracts, we kept being told, "not now, later". It should be now. That is what an economic statement should look like, but no, once again, Davie suffers. Soon the Liberals will be trying to woo workers before the election, but for now, they get nothing. They are just as predictable as the Conservatives.

There was nothing about how e-commerce is disrupting the economy, either. Nothing for businesses that are competing with Amazon, which does not have to charge sales tax on purchases under \$40. How are our people supposed to compete against a giant with an unfair advantage? Our small businesses are going to take a beating, and Ottawa is not doing anything about it. Obviously, people are asleep at the switch.

Internet giants are another example. They are hurting our media, our artists and our culture, and they are competing unfairly. I applaud the government's initiative to support our media. Well, actually, it announced plans to support our media, but not until the next budget. Press freedom and information quality are essential in a democracy, so I welcome this initiative, but I am not getting too excited. As long as the government refuses to do something about Internet giants and their unfair competitive advantage over our media, it will not solve the problem. If it does not solve the problem, it is part of the problem. Ultimately, every one of us and democracy as a whole will pay the price. The government needs to take meaningful action to support our media.

To sum up, the Bloc Québécois is disappointed. If we were to grade the economic update on looks alone, I would give it a B, but the true yardstick is the measures themselves and whether they will meet people's real needs in terms of health, education, tax fairness, agriculture and support for strong economic sectors. On that score, this economic update is vacuous. The only real measure coming on line right away is accelerated depreciation. Something that minor could have been addressed with a planted question. All the rest is fluff.

• (1710)

We give the government's economic statement an F for failure.

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise to respond to the hon. Minister of Finance's presentation.

I will note that I have never seen a display as rude as the heckling of the Minister of Finance during his speech in this place. I wish that did not happen in this place, because it brings disrepute on us all. I disagreed with much of what the Minister of Finance said, but we owe respect to the officers of this place and to our executive in a government. We are here as members of Parliament to hold the Liberals to account, not to ridicule them as if we were in a school yard.

I apologize for taking a moment to act like a schoolmarm, but I just could not help myself.

To the matter in front of us, I want to say how disappointed I am that in an opportunity to respond to the intergovernmental panel on

climate change report that we must hold global average temperatures to 1.5°, that the document apparently did not cross the Minister of Finance's desk. This is not an issue that can be pigeonholed, where the cabinet can afford to say that the Minister of Environment and Climate Change or the Minister of Natural Resources can worry about whether our children will have a livable planet, because that is just one of those other issues that is less important than its finances.

For every member in this place, particularly to the Prime Minister and his cabinet, no issue comes close to discussing whether this planet will be habitable for human beings in the lifetime of our children. It is a rather important issue and it is completely ignored in this document.

Let us look at what was discussed. We have to be serious about ensuring we change our plan so Canada is not held up as it was recently in the scientific study and earlier referenced in this place. If every country on earth followed Canada's plans for climate, we would not hold to 1.5° and we would be in the worst category there is. We would be in with China and Russia, taking this planet to 5.1°, which is a level of danger that can only be described as an existential threat to the survival of humanity on this planet. That means it is important.

Let me put it very clearly. Climate change is not an environmental issue. Climate change is a security threat that eclipses all of the terrorists one could find on the planet. It is a security threat that should awaken in every responsible member in the House a determination to rise up and meet that challenge.

I am convinced Canadians from coast to coast want to be given the tools. They want to know what they can do. We should ask the Rotary clubs, the Lions clubs, the church groups, every volunteer organization in our country what they would like to do. If they want to start installing solar panels, we could help them. If they want to plant trees everywhere, we could help them with that. If they want young people to know what they can do so they to make a difference and to protect their future, we could be there for them. We need leadership.

We have to look at the advice we have had from serious studies of how we get to a place where we have security for our future, a planet that will not only sustain life but will allow us to thrive. We have had the benefit of a very hospitable planet ever since human beings first emerged as homo sapiens and left our monkey cousins behind. We have had the benefit of a very beneficial climate. We are at risk of losing it for good.

What would we do if we wanted to put ourselves on that good path? We know that because work has been done. The advice of the deep decarbonization project, which I will refer to quickly, is to first get all fossil fuels out of electricity, decarbonize our electricity grid, improve our east-west electricity grid so there is good connectivity for British Columbia to sell to Alberta, for Quebec to sell to all of the Maritimes and so on. The east-west grid needs work.

Then we want to get all the fossil fuels out of it and ensure we are able to go off fossil electricity entirely. That does not mean Alberta's plan of going off coal and going to fracked natural gas. That does not do it. It is about the same amount of greenhouse gas. Therefore, we do all of that and then we get rid of the internal combustion engine and go to electric vehicles. Then we ensure that every single building in the country is retrofitted to the highest energy efficiency standards, which will employ, according to the trade unions I have talked to about this, four million Canadians. That means jobs for more workers than we actually have needing jobs.

• (1715)

We take this apart and compare it to this document. What do we have on the priorities for removing barriers to trade within Canada? We have nothing on the barriers to selling electricity.

These are the four high profile areas identified by the government in a time of climate crisis. These are the four areas where there will be an opportunity to improve internal conduct of trade. It is going to improve the transporting of goods in the trucking industry. It is going to harmonize food regulations. It is going to align regulations in the construction sector. It is going to facilitate greater trade in alcohol between the provinces and territories across Canada.

I am not against any of those things. However, where is the east-west electricity grid anywhere in this discussion? Where is there any awareness of what needs to be done, how it could stimulate our economy, how it would create jobs and how it would protect our future?

As I look—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order, please. I want to remind the hon. members that someone is speaking and normally we try to listen when someone speaks. It is parliamentary procedure. It is nice to hear everyone getting along and talking, but it is starting to get a little loud and I am having a hard time hearing the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the courtesy very much, so my friends in this place can hear me.

The east-west electricity grid is a very important part of putting together what we need to do to address the climate crisis. When I talk to groups in my riding, I say this to them. If they had a jigsaw puzzle with all the pieces on a table in front of them, but they had lost the lid of the box, it would be very hard to solve the puzzle. However, if they paint the top of the box, it looks like this: get carbon fuels out of electricity; move our vehicle fleet to electric vehicles; do fuel switching for everything else, tractors, fishing boats, forest equipment using biodiesel; ensure all our buildings are as energy efficient as possible; and stop exploring and developing any more fossil fuels than the level we have now and use it domestically instead of trying to put it in pipelines to ship it to places that are not interested.

Instead, there is a pipeline reference in this document. Page 93 tells us what we already know, that we have spent \$4.5 billion on a 65-year-old pipeline, and it refers to the idea that we may expand and build an additional one, but it does not indicate the price tag. If anyone wants to know the price tag for expanding the now owned by

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the Government of Canada Kinder Morgan pipeline, it is an additional \$10 billion to \$13 billion on top of the \$4.5 billion we already have spent for an existing pipeline. It is actually referred to in the following sentence:

Should construction of the Expansion Project be permitted to recommence prior to a sale of the Trans Mountain entities, the Government will record construction and other associated expenditures as adding to the book value of the asset.

However, the opportunity cost of spending \$10 billion to \$13 billion on an expansion of that pipeline is extraordinary. Not only in this document, but in any document of the Government of Canada or document of the prior owner, Kinder Morgan, will we find a cost benefit analysis of what it really costs just in economics to build a pipeline to ship bitumen offshore.

The reason the Alberta Federation of Labour and Unifor, the biggest union representing oil sands workers, intervened at the National Energy Board to oppose the Kinder Morgan pipeline was because it cost jobs and it did not diversify markets either. If anyone wants to track the real-life examples of where the dilbit goes that reaches the port in Burnaby now, it mostly goes to California. It is not diversified markets; it is just moving our oil, solid bitumen, not even crude, to the same places it can go over land.

If we are serious about this, if we want to be serious about a climate crisis, which is real, and we want to respond to the needs of Canadian society, this is not the document to produce.

We do have other critical issues in the country and while the climate crisis is an existential threat, I really do agree with the New Democratic Party's response, which is this would have been a good time to start getting pharmacare going, to give us that commitment, maybe in the spring budget, but we need pharmacare in the country.

