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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, June 4, 2019

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 4, 2019

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1005)

[*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 44 petitions.

While I am on my feet, I move:

That the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1040)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 1331*)

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Alghabra

Aldag

Amos
Arseneault
Ayoub
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Baylis
Bendayan
Bibeau
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Breton
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
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Long
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Soeurs)
Morrissey
Nassif
O'Connell
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Sikand
Sorbara
Tan

Anandasangaree
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Badawey
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Lockhart
Longfield
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-
Murray
Nault
Oliver
Ouellette
Pescholido
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Qualtrough
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The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2019, NO. 1

BILL C-97—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That in relation to Bill C-97, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2019 and other measures, not more than five further hours shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and five hours shall be allotted to the consideration at third reading stage of the said bill; and

That, at the expiry of the five hours provided for the consideration at report stage and at the expiry of the five hours provided for the consideration of the third reading stage of the said Bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this Order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the Bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period.

[*English*]

At this point, I would invite all hon. members who wish to participate in the 30-minute question time to please rise so that I can gauge participation. Accordingly, I would ask hon. members to keep their interventions to approximately one minute, that being for the member posing the question and also for the minister or a member who may be responding to that.

I remind hon. members that in this 30-minute question period, questions by members of the opposition are given preference, in that the government will be responding, but that is not at all to limit a few questions coming from the government side as well.

Questions, the hon. member for Carleton.

● (1045)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we rise to ask questions about the government's decision to shut down debate on its budget implementation act, at a time of great economic difficulty in Canada. Economic growth has ground to a halt. In fact, growth for the last half-year has been 0.4% on an annualized basis. Meanwhile, south of the border it has been 3%. It is almost 10 times higher south of the border than north of the border.

Then we have the personal financial situation of everyday ordinary Canadians. According to MNP, one of the largest accounting firms in Canada, almost half of Canadians are less than \$200 away from falling short of paying their bills at the end of every month. Just today, this excerpt appeared in *The Globe and Mail*:

More Canadians can't make ends meet.

The number of consumer insolvencies climbed 9.3 per cent in April from a year earlier, to 11,785, according to the latest numbers from Canada's Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy.

The government has raised taxes by \$800 on the average middle-class family, and further tax increases will be required to fund its out-of-control spending. Will the government admit how much taxes will have to rise if the Liberals are re-elected in October?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since my colleague mentioned the time allocation motion, I would like to remind him about everything our government has done in the context of this bill.

Over a period of five days, we had 13 hours of debate in the House at second reading and report stage. Over 46 MPs participated in the debates. In consideration of the bill at committee, we attended 11 meetings and heard from over 138 witnesses. That resulted in 23 amendments being made to the bill, amendments that really strengthen it.

Government Orders

It goes without saying that, as a government, we are committed to collaborating with all parties in Parliament so that we can work for our constituents more efficiently. It is important that we all do our utmost to achieve a consensus on the time remaining to all the parties to debate a bill in the House of Commons.

Since my colleague talked about the time allocation motion, I wanted the record—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is a very sad day. This is the 69th time the Liberals have moved time allocation and closure, basically shutting down debate in this Parliament.

Comparatively, we remember the dismal Harper years, but proportionally, the Harper government actually used closure less often per bill passed than the Liberals have. The Liberals have now gone even lower than the former Harper government did.

That is quite contrary to what the Prime Minister promised back in 2015. He promised Canadians he would respect Parliament, not to shut down debate, as is happening. He also promised not to introduce these massive, omnibus “everything but the kitchen sink” pieces of legislation, which Bill C-97 is. It is a massive budget omnibus bill. It is worse than anything the Harper government produced, and within it are very toxic provisions, including provisions that cut off the ability of refugees to come to Canada.

It has been decried by immigration and refugee groups right across the country. The only group that seems to support the Liberals in this are the white supremacists who have offered real support for the despicable aspects of the bill. Is the real reason the government is trying to ram through this omnibus legislation because it does not want the public to know about the despicable aspects it has hidden in this omnibus bill?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague's mouth was moving faster than his brain, and I would like him to apologize. He said that only white supremacists would support our bill, and that was totally inappropriate.