I also know Jim. The hon. member mentioned him earlier. He is a veteran and he sits outside by the bridge next to the Chateau Laurier. He cannot afford his medications without people giving him money. We are the only country with universal health care that does not provide universal pharmacare. While we are at it, why are we not implementing Vanessa's Law, which was passed in the 41st Parliament, to take big pharma to task and make it publish its drug results? There is a lot we need to do in our country and this document does not say that we are committed to doing those things.

There many nice words in the document, I am not saying there are not. I welcome any document that says it is time we take the charitable sector seriously. However, there is nothing about when we will pull up our socks and live up to our commitments to make poverty history by increasing our overseas development assistance to 0.7% of our GNP. That commitment was made years ago, and we are falling backward compared to where we were under former prime minister Brian Mulroney. That was the highest it ever was with respect to our charitable sector, 0.45%, in 1992.

Private Members' Business

To wrap up, the late Jim MacNeill, a great Canadian who wrote the Brundtland report, said that the single most important environmental document prepared by any government was its budget.

● (1720)

This fall mini-budget fails entirely to respond to the single largest threat to our children's future. Let us hope that before we go to COP24 in Poland, we will see the government step up and say that it wants to be the climate leader it promised Canadians it would be.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

The House resumed from November 19 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 8, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 189 under private members' business in the name of the hon. member for Thérèse-De Blainville.

The question is on the motion. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

● (1730)

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

(*Division No. 942*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Albrecht
Aldag	Alghabra
Allesley	Allison
Amos	Anandasangaree
Anderson	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Barlow
Barsalou-Duval	Baylis
Beaulieu	Bennett
Benson	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Bossio
Boucher	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Bratina	Breton
Brisson	Caesar-Chavannes
Calkins	Cannings
Caron	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Chen	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Cooper
Cullen	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diotte	Doherty
Dreeshen	Dubé

Dubourg	Duguid
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Duval	Dzerowicz
Easter	Eglinski
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fergus	Fillmore
Finley	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fuhr	Gallant
Gameau	Garrison
Généreux	Gerretsen
Gladu	Godin
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gourde	Graham
Hajdu	Hardcastle
Harder	Hardie
Harvey	Hébert
Hoback	Hogg
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Jeneroux
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kelly
Kent	Khalid
Khera	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kwan
Lake	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	Laverdière
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Leslie
Levitt	Liepert
Lightbound	Lloyd
Lobb	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
Lukiwski	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor	MacKenzie
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Malcolmson	Maloney
Martel	Masse (Windsor West)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
Mathysen	
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McCrimmon
McDonald	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mendicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Moore	Morrissey
Motz	Murray
Nantel	Nassif
Nater	Ng
Nicholson	Nuttall
O'Connell	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Paradis
Paul-Hus	Paupé
Peschisolido	Petitpas Taylor
Philpott	Picard
Poissant	Quach
Qualtrough	Raitt
Ramsey	Rankin
Ratansi	Rayes
Reid	Richards
Rioux	Robillard
Rogers	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Sahota
Saini	Sajjan
Samson	Sangha
Sansoucy	Sarai
Saroya	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Shields	Shiple

Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Simms
Sohi	Sorbara
Sorenson	Spengemann
Stanton	Ste-Marie
Stetski	Strahl
Sweet	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Thériault	Tootoo
Trost	Trudel
Van Kesteren	Vandal
Vaughan	Vecchio
Virani	Wagantall
Warawa	Warkentin
Wauh	Webber
Weir	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Wong	Wrzesnewskyj
Yip	Young
Yurdiga	Zahid
Zimmer— 267	

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

It being 5:35 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

* * *

• (1735)

STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

The House resumed from October 15 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to speak here today in favour of Motion No. 177 supporting flight training schools across Canada. The member for Kelowna—Lake Country represents a neighbouring riding to mine, and I respect his history as a pilot in our Armed Forces. My father also served in the air force, so I kind of share that tradition.

Motion No. 177 would instruct the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities:

to undertake a study of flight training schools in Canada and be mandated to: (i) identify the challenges that flight schools are facing in providing trained pilots to industry, (ii) determine whether the infrastructure available to flight schools meets the needs of the schools and the communities where they are located; and that the Committee present its final report no later than seven months after the adoption of this motion.

To begin with, I, like many of the people here, have several flight schools in my riding. I have standard flight schools in Penticton and Grand Forks where people can get a flight licence.

For over 40 years, Selkirk College, in Castlegar, had an aviation program teaching flight skills, but unfortunately, that program closed in 2014. The reasons for this closure are diverse, but I am sure that if this motion passes and the transport committee takes on this important subject, it would do well to hear from Selkirk College to get some insight into the challenges the program faced and why it was forced to close.

Private Members' Business

I would like to spend much of my time today talking about a unique flight training school in my riding, a very successful school, called HNZ Topflight. HNZ is one of the premier helicopter flight training schools in the world. I will start with some of its history, because it is an interesting history.

The story of HNZ Topflight began just after the Second World War, in 1947, when three RCAF veterans joined forces to form a small company called Okanagan Air Services, based in Penticton. The company consisted of pilots Carl Agar and Barney Bent and mechanic Alf Stringer. They bought a Bell 47 helicopter and offered crop-dusting services to farmers and orchardists in southern British Columbia.

I did not know this before researching this speech, but I thought it very interesting that helicopter flight was very new at the time. Igor Sikorsky had, in fact, only invented the first truly functioning helicopter in 1941. Another company, Bell, brought the first commercially available helicopter, the Bell 47, to market in 1946, and Okanagan Air Services was one of its first customers.

After a year or two of working exclusively as a crop-dusting operation, Okanagan Air Services expanded to work in topographical surveys, timber cruising and mineral exploration. It serviced the Palisade Lake dam project in 1949, and then in the early 1950s, the company really spread its wings, or rotors, I guess, and helped build the massive Kemano hydroelectric project. For that, the company bought a couple of huge Sikorsky helicopters, from Igor Sikorsky himself, to add to its growing fleet of Bell 47s.

Realizing that helicopters were really the future of aviation for many transportation, industrial and military applications, the company's owners changed its name to Okanagan Helicopters. By 1955, they had 90 employees. By 1958, they owned 54 helicopters. It was the largest helicopter operator in the world, and the company continued to grow, expanding around the world.

In 1987, Okanagan Helicopters was bought by Craig Dobbin, of St. John's, Newfoundland, who combined its operations with a couple of other helicopter companies to form Canadian Helicopters.

Just as an aside, I want to mention that I had the opportunity to meet Craig Dobbin once. I was driving a Memorial University jeep down to Cape St. Mary's, almost a four-wheel-drive road, and up drove this brown Cadillac. I had broken down and Craig helped me out by driving me to the lighthouse where I was living, so I had that little interaction with him.

Recently, a reunion of the company in Osoyoos, British Columbia, attracted 250 people from around the world.

Private Members' Business

• (1740)

In 1951, Carl Agar and Barney Bent began training pilots in Penticton through a subsidiary company that eventually became known as the Canadian Helicopters School of Advanced Flight Training. As a kid growing up on the West Bench of Penticton, just above the airport, I remember those early flight training operations, watching those Bell helicopters, basically a glass bubble attached to an open frame of metal girders, land and take off from the grasslands just south of our house.

The flight school has been operating continuously in Penticton for more than 60 years. The diverse terrain and variable winds of the Okanagan Valley and surrounding mountain areas provide flying challenges that are ideal for the study of the mechanics of mountain winds and advanced flying techniques.

Among the company's many innovations was Agar's "bump jump" process for high-altitude takeoffs. Someone who has flown a helicopter in the mountains would know this technique involves tipping the helicopter over the side of a cliff and waiting until the air is heavy enough for the rotor blades to operate. It is quite a feeling. It also invented the Monsoon Bucket for use in forest fire suppression.

The company was rebranded as HNZ Topflight after Canadian Helicopters bought HNZ, a New Zealand company. Flight training at HNZ not only includes advanced mountain flying, but also emergency auto-rotation training and night training with and without night-vision goggles.

Over the years, HNZ Topflight has trained thousands of pilots. The school is known for providing training to government, military and special forces, law enforcement, commercial and private groups from all over the world and the instructors are rightfully proud of the school's heritage. Over 300 students pass through the school each year, and their activities generate a big boost to the local economy in the South Okanagan. The company generates over \$8 million per year in direct revenue but the spinoffs are considerable, including more than 3,000 hotel nights per year.