We have zero tolerance for any form of discrimination against any Canadian. We have zero tolerance for white supremacist speech. I think it is totally inappropriate for him to bring up that issue in the context of a budget bill. I demand that my colleague apologize.

• (1050)

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I as well am very saddened the government is using closure again. As everyone in the House knows, my community has faced some devastating news with the closure of the General Motors plant. We will have a few jobs remaining.

I have been doing round tables for the manufacturing sector and there seems to be a message out there about lack of competitiveness. The government is moving forward on an agenda without actually dealing with our productivity issues and the competitiveness issues.

Sadly, one of the things the government could do is to remove some of the uncertainty it is putting out there. If you look at our trade situation, about 76% of our trade is with the United States and basically the Americans are winning at every attempt they move forward with.

I know the Liberals know this, but they put in a carbon tax and the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says it could be as high as \$5,500 per tonne by 2030. It would get rid of a lot of the uncertainty if the Liberals would let Canadian companies know what their carbon tax will be by 2030. I wonder if the minister would tell us here today.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that our hearts and thoughts go out to the families of GM workers. We are working very hard with the union to protect jobs. The automotive sector is extremely important to Canada, of course, which is why we have not only invested heavily in the sector, but also worked with it to lift the tariffs on steel and aluminum.

I want to set the record straight, because my colleagues have been peddling falsehoods. We have been able to create a million jobs since we were elected. We now have the lowest unemployment rate in 40 years. Let us take a closer look at how Canadian families have benefited. A middle-class family of four has an average of \$2,000 more in their pockets every year thanks to the Canada child benefit. Poverty has also fallen. The poverty rate has decreased by 20% in Canada. Our strategy has lifted 825,000 Canadians out of poverty.

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as everyone knows, the poverty rate is high in Winnipeg Centre. I was just reading about the drop in the poverty rate, which is currently the lowest it has ever been in recorded Canadian history. I even learned today that the median after-tax income was \$59,800 in 2017, the highest in Canadian history. Obviously, we need to do more because there are still people living in poverty in Canada, particularly in Winnipeg Centre.

I would like to know what the minister and the government intend to do to further reduce poverty among children, seniors and the population in general.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the excellent work he does in his riding, in Winnipeg, and more generally in Manitoba and across the country.

Poverty is certainly an area of concern for our government. As I just mentioned, 825,000 people have been lifted out of poverty since we took office and the poverty rate has dropped by 20%. However, the important thing is that, in this bill, the government is recognizing for the first time the importance of establishing an official poverty line in Canada.

Government Orders

It is important to have data so that we can monitor the issue and develop good public policies to counter the effects of poverty. We are going to set up the national advisory council on poverty so we can monitor the situation and continue to take effective action in this regard.

[English]

Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we do care about seniors. Just in the last couple of weeks I was in Richmond Hill, and in my own riding of Richmond Centre, listening to seniors who were crying out for help because of the carbon tax. Everything including groceries, heating their homes and even driving, as many seniors still drive, and a lot of other things are no longer there for them.

How can the government look at those seniors, who have built our great nation, and waste money on things that mean nothing. The Liberals just want to get votes. Let us look at our seniors. What are the Liberals going to do about their living? I heard from seniors, loud and clear, that the current government is not doing anything at all for our great seniors.

• (1055)

[Translation]

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, my colleague should avoid going overboard on the partisanship. Our government has done a lot for seniors. We hear all across the country that seniors are happy after being ignored for years during the Harper government. They are happy to have a government that listens and puts more money in their pockets. That is exactly what we have done. We also helped make things better for low-income seniors.

The bill proposes improvements for the earnings exemption, which is going up to \$5,000 from \$3,500. We are making sure that this exemption will also apply to self-employed workers. When seniors decide to work a little longer, they will have more money in their pockets. My colleague should share this good news with the seniors in his riding.

[English]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have grown somewhat accustomed to the Liberals breaking the promises they put hand on heart and solemnly swore to in the last campaign. However, in this one instance, the Liberals are breaking three commitments all at the same time. First, they committed not to use omnibus legislation to sneak in major changes that have nothing to do with the budget. That is exactly what we see here with respect to refugees. Second, they said they would not use closure to shut down debate in Parliament, yet here they are, at a record pace, beating even the Harper government's pace, shutting it down 69 times.

When asked about these refugee claimants, the border security minister said these changes were necessary because there was too much “asylum shopping” going on, which refugee advocates across this country properly condemned. He also said the reason for these changes was that a fearmongering campaign had been initiated by the Conservatives, with support from groups like the yellow vest movement. He actually laid the claim that this fearmongering was going on with respect to refugee claimants. Then what did he do?

Rather than fight against that fearmongering, he capitulated to it in the changes we see here today.

We see the hypocrisy. It is exactly right. I believe Amnesty International and the refugee advocates in this country when they say the Liberals have broken that promise to Canadians in three different ways. Why are they so surprised that Canadians are failing to support them now when they failed to keep their promises sacred?

[Translation]

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, first, I want to set the record straight. My colleague said that our government promised it would not introduce omnibus bills like the ones introduced by the Harper government.

The truth is that we kept this promise. This bill only contains measures associated with the budget. Since these measures are associated with the budget, I will answer the member's question directly. His question relates to the urgency of refugee cases. I want to assure him and all my colleagues in the NDP that no one will be turned away if they are deemed at risk, and no one will be sent back without the opportunity to be heard. Under the circumstances, it goes without saying that our government is committed to implementing a fair and compassionate refugee protection system that protects the people who need it most while keeping Canadians and our borders safe and secure. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has said that our approach fits in with the refugee approach.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, with all due respect to the minister, I must correct something she said that was patently absurd. She said that the Liberal government has not introduced omnibus bills containing items that have nothing to do with the budget. Need I remind her that the Liberal SNC-Lavalin scandal came about precisely because her government introduced an omnibus bill that included 10 pages of clauses that had absolutely nothing to do with the budget? That is what led to the SNC-Lavalin scandal.

On top of that, the minister said the Liberals have created jobs across Canada. It is not the government that creates jobs, but rather private enterprise. What the government is responsible for, however, is managing public funds and deficits. Need I remind the minister that she and her colleagues promised to run tiny deficits for three years and achieve a zero deficit in 2019?

Could she tell the House what the deficit is today, in 2019?

• (1100)

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, obviously the Canadian economy is doing well.

Government Orders

Indeed, Canadians are the ones who have created one million jobs in this country, but there is a direct link between decisions made by the federal government, our economic performance and Canadians' capacity to create jobs. By cutting taxes for the middle class, we have helped create more jobs in this country and better redistribute wealth. By reducing the small business tax rate from 11% to 9%, we are giving our SMEs a better chance to succeed, improve their profitability and reinvest in their businesses. Not only are those results making a difference, but the federal debt-to-GDP ratio is much, much lower.

This means that Canada has posted the strongest performance of any G7 country. That is thanks to the hard work of Canadians, but also thanks to the work our government has done.

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I cannot but stand when the government denies it has tabled omnibus bills. What about the 800-clause Bill C-69? This bill was so huge that it should have gone to three committees: the environment and sustainable development committee, the transport committee and the natural resources committee.

Instead, our committee, the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, had to deal with the 800-clause bill. The Liberals cut off the number of witnesses we could hear. I could choose only three of the 600 first nations to testify. The bill would impact almost every one of them.

Then, when the committee went through clause by clause, we had to end the review half way through because there was not enough time to review it as it was so urgent to pass it.

The world will be watching what the government does with Bill C-69, which the Senate has shredded.