HNZ Topflight is a good community citizen. One of the most popular charity auction items in town is the scenic flights it offers, often combined with a gourmet picnic on an alpine mountaintop catered by one of the local restaurants.

Much of HNZ Topflight's training takes place in the spectacular mountains southwest of Penticton, much of which is in provincial protected areas, primarily in the Snowy Protected Area, but also through the South Okanagan Grasslands Protected Area. HNZ must obtain permits to operate in these areas to ensure its activities do not negatively impact local wildlife populations. These permitting processes are thorough and the company is in the process right now of spending \$300,000 on a study to back up an application for a 10-year operating permit in these areas.

The company has concerns that a proposal to convert the South Okanagan Grasslands Protected Area to a national park would impact its operations. Parks Canada has assured it verbally that previous provincial permits would be honoured and future permitting processes would be similar, but until those promises are on paper that concern will linger.

I would like to mention now that there are a few downsides to having a successful flight training school in one's backyard. One of the obvious ones, and this goes for many flight training schools across the country, is the noise coming from the repetitive takeoffs and landings that take place around the airport day after day. Penticton airport is relatively small, though it does have scheduled flights through Air Canada and WestJet. There are over 10,000 aircraft movements every year from the airport and many of these involve takeoffs and landings by flight schools. These repeated flights are of concern to many citizens who live in the area around the airport. I can attest that having a helicopter over a house in the middle of the night does cause some concern, wondering in a groggy state whether the special forces are landing in the backyard or whether it has just rained in the night and the local cherry orchards need a blow-dry.

These are serious issues in some small communities with large flight schools and must be addressed through proper planning processes involving governments at all levels, including Transport Canada.

The NDP has proposed an amendment to this motion asking the committee to also study the effects of noise pollution on community members and I would obviously support that amendment.

It is clear from this debate that Canada needs more pilots in all sectors. If this motion can help us to reduce that problem, I am happy to support it.

• (1745)

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, or perhaps I should say House traffic control, thank you for granting me a clearance to speak to Motion No. 177, the challenges facing flight schools, from my colleague both in the House and in the sky, the member for Kelowna—Lake Country.

The aviation industry as a whole is an important one, and the biggest challenges facing flight schools stem from wider problems in the industry, namely a shortage of qualified pilots. As many of us here know, this is not a problem unique to aviation. The worker shortage across my region is significantly affecting all sectors. Restaurants are having trouble staying open, not for a lack of clients, but for a lack of kitchen staff. The 24-hour Tim Hortons are not. Even garages have significant ad campaigns on local radio stations to hire mechanics, and the story is repeated in just about every industry across the region.

According to the International Civil Aviation Organization, the aviation industry will be short some 620,000 pilots over the next 18 years. We are in a period of feast, and there will no doubt be challenges that come along that affect this prediction over the course of that time, but the need will still be significant.

Private Members' Business

When I started flying in 2005, the industry was in a state of famine. My first flying school, which closed not long after I earned my licence, had an abundance of flight instructors, each paid by the flight instruction hour, on contract, rather than on a salary. Many, if not most, had second jobs to get by, as well as significant five-figure loans. If someone got a job offer off the instructor circuit, it was a huge victory worth celebrating.

Times were tough in aviation, and while I dreamed of being a career pilot like my grandfather, Jack Ross Graham, before me, who flew from the early 1930s until his death by pulmonary embolism in 1959, a direct consequence of his time in flight, there was no way I was giving up a good career as a news editor in the free software world for the high-risk gamble of following that passion.

The industry since that time has faced a complete reversal. Around the world, aviation is on an upswing, and rather than going overseas looking for students to keep idle fleets of training aircraft occupied, schools are struggling to find instructors to meet the demand of largely overseas students coming on their own.

That leads to another point. I cannot think of very many industries where it is the novices, rather than the seasoned veterans, who teach the beginners. For the majority of new commercial pilots, their first job is either as a bush pilot or as what is called a class 4 flight instructor. Veteran career instructors exist, but are extremely rare and are largely a dying breed.

For most new pilots, flight instruction is a job held for the minimum amount of time possible, until what they call “a real job” becomes available. Today, these instructors often serve as little as four months' time, meaning new pilots, if they are lucky enough to find an instructor, risk changing instructors several times through their training, which can slow down the process.

There are some instructors who for various reasons choose to remain instructors, and I am privileged to have one of this type as my own instructor, but that has not always been the case for me. When I started as a student at a flying school called Aviation International at Guelph Airpark, then the busiest uncontrolled airport in the country, I had someone I felt to be an exceptional instructor in Rob Moss, then both a civilian and a military instructor. Over the course of my training, Rob got an interesting job flying in northern Ontario. Then I was bounced through Andrew Gottschlich, Scott Peters, Marcia Plum and Alex Ruiz before finally getting my licence in the summer of 2007. I had to check my logbook to make sure I did not miss anyone. While each of them was both a good pilot and a good instructor, there is no doubt that the constant change in instructors slowed down my training. That was one of the pitfalls of not training full-time.

Another of these pitfalls was that during this time when I filed my flight training receipts with my taxes as a tuition expense in view of training toward a new career, Canada Revenue Agency rejected these significant deductions because I had not yet achieved a commercial licence and therefore it did not count, though I was told by many in the industry that if I made a federal case out of it I could get that fixed.

It is little roadblocks like this that tend to cascade into larger problems for those trying to get into the industry. Some of these

affect the schools themselves, which have onerous and difficult processes to be recognized as schools by provincial education departments, complicating matters further.

It is certainly a particular personal pleasure for me to talk about aviation here in the House. One day, early on in my flying career, I was learning the basics of how to land a plane. Every landing, though successful, was sloppy. Off the centre line, a bit of a bounce, a bit more of a bounce, a little long on our short runway, maybe an incorrect radio call or two, and I was getting frustrated. I was very focused, doing exactly what I had been taught in ground school and shown by the aforementioned Rob. Then, a few circuits in, Rob and I got into a long and interesting conversation about politics. At the time, it was the dying months of the Martin administration, and there was a good deal for us to talk about. We kept talking about federal politics until I had pulled off runway 32 at the far end and started taxiing back for the next circuit. It was only at that point that we realized that I had made my first perfect landing. Politics, it seems, was the solution. Indeed, we never missed opportunities to talk about politics while I was learning to fly. Now, fast forward 13 and a half years and a couple of hundred flying hours in a dozen different aircraft, and it is a complete reversal to at last be able to speak about aviation on the floor of the House.

I have, on a few occasions, travelled to events in my riding by plane rather than by car. I have landed at all five registered land aerodromes in the riding, including La Macaza/Mont-Tremblant International Airport, where I rent a Cessna 172M.

● (1750)

There are another five registered heliports, five registered seaplane bases, numerous unregistered runways and the occasional temporary airfield plowed into a frozen lake, several of which I have also landed at, and helipads, as well as float plane docks on many of the approximately 10,000 lakes that decorate Laurentides—Labelle. A search last year of Transport Canada's airplane registration database found about 300 aircraft that are registered to postal codes in my riding.

Aviation is, then, an important part of the Laurentians. I am a member of the Association des aviateurs de la région du Mont-Tremblant, Association des pilotes de brousse du Québec, and the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association.

Private Members' Business

The first puts up an event we call Jeunes en Vol every year at the Wheelair field in Mont-Tremblant, itself the site of Canada's first commercial airline. There have also been such events in Sainte-Anne-du-Lac and La Minerve over the past couple of years. At five of these, I have participated as a volunteer pilot, offering rides to three kids at a time aged eight to 17 in what we call "aerial baptism". All the organizations I mentioned put on this type of event all across Canada.

At its core, it is a way for the aviation industry to tackle the problem of self-renewal. In offering 200 kids at a time the opportunity to experience flight in a small plane, for the first time in almost all cases, we are inviting interest in pursuing a career in the industry. I have taken a total of approximately 50 kids up so far in this manner, as well as my own four-year-old daughter Ozara, who now insists, depending on the day, that she will either be a member of Parliament, a pilot, or most recently, a flight attendant.

Almost every time I take a new person up in the air, I see their eyes light up. Only once has one of the kids also lit up a plastic bag, but we do try to avoid that. The interest is there. People want to fly. The challenges of learning to fly are numerous. It is expensive. A new pilot will typically incur \$75,000 or more in debt before obtaining their commercial licence, and while prices have climbed steadily over the 13 years that I have been flying, schools are reticent to further raise prices. Of course, this leads to the vicious circle of instructors being few and far between.

Aviation medical examiners are rarer than they need to be, and if people do complete the courses, there are not enough flight test examiners to meet current demand. Now, I am lucky to have an extraordinarily competent instructor in Caroline Farly, the owner of Aéro Loisirs at La Macaza. For her, finding and retaining additional instructors for the three Cessna 172s used for land training at her school, and many others like hers, is a huge challenge.

A newly commercial-rated pilot with 200 hours, the minimum necessary to get a commercial license, can easily pick up a job for mines in Central Africa, for example, or obscure routes across the Far East, making decent money, and it does not take a whole lot of hours to pick up a flying job back at home.

Sticking around to be a class 4 instructor, the class that an instructor remains until they have successfully trained at least three students, at which point they become a class 3 instructor, is hardly a lucrative way to live. Generally on contract and paid by the instruction hour rather than by the duty hour, they are severely constrained by weather and aircraft availability, among numerous other factors, and there is no way to clear their \$75,000 in debt in anything resembling a rational timeline.

While schools themselves face challenges with things like noise complaints from neighbours who get annoyed by the constant buzz of planes climbing out and circling over their houses and then landing, the biggest challenges are in incentivizing commercial pilots to pass on their skills.

There is, for example, zero incentive for an experienced pilot to pass their thousands, or tens of thousands, of hours of knowledge back to the next generation. It is left to the new pilots to train the newer pilots. More than that, there is little incentive for those new

pilots to even take on that challenge, because their immediate concern is getting themselves out of the mountain of debt they incurred to become a pilot in the first place, a debt that many succumb to before even finishing their license, resulting in high drop-out rates, further stressing the system.

There are obvious places to look for solutions. Only about 7% of Canada's pilots are women, and indigenous communities are severely under-represented, yet are generally more reliant on aviation than most of the rest of society—though many reserves do not even have an airstrip. Ensuring that reserves have a landing strip, a plane, and a flight and mechanical instructor could kill several birds with one stone, but not before we address the financial challenges of getting into the business, for which solutions have been proposed, such as granting student loan forgiveness for instructors who serve a certain amount of time and/or in a remote location.

There are myriad other ideas, and this study would help us identify and evaluate them. The problem, of course, is wider than just pilots, and also speaks to the related problem of the death of the apprenticeship economy. Aviation mechanics, the Royal Canadian Air Force, and pretty much anyone hiring in the aviation industry has stiff competition for competent, trained workers, and so a deeper study of these challenges and how we can address them is not only warranted, but urgent.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to start off, we are supporting Motion No. 177. That should come as no surprise as I have had previous conversations with our hon. colleague across the way.

However, I am also disappointed. When this motion was first discussed, I had put forth a friendly amendment, as I wanted Parliament to look at some of the causes of pilot shortages and the deterrents that are perhaps stopping the next generation from enlisting to become pilots.

Through my intervention tonight, I want to give some of my thoughts about why there is a pilot shortage. I also want to talk about the serious void that we have of pilots coming in, not only in Canada, but globally. There is a global pilot shortage. There has been a whack of numbers offered. Boeing recently stated that global aviation will need 790,000 new pilots by 2037 to meet the growing demand. The biggest issue right now facing aviation is time, which we do not have as many of our pilots currently fit into the baby-boomer demographic. They are aging out and retiring. We do not have that next generation who are able to take over and become pilots.

Private Members' Business

For 22 years I was in aviation. I worked on all sides of the industry. I was an owner. I owned an aviation company that worked with airlines in servicing both the back end in terms of baggage handling and ground support, as well as the front end, which was customer service. I was also an owner of a carrier. I was one of the original management and owners of WestJet. Then, I went over to the regulatory side and worked with Transport Canada for a number of years on the airport side and, finally, I was a consultant working all over the world in pursuit of aviation opportunities, security opportunities and trade opportunities for Canada.

I am very familiar with this issue of pilot shortage. As a matter of fact, one of last files I worked on was with one of the largest international carriers in the world that was here doing a job fair, looking for Canadian pilots or Canadian-trained pilots for its major network. Colleagues will be shocked to hear that they were so desperate they were looking for pilots who had even fewer than 100 hours of flight training, which speaks to the seriousness of the pilot shortage issue. The baby-boomer pilots represent almost 50% of the pilots flying today who are about to retire. Over the next 20 years, our commercial passenger market is going to double.

However, this is our real issue. The pilot shortages are now forcing carriers to make route decisions. Air service is such a vital component. It is critical to our northern communities. It is critical to the rural way of life. It connects people. It connects cargo. It provides critical care or critical medical transport.

With air service comes business. In a small community with a daily air service connecting to a larger market, one can be guaranteed that when a business is looking to relocate or invest in that community, it will be looking to connect their executives and employees to and from that area, as well as their goods.

We are seeing a number of issues in terms of the pilot shortage. The duty hour issue is coming in. We are seeing carriers having to make some serious decisions with respect to their route network.

• (1755)

Also, it is becoming increasingly more expensive to operate. Whether it is our uncompetitive environment regarding our tax system or the fee structure that airlines and passengers face when they are flying through our Canadian airports, it is getting harder for carriers to turn a buck.

It is really important to look at this when we deal with Motion No. 177. I know our hon. colleague from Lake Country also shared my point of view with respect to looking at the pilot shortage, not just with respect to the flight school program. Why are we not getting more students to the flight school and how can we develop the Canadian flight schools? Perhaps we could become a centre of excellence. We have some of the best flight instructors in the world.

In my former career, we always talked about what Canada wanted to be when it grew up, if we could look to harness some of the expertise we had with respect to our transportation, our intermodality and the things that we did right in Canada. Would it not be a great opportunity for Canada to have a global centre of excellence for flight training? Would it not be great for Canada to have a global centre of excellence for trucking, rail or marine? These are things we could do if we really opened our minds and became progressive.

However, we first have to take away the deterrents and entice the next generation to put their names forward with respect to this industry.

I am wondering if there are things we could do. Could we look at industry as well, working and partnering with training schools to ensure new pilots are being trained for specific gaps in the system? The costs are prohibitive. It costs a new pilot anywhere from \$75,000 to \$150,000 to become licensed. When they are done their training, very often they have to become what we call either a Tier 3 or bush pilot. They spend a lot of time in Lac La Ronge or a lot of northern communities, flying small aircraft and getting paid probably around to \$20,000 to \$25,000. Many of my friends have spent a lot of time bunking together and working in rural and remote communities just trying to boost their hours so they can get on to the next carrier.

That is another challenge for carriers. Once pilots are trained, they are going to look for that bigger and better job. I am wondering if there are incentives that schools can offer to encourage a larger enrolment. Can we partner to make it easier for that next generation of pilots to really get into this critical industry? Costs are very prohibitive for that.

I am going to end with this. I want to again echo my support for our hon. colleague. I hope I have a chance to participate in the study. I would offer this regarding the economic impact that our aviation industry and airports have on Canada. There are around 194,000 direct jobs and 355,000 jobs within Canada's aviation sector. Airports handle about 140 million passengers. For every one million passengers, there are about 1,400 jobs, about \$93 million in wages, \$137 million in GDP and \$342 million in economic output.

Aviation is a critical component of our trade and transportation network. We should do what we can to ensure we strengthen Canada's aviation sector. Furthermore, we should be dreaming big and figuring out what Canada wants to be when it grows up.

I offer our humble support for Motion No. 177 put forward by our hon. colleague across the way from Kelowna—Lake Country.

• (1800)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate the member for Kelowna—Lake Country for bringing forward this motion today.

Motion No. 177 would instruct the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities to undertake a study of flight training schools in Canada, basically to identify the challenges they are facing in providing trained pilots to the industry but also to determine whether the infrastructure available to flight schools meets the needs of those schools and the communities they are located in, and to, hopefully, present its report no later than seven months from the adoption of this motion.

Private Members' Business

The 42nd Parliament does not have too much time left. We have three more weeks following this one before we go for Christmas, and then, of course, January to June. Therefore, I hope the committee is able to produce some recommendations, but it does not seem that it would leave much time for the government to act upon them.

I hope that the Minister of Transport, if he sees this as a worthwhile study, a worthwhile motion, pays attention to what the committee is doing. Maybe he can direct his officials in the ministry to pay attention to the witness testimony at that committee and preemptively act on some of the recommendations they hear from witnesses so that we do not need to wait for some of the significant recommendations.

I also want to take the time to recognize the member for Trois-Rivières, who has been doing great work on the transport file for our NDP caucus. He sits as the second vice-chair on the transport committee. During the first hour of debate on this motion, he offered some substantive commentary, and he has also been doing some great work in other areas. I was very pleased to see this member move an amendment that would add a study on the effects of noise pollution on public health, because that is often a recurring issue with flight schools, and that would have Transport Canada be more transparent in how it handles all the data collected.

During the course of that first hour of debate, the member for Kelowna—Lake Country seemed to indicate that he supported that amendment. I hope he will continue to honour that. Nevertheless, if Motion No. 177 does proceed to the transport committee as originally written, I am still sure that there is plenty of room within the original wording to hear from people who are concerned about some of the negative impacts flight training schools have.

Personally, I do not have much direct experience with airplanes other than being a member of Parliament who relies on Air Canada to get back to the amazing constituents of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. I try to do that every weekend. However, there was a time in my life when I had a job as a tree planter. I did that job for eight long years in the wilds of British Columbia. I often had to rely on the services of some amazing helicopter pilots who would not only carry our trees up to blocks that were almost above the cloud cover but who would also transport us, as tree planters, to get to our blocks.

The skill set of these pilots is really something to behold. For most of us, when we see a helicopter flying, it is usually from pretty level ground, where they take off nicely and go off into the distance. However, when we were flying in a helicopter in the mountains of British Columbia, these pilots, under adverse weather conditions, with low visibility, who were trying to place trees in a specific location, sometimes with a very badly drawn map and a full load of tree planters, would not only drop us in a precise location but, with the rotors going full blast, would just touch one of their landing rails on the side of a mountain while we all hopped off, while trying to get our equipment. Therefore, I can speak to the quality of the pilots this country produces.

I very much agree with the fact that if our flight training schools are producing that calibre of pilot, we certainly know that there is a great demand. I think we can be proud of the job our flight trainers do on behalf of this country.

In terms of the wording of the motion itself and what we are specifically looking for, we acknowledge that there is a worker and labour shortage. Communities are very much in danger of losing air transportation service, because private regional air carriers could curtail or even discontinue some regional connections. Of course, the main reason for this is a pilot shortage.

In terms of accessibility, many communities and remote areas need an air transportation service for medical and various other reasons. Studies show that air fares are far too high for regional markets. In fact, in February of this year, the NDP filed a complaint with the Competition Bureau to shed light on Air Canada's practices in the regions. The pilot shortage, I think, is going to drive up airfares and further restrict access to air service.

● (1805)

In the area of public health, which I have talked about, the repeated daily exposure to aircraft noise is a threat to the health of Canadians. We want the government to introduce more effective noise management measures for all airports, specifically those that have flight training schools, because the level of traffic is a lot higher. Instead of an aircraft taking off and going to its desired destination, flight training often takes place in a specific region that is revisited multiple times.

If we look at the statistics, they very much show the need explained in this motion. Forecasts indicate that the industry will need about 7,300 new pilots between now and 2025. Currently, fewer than 1,200 new licences are being issued each year, and nearly half of those, 45%, are going to international students. Whether or not we are going to retain their services in this country is a big open question. The source of those statistics is the Canadian Council for Aviation & Aerospace. Furthermore, the Air Transport Association of Canada expects there to be a shortage of 3,300 pilots by 2025, and Boeing has indicated that the global demand is expected to be 790,000 pilots over the next 20 years, double the current demand.

If I look at my own riding, and I am sure this is the same for a lot of members, over the last decade there has been an enormous increase in the number of low-flying training exercises over people's homes. It is an issue that I have become very well aware of as the local member of Parliament. Many residents are losing their wits.

I will read into the record some of the emails I have received from constituents. I have one from February 4, 2017, which states:

The last 10 years have been bad but the last 7 years got even worse since a farmer near us cleared his trees and made a hay field these planes found to be the perfect practice field for their touch and goes and stalling their engines, so when they have to full throttle out of these stalls and starts, that will cause excessive noise which is 10 times louder than when a plane just flies over us. It has ruined our quality of life here.... We feel that it is our right as taxpayers that this has to change as it is effecting our health, we both have been diagnosed with high blood pressure and it is elevated from this constant barrage of excessive noise from these airplanes.

Another email from October 3, 2018, states:

I can't even explain how bad this summer really was, 8 a.m. til 9 p.m. all day long, as they are here flying low-gunning their throttles over our homes to even make more purposeful noise. The thing that gets me is that they are still intentionally hitting us hard as they know that we are trying to fight them off. It was so bad trying to torture us up here that they are going to kill or injure another person....

Private Members' Business

Another one talks about how a constituent and his wife had to work, but they kept being woken up.

This is causing real pain and suffering to people. People who have bought homes in rural areas to enjoy the peaceful countryside are being bombarded by these constant manoeuvres.

I have raised this issue with the Minister of Transport. It is very much within the minister's powers to designate new airspace for flight training, and we have to look at the population growth in areas like Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. When class F airspace was designated decades ago, there were hardly any people living there, but the population has grown and now these flight manoeuvres go right over people's homes, often buzzing the tops of trees.

I hope the transport committee will look at the minister's power to designate new airspace. I acknowledge the importance of training new pilots, but at the same time, we have to look at the quality of life of the people on the ground to make sure they are not adversely affected by our efforts to meet this growing demand.

I am happy to vote in favour of this motion.

• (1810)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak in support of Motion No. 177 brought forward by my colleague from Kelowna—Lake Country.

My colleague is seeking to direct the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities to undertake a study of flight training schools in Canada to identify the challenges that flight schools are facing in providing trained pilots to industry, to determine whether the infrastructure available to flight schools meets the needs of the schools and the communities where they are located, and that the committee present its final report no later than seven months after the adoption of this motion. The content of this motion is both timely and welcome.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, much has been said recently about the pilot labour shortage in Canada and the rest of the world.

• (1815)

[*Translation*]

The demand for air travel is at an all-time high and, aside from military operations, so is the demand for pilots. There is every indication that this demand will only increase.

Boeing and Airbus may be commercial competitors, but they agree that the growing shortage of airline pilots for their aircraft and for all commercial aircraft will be acute by 2036. They base their forecast on the need to double the number of commercial international flights to meet a record demand for airline travel and tackle the growing shortage of workers.

[*English*]

Airbus's 2017 global forecast projects that 534,000 new pilots will be needed by 2036 just to fly passenger airliners of 100 seats or more.

Boeing recently released its 2018 Pilot and Technician Outlook. It is projecting a demand for 635,000 commercial pilots, 790,000 if we add business aviation and helicopter pilots, over the next 20 years.

If we use the Boeing number, this means that meeting global pilot demands will require 108 newly trained pilots each day, or one every 14 minutes.

Think about the Boeing number for a moment. That means more pilots, just pilots—and I am not talking about cabin crew or mechanics—will be needed globally than the population of Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island combined. It is staggering.

[*Translation*]

In Canada, the need is for roughly 7,300 pilots by 2025. While this number is small by comparison, meeting this demand will be a challenge.

We have already identified a number of factors that have contributed to the commercial pilot shortage in Canada.

Expensive training and low entry-level wages for commercial pilots means that fewer people are choosing careers in aviation. In addition, more competitive salaries abroad means that a portion of those who do choose this career path end up leaving Canada.

There is a shortage of qualified instructors to train new pilots, in part because of low wages for instructors that deter many graduates from staying in these positions for extended periods of time.

And finally, there are fewer ex-military pilots who have historically taken up flying duties on the civilian side.

[*English*]

When it comes to training new pilots in Canada, the output of qualified commercial pilots to serve on domestic carriers hovers at approximately 550 per year. This is half of what will be required by 2025 if retirements and pilots leaving for opportunities with international carriers are considered. The fact that the number of flight schools in Canada has declined from 230 schools in 2001 to 169 in 2016 only compounds the problem.

In fact, in my riding of Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, we are right next to the L'aéroport de St-Hubert, where we have many pilot training schools. I know how important it is to continue to support them.

As I said, meeting our need for commercially trained pilots will be a challenge. It is clear that a shortage of pilots in Canada is an issue. It is something that must be addressed if we are to avoid the negative economic and social impacts of an undersized domestic air transportation system.

The importance of our aviation industry cannot be overstated, especially because reliance on, and demand for, air transportation services continues to grow with our population and the emergence of new technologies.

Private Members' Business

In a competitive global marketplace, Canada relies extensively on aviation to connect people and move goods in an efficient and reliable manner. From an economic perspective, the aviation sector currently employs approximately 140,000 Canadians and contributes over \$35 billion in GDP annually and \$12 billion in federal and provincial taxes.

In 2017, Statistics Canada reported 146,641,672 passengers boarded and deplaned at Canadian airports. That was nearly 26 million, or nearly 21%, more than what was reported in 2013. We saw a 21% increase over four short years, and this upward trend is not expected to change.

Between 2010 and 2017, Statistics Canada reported that the amount of air cargo handled at Canadian airports jumped by nearly one-third, from 1.05 billion kilograms to 1.31 billion kilograms. Again, this upward trend is not expected to change.

Capitalizing on this anticipated growth requires a domestic aviation system that can meet the demand.

• (1820)

[*Translation*]

Capitalizing on this anticipated growth requires a domestic air transport system that can meet the demand.

Air transport is the lifeline that gets people into and out of communities. It ensures they have access to emergency medical care. It is essential for food security. It brings in building materials, clothing and other necessities of life. It also brings in valuable tourist dollars. In short, the loss or reduction of air service to these communities could very well lead to their demise.

[*English*]

This brings me back to the motion at hand, which seeks to direct the standing committee to look specifically at flight training schools in Canada to see what can be done to increase the output of commercial pilots. We want to use all the tools at our disposal to address this very real and pressing issue.

For this reason, the government supports Motion No. 177, the motion put forth by the member for Kelowna—Lake Country, himself, a pilot.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased to be here this evening talking to Motion No. 177, which directs the transportation committee to study flight schools and their infrastructure. I want to talk about a few different things and I am going to be brief as I have a lot to talk about.

I want to talk about my personal experience in getting my pilot's licence. I remember as a young child going to air shows and being fascinated with the concept and the whole idea of flight, the freedom of flight, the wonder of flight. Growing into my adult years it continued to fascinate me, but I was scared to fly. I had never been in an airplane until I was a young adult. I was frightened to take that first move and my wife played a bit of a trick on me. She bought me an introductory flight lesson for my birthday and I had to do it. It was something that I needed to overcome and it was a wonderful experience and I let it go at that.

However, some time later I was reading the paper and she pointed out ground school training. She told me that I enjoyed airplanes so much and the whole concept of flying, why not take ground school, as I did not have to fly. It was reasonably inexpensive at \$400 or \$500 and I understood the whole theory and concept of flight. She tricked me again. I think she knew that once I was at ground school there would be tremendous peer pressure to actually fly the airplane. Of course, I succumbed to that peer pressure and I did go up with an instructor. It did not take long until I got the bug.

I took my training at Harv's Air Service, in my riding. It is based out of Steinbach and operates a flight school just outside of St. Andrews, Manitoba at the St. Andrews Airport. Harv and Betty Penner, together with their sons, Adam, Luke and Greg, operate the flight school. They have operated it for 30 or 40 years. They have trained thousands of pilots, many of whom fly for a lot of our commercial airline companies today. They do a wonderful job and have a fantastic safety record. I look at some of the challenges they faced at the flight school, such as staffing challenges, getting and retaining qualified instructors, but they also faced challenges with sourcing students.

I can attest to that because when I started the ground school training, it was relatively inexpensive. Once I began flying, the costs per hour to get training in an airplane were quite significant and this was some 18 years ago. By the time I completed my training, the cost was probably about \$5,500 or \$6,000. To become a private pilot today is north of \$10,000, so it is not an inexpensive exercise.

This is a challenge for our flight schools. They need to attract students at a reasonable cost. Not everyone can afford to take flying lessons. When I go to air shows today, I see boys and girls lined up at the fence watching the airplanes and wishing they could fly them. There are a few things I need to point out that a study would do. A study would determine what the needs of flight schools are. We know there is a pilot shortage. We know there is going to be an increasing pilot shortage in the years to come and we need to address that shortage somehow. A good way to do that is to encourage folks to get into pilot training and to ensure it is affordable. One way we can do that is to look at ways of decreasing costs.

Flight school operators have all kinds of costs. They have the cost of airplanes, which is based on the American dollar and we know how that fluctuates. Right now it is to our disadvantage in Canada. They also have to buy fuel, which is very expensive. With the proposed Liberal government carbon tax, the cost of fuel is going to go up and that is going to negatively impact flight schools. We need to make sure that does not happen.

We need to make sure that we provide them with the facilities that are required to operate a safe and effective flight school. We need to make sure there is infrastructure money available for municipal airports, but also for flight schools to take full advantage of that to make sure we can get pilots trained.

Private Members' Business

•(1825)

The other aspect I want to touch on briefly is the whole aspect of training military pilots. A lot of them have come through flight schools, but a lot are also trained directly by our military. We know, based on the Auditor General's report that came out recently, that we have a significant shortfall in technicians and pilots. In fact, we do not even have enough pilots to fly the airplanes we have. That is a big concern to me.

We need to ensure we do not underfund our military, like the government has been doing. We need to ensure we get on with our fighter jet replacement program, that we get that contest happening sooner than later, that we do not buy old, rusty airplanes from Australia but look at current technology so we can attract people into our military who will want to fly the latest and greatest. We need to ensure we also provide our troops adequately with the best equipment available for them to do their job.

I am happy to support the motion.

Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the aviation sector serves a variety of crucial roles in Canada and a requisite number of trained and experienced pilots will be required to facilitate a healthy industry.

As I mentioned in my previous speech on my Motion No. 177, Canada is facing a severe pilot shortage and it has lost the ability to generate the pilots it needs today or that it will require tomorrow.

In fact, Canada will need 7,000 to 10,000 new pilots by 2025, resulting in a projected shortage of at least 3,000 pilots, given the current rate of production. To this point, Canadian flight schools produce about 1,200 commercial pilots each year. Of these, only about 500 join the Canadian aviation industry each year due to international student pilot graduates returning home or international entities that purchase Canadian flight schools and subsequently prioritize their home markets.

Some of the biggest challenges to pilot production in Canada are the high cost of training for new commercial pilots, the low starting salaries and an industry that has evolved a non-linear career path. Those who are fortunate enough to navigate the existing barriers to becoming a pilot are almost always focused on the quickest path to a left seat at a flag carrier. The pilot shortage we face has accelerated that process, leaving the interim paths in considerable chaos.

Traditionally, pilots would spend years building flight time and experience as either a primary flight instructor, a bush pilot or as a military pilot in Canada's Royal Canadian Air Force. All three of these paths service an important purpose in our aviation ecosystem. When the industry faces a pilot shortage, they are usually the first sectors to suffer.

Pilot shortages in these sectors decrease our ability to train the next generation of pilots, reduce or remove air service to rural and remote communities and degrade our country's ability to generate air power with our Canadian Armed Forces. As the pilot shortage percolates up, both scheduled and non-scheduled commercial air service will be negatively affected, disrupting the travelling public, a position that we have already started to see occur.

A further strain that will most certainly exasperate the Canadian pilot shortage is a global one. It is projected that the international transport industry will double the number of aircraft and the amount of passenger traffic by 2036. This will require 620,000 new pilots to fly large commercial aircraft internationally. Eighty percent of these pilots have yet to be trained and Canadian-trained pilots are an attractive offer to many overseas flight operations.

Motion No. 177 only highlights one aspect of the pilot shortage in Canada. Flight schools and pilot training are a critical component of the pilot generation machine. However, it is certainly not the only issue Canadian aviation is facing from a broader perspective.

The industry also has a growing need for experienced aircraft maintenance engineers. It is projected the industry will need a minimum of 5,300 new aircraft mechanics by 2025 to keep up with growth and retirements. Occupations with the largest hiring needs in the industry include pilots, mechanics, avionics technicians, flight attendants, assemblers, air traffic controllers, managers, machinists and engineers.

While discussing the Canadian pilot shortage, it would be remiss of me not to mention the importance of our airports. They too play a critical roll, and I encourage the Government of Canada to continue to work with organizations like the Canadian Airports Council to ensure our airports are properly resourced.

Canada has the third-largest aerospace sector in the world, generating nearly \$30 billion in annual revenue and supporting 211,000 direct and indirect jobs. Aviation connects Canada and Canadians in ways no other form of transportation does or can. Our country's economic prosperity will be highly influenced by the health and well-being of the Canadian aviation sector.

It is my hope to receive the support of the House on my Motion No. 177, which would task to the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities to determine the most effective way to support our Canadian flight schools and pilot production in Canada.

As was mentioned earlier, there was a motion from the NDP. When I last spoke about this, I was asked to consider adding the study of the issue of noise pollution to my motion. I subsequently found out that the committee was already doing it, so although I was agreeable to it at the beginning, I will not be supporting it moving forward.

•(1830)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 6:35 p.m., the time provided for debate has expired.

The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

Adjournment Proceedings

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, November 28, 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.

● (1835)

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on June 18, I asked a question about genetically modified organisms, or GMOs, a topic that is of great concern to Canadians. More specifically, I asked a question about something that happened in Alberta, where genetically modified wheat had been found along the side of a road.

This is all the more shocking because the cultivation of genetically modified wheat for commercial purposes is not authorized in Canada. Canadians are naturally asking questions, since this is not allowed.

The Liberal government and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency must take this situation very seriously. It is so concerning that Japan and South Korea even said that they would suspend their tender and sale of wheat from Canada.

Canadians are very concerned about GMOs because there is no mandatory labelling and because banned products are popping up, like the genetically modified wheat found in Alberta.

While we are on the subject of agriculture, I would like to mention that the NDP was in Montreal last weekend to support farmers. The NDP's position on fully protecting supply management has always been clear: our food supply must be safeguarded.

Many farmers from in and around Drummond participated in "Garde-manger en danger", a major demonstration organized by the Union des producteurs agricoles, the Quebec farmers' union. One of the participants in that march against threats to our food security was Karina Poudrier, vice-president of the local branch of the union and a dairy farmer in Notre-Dame-du-Bon-Conseil. Here is what she said during the march:

Every time there is a new free trade agreement, we get the short end of the stick. It's a real shame. ...We feel like we are constantly being shoved aside and being told it won't be so bad. Sooner or later, people are going to have to realize that we are the ones producing food for everyone else.

She also said she would like the government to develop a food policy that encourages people to buy local foods. The NDP has been urging the government to adopt just such a policy for a long time now, but the government has not done it yet.

Getting back to the subject at hand, we have repeatedly called for mandatory GMO labelling. The member for Sherbrooke even introduced a bill on our behalf to make it mandatory. Unfortunately, the Liberal government rejected it.

Why is it against transparency and our right to know what we are putting on our plate? What does it have to hide? We have the right to know plenty of things. Farmers are already being asked to put certain labels on their consumer products, but GMOs are a strong exception.

What will the government do to prevent a repeat of a situation like the one where genetically modified wheat was found in Alberta despite it being banned?

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has one of the best food safety systems in the world. It is built on internationally recognized scientific regulations.

At the end of January 2018, the Canada Food Inspection Agency, the CFIA, was informed that genetically modified wheat plants were discovered in southern Alberta along the side of an access road after it had been sprayed with herbicide and those plants survived. When the CFIA was informed of this discovery, its scientists immediately began conducting tests to determine why the wheat had survived. The results of the CFIA's tests showed that the wheat that was found had been genetically modified and was tolerant to herbicides. Since genetically modified wheat is not authorized in Canada, the CFIA worked together with its partners at all levels of government on gathering further information, as complete, precise, and credible information as possible on this discovery.

Based on extensive scientific testing, there is no evidence that the genetically modified wheat is present anywhere else other than the isolated site where it was found. It has not entered the human or animal food supply.

We can be certain that the genetically modified wheat does not pose any risk to public safety, animal health or the environment. What is more, we are convinced that the genetically modified wheat did not leave the isolated site, which is being monitored.

Here is another equally important fact. When the extensive scientific testing was complete, our government worked diligently to ensure that our international trading partners had all the information they needed to make informed decisions and to limit market disruptions. To that end, the CFIA developed a test to detect genetically modified wheat. This test was made available to our trading partners so that they could analyze the wheat they imported if they so desired.

Although two of our trading partners, Japan and Korea, temporarily closed their markets to Canadian wheat, they did so only for a short time and it did not have any impact on our trade relations or our partners. It is essential that we ensure that our markets remain open and that Canadians and buyers from around the world continue to have confidence in our top quality Canadian wheat.

Adjournment Proceedings

As a trusted science-based regulator, the CFIA is committed to being transparent and accountable to Canadians and the international community.

The CFIA understands the importance of Canadian wheat for Canadians and our international trading partners. The CFIA is currently looking into the isolated incident to identify targeted areas for continued improvement. The site will be monitored for a number of years and mitigation measures have been implemented to prevent any genetically modified wheat from persisting.

• (1840)

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to congratulate the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford on his work on the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. He asked a lot of questions to try and get some answers on genetically modified wheat.

Why are we having this problem today? We are having this problem because we approved some trials in the 1990s and 2000s. That wheat, which was supposed to be carefully regulated, was found in Alberta, in places where it never should have been. When we say that we need to stop fiddling with our health and our food supply, this is what we are talking about.

When we talk about recklessly fiddling with our food supply and our health by playing around with GMOs, we have to think of genetically modified salmon. Canada is the only country in the world where genetically modified salmon can be bought, sold and distributed. No other country allows it. It is ridiculous.

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant: Mr. Speaker, I repeat, Canada has one of the safest food systems in the world. It is based on sound scientific regulation that is recognized internationally.

This strong, rigorous regulatory system also covers genetically modified crops along with the food and livestock feed that come from those crops. They all must undergo a comprehensive, science-based approval process involving both Health Canada and CFIA.

There are strict requirements regarding the types and quality of the data that must be submitted by applicants. We continue to work with federal departments and provincial ministries, as well as the industry and farmers, to ensure regulatory compliance and to protect Canadian wheat.

The government supports farmers and their families and is working hard to ensure prosperity for Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector now and for years to come.

• (1845)

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after receiving a boiler-plate response last night on this topic, the safe third country agreement, that failed to even address the substance of the issue before us, I thought I would make it easier today.

Experts at the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration have been clear for a year.

For example, Seidu Mohammed, a refugee who lost all his fingers crossing irregularly into Manitoba to have his asylum claim heard,

said that “the safe third country agreement, that's what causes a lot of damage to most refugees and immigrants, so we would like it to be suspended.”

Alex Neve of Amnesty International said that “from a human rights perspective...it's vital that the agreement be suspended.”

Anne Woogler from Matthew House said that “for half of my career there was no safe third country agreement, and I would have to say that things worked so much more smoothly.”

Professor Jamie Liew of the University of Ottawa recommended that we “suspend the safe third country” agreement.

Peter Edelmann, an immigration and refugee lawyer, said, “I think it's worthwhile to suspend the agreement.”

The Hon. Allan Rock, now with the World Refugee Council, stated, “I think that agreement should be suspended and that we should no longer regard the United States as safe for those purposes.”

Dr. Patti Tamara Lenard said, “We can save lives and fingers by suspending it quickly.”

Jin Chien from the Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic said, “we call on Canada to rescind or suspend the safe third country agreement with the U.S.”

Prof. Audrey Macklin, quoting a 2002 report by the citizenship and immigration committee that outlined the conditions the committee believed would justify suspending or terminating the agreement, said, “I would just encourage this committee to consider heeding the recommendations of its predecessors.”

Prof. Anna Purkey of St. Jerome's University said that “As a leader, Canada should reaffirm its commitment to the international legal regime that not only ensures and protects the rights of refugees, but ensures and protects the right of all human beings. This includes....rethinking the safe third country agreement.”

Dr. Megan Bradley of McGill University said that “the safe third country agreement should be suspended.”

Doug Saunders, international affairs writer with the Globe and Mail, pointed out that “The safe third country agreement is what is causing irregular crossings between entry points on the Canada-U.S. border. There is no other factor. If people could present themselves at a legal crossing point for an asylum claim, they would do so.”

Experts have been just as clear about this issue in public. It is time for the government to heed their advice.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to answer the question from the member for Vancouver East.

Adjournment Proceedings

As my hon. colleague knows, the safe third country agreement was reached with the United States in 2004. This agreement's objectives are to enhance the orderly handling of refugee claims, strengthen public confidence in the integrity of asylum systems and help reduce abuse, and share responsibility for protecting people who need protection.

The fundamental principle of this agreement is that people must claim asylum in the first safe country they reach. People who have a legitimate need for protection have the right to claim asylum. This is why we must make sure we are fulfilling our international obligations regarding refugees and why processes must be effective.

To satisfy the requirements of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, Canada is constantly reviewing the countries designated as safe third countries. We take our responsibility to monitor the United States as a safe third country very seriously. The Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction sent a letter to the American Secretary of Homeland Security to ask her to address this issue as soon as possible.

Canada has analyzed recent developments in the United States, including orders pertaining to immigration and refugees, and considers the United States to be a safe country for asylum seekers. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is of the same opinion.

Consequently, the safe third country agreement remains an important agreement with the United States that ensures the orderly treatment of asylum seekers. That said, we continue to raise the issue of the agreement at meetings with our U.S. counterparts and we look forward to discussing options that will improve this agreement.

With all the measures taken by the government to help deter irregular migration, we hope to reconcile two objectives: Canada must remain a safe place for those truly in need of protection, but we must also maintain the integrity of our immigration system and the safety of our citizens.

• (1850)

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, every time the Trump administration blatantly disregards international and human rights law, the government is publicly supporting it by continuing to say that it is a safe country for asylum seekers. The hon. Lloyd Axworthy, now with the World Refugee Council, said:

If the United States returns to a place where refugees can get a fair hearing, then fine, but right now, they are engaged in a total and complete renegeing on all the fundamental commitments of refugee law and treaties and agreements and we should not be part of it.

The former minister of immigration, the hon. Chris Alexander, said:

I've been calling for [the Safe Third Country Agreement] to be suspended for over a year: current US policies & practices for refugees & asylum seekers violate international humanitarian law. Suspend [the Safe Third Country Agreement]

Even the former Conservative minister of immigration is calling for the same. When will the government act?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant: Mr. Speaker, the fundamental principle of the safe third country agreement is that people must make their claim in the first country they arrive in.

Canada has analyzed recent developments in the United States, including the orders pertaining to immigration and refugees, and considers the United States to be a safe country for asylum seekers.

That said, we continue to raise the issue of the safe third country agreement with the U.S. and we look forward to discussing permanent ways to improve this agreement. Canada must remain a safe place for those truly in need of protection, and we must also maintain the integrity of our immigration system and the safety of our citizens.

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, about two weeks ago, every member in this House stood up and agreed on one thing, that the decision of Canada to have a “none is too many” policy and turn away Jewish refugees who were fleeing genocide was something worth an apology.

The Prime Minister invoked the phrase “never again”. To me, if we are going to truly mean never again, we should not be undertaking actions for which Parliament is going to have to apologize in terms of failing to prevent genocide in years to come.

ISIS is a genocidal death cult. There is no other way to describe it. Its members have raped, tortured and systemically eradicated ethnic and religious minorities. This place has declared that ISIS has committed genocide against the Yazidi people. Therefore, I just do not understand why the government has essentially acted as an apologist for Canadians, or people with affiliations to Canada, who have travelled abroad to take up arms to fight with ISIS. The Prime Minister cannot stand in this place, with flowery words and a Kleenex in hand, and say “never again” and then allow ISIS fighters, terrorists, to roam free in Canada as if nothing has happened. I refuse to use the term “fighters”. They are people who are complicit in genocide.

This is so wrong. The government refuses to issue peace bonds to people they suspect have gone and taken up arms and are complicit in genocide. The Prime Minister has stood up and essentially defended giving poetry lessons to these people as opposed to bringing them to justice. The government has introduced Bill C-69, which actually increases the intelligence-to-evidentiary gap in terms of being able to prosecute these people within our own courts of justice. The Prime Minister refuses to go to the United Nations and make changes to the International Criminal Court process.

The reality is that there is no such thing as a big bad guy or just one leader in terms of ISIS being complicit in genocide. As Nadia Murad said in her book, every person who spread propaganda or turned a blind eye to the sex slave trade that she was forced into are complicit in genocide and should be treated as such.

Adjournment Proceedings

There is a Canadian, someone who is in Canada, who has confessed to having killed on behalf of ISIS. His name is Abu Huzaifa. He told this to a New York Times journalist, yet the government has been silent on what it is doing.

My question to the government is very simple. Where is Abu Huzaifa, and why has he not been brought to justice?

•(1855)

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we condemn the horrendous crimes and atrocities perpetrated by Daesh against minorities in Iraq and Syria. We have been clear the persecution of Yazidis in Iraq and Syria is genocide. The perpetrators of these crimes must be brought to justice and to achieve this, Canada has taken action on multiple fronts, and I would like to go over them with the member.

We co-sponsored the UN Security Council resolution that led to the establishment of a mechanism to investigate violations of international law by Daesh, including genocide, to ensure accountability for these crimes.

We co-sponsored the UN Security Council resolution that led to the establishment of an investigative team, Boots on the Ground, to collect evidence of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed by Daesh in Iraq. The team will collect, preserve and store evidence of acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed by the terrorist group in Iraq. Canada continues to actively support the UN and the Government of Iraq in this investigative work.

Furthermore, on the ground, Canada is funding work in Iraq and Syria aimed at collecting and preserving the evidence of Daesh war crimes, including sexual and gender-based violence committed against the Yazidi population for use in eventual legal proceedings.

Our government is also calling on the Security Council to recognize sexual violence as criteria for UN sanctions, so that perpetrators of sexual violence can be held to account for their crimes.

We understand that fighting incitement, pursuing accountability and supporting the reduction of community tensions remain critical for long-term reconstruction and stability and Canada supports such efforts. That is why we have committed \$9.7 million for community-level initiatives to resolve disputes peacefully and foster better social cohesion amongst communities in Iraq.

Through our Middle East strategy, we are also committing \$840 million in humanitarian assistance to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in Syria, Iraq and the region.

Canada is a party to the genocide convention article V, which requires state parties to enact the necessary legislation to implement the convention on domestic law. We are on track to do so.

Let me reiterate and let me be clear, Canada is there on the ground. Canada is providing resources such as expertise and large amounts of funds. We are taking concrete action that will make a meaningful difference to the people in Iraq and Syria, especially the Yazidis.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, what that translates to for those who are watching this is “blah, blah, blah, we have done nothing”.

The reality is that confessed ISIS terrorists are loose in Canada. No peace bonds are being issued. The government cannot tell us where Abu Huzaifa is or when he is going to be brought to justice.

The Liberal government is the government that pulled our armed forces, our men and women in uniform, out of the fight to contain ISIS and spoke against that mission to do so.

The Liberal government likes to have photo ops but when the rubber hits the road, it does not do anything.

The reality is that in order to say “never again” and mean it, we have to prevent genocide as it is happening. Genocide is happening by ISIS right now and we need to bring these people to justice. The government will stand up here and give talking points and litany after litany, but it cannot say “here is how we are bringing these people to justice”. That is wrong.

Where is Abu Huzaifa?

•(1900)

Hon. Andrew Leslie: Mr. Speaker, this government has great soldiers, boots on the ground and training forces to counter these terrorists. We are providing \$840 million to assist in the reconstruction and resettlement and also to ameliorate violence within the communities. We have been a very strong supporter internationally for accountability for Daesh crimes.

As I mentioned, we are taking concrete action on multiple fronts. We have provided extensive support to the United Nations' partners and to our friends and allies.

We are taking action on the ground. We are taking action in the courts. We are taking action within the United Nations. Our troops are helping to train those who are hunting down the terrorists.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. The House stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow, pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:01 p.m.)

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