I cannot believe that a member on that side would say the government has never tabled an omnibus bill.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, since my colleague mentioned Bill C-69, I will gladly take this opportunity to talk to him about our action plan for the environment.

Canadians know that climate change is real and that we have to be prepared to deal with it and to start engaging in an energy transition. That is why our government introduced a new action plan that includes putting a price on pollution. It is high time that we recognized the polluter pay principle in Canada and, ultimately, ensured that polluters are penalized, because pollution has an impact on society as a whole and on our children.

In the meantime, it goes without saying that putting a price on pollution does not mean that Canadians should end up paying more than polluters. That is why our plan helps put money in the pockets of eight out of 10 families while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Rémi Massé (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy that my colleague can list the excellent measures included in budget implementation act, 2019, No. 1. These measures are important for all Canadians.

She mentioned the support that we are giving to seniors who want to return to work. We are exempting them from guaranteed income supplement penalties on the first \$5,000 they earn. That is an excellent measure.

I would also like to hear my colleague talk about the measures we put in place to make it easier for young people to buy their first home.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, access to home ownership is very important.

For 10 years, the Conservatives under Stephen Harper, and now under the Leader of the Opposition, ignored this issue. Little by little, home ownership has slipped out of reach for many Canadians, especially young people.

To address this issue, the Minister of Finance introduced the interesting bill we are debating today. It creates an incentive for the purchase of a first home that will really help new buyers put together a larger down payment. It updates the homebuyers plan and increases the amount that can be withdrawn from the plan from \$25,000 to \$35,000. That is good for first-time homebuyers as well as Canada's construction sector.

• (1105)

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with this whole concept of closure, it has become apparent that the government does not want to keep the promises it made to Canadians. For example, the budget mentions the word “farming” only five times. The government promised it would help canola farmers. It came out with a change for things to go to \$1 million and, surprise, it is not in there. It promised to get rid of the carbon tax on farm fuel and it is not there.

The whole approach of the government is to show nothing. It is embarrassing that we do not have the opportunity to talk about this.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, as the granddaughter of a farmer, I am concerned about the agriculture sector. I am convinced that Canada's farmers are aware of all the work the government is doing to open markets for them around the world while protecting our supply management system, which the Conservatives were prepared to scrap.

To protect the supply management system, we held our ground with the U.S. administration so we could get a good deal with the United States and Mexico. I also know that my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, is working very hard on the canola issue.

We have presented an initial action plan and we will always defend farmers' interests when dealing with the Chinese government.

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I find it unfortunate that we are being imposed a 69th time allocation motion. This time, it is a 370-page budget implementation bill. If this is not a mammoth bill, I do not know what is.

Government Orders

When the Liberals were on the opposition side, they condemned the actions of the Harper government, which did not care about transparency or democracy, but they are doing the same thing today. The minister boasted that 46 members spoke to the bill, yet there are 338 members in the House. That is a far cry from full democracy.

In addition, we are now talking about the most important issue of our time, the environment. All the reports, including those from the commissioner of the environment, the OECD and the Department of the Environment itself, say that we will not reach our targets for at least 200 years. That makes no sense. Every Friday since the beginning of the year, young people have been taking to the streets. These are serious protests, yet the government cannot even be bothered to listen to what they are saying and take concrete action to lower our greenhouse gas emissions right now.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, time allocation is the only tool the government has to move a bill forward in the event of an impasse. We have the duty to ensure that all bills are put to a vote. Obviously, our goal is to work with all of our colleagues here. We do not take any decision lightly, but that is the decision we came to in this case.

With regard to the environment, I agree with my colleague. Climate change is real, and young people across the country are calling on us to take action. That is why we were the first government to have the courage to put a price on pollution. We will always defend our plan and continue to do even more.

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for continuing to defend her government.

Many Liberal MPs knocked on doors in the last election, saying that they were going to be completely transparent, which we have not seen from the government. They said that they would oppose omnibus legislation, like this bill. They also said that they would run balanced budgets in this fiscal year. That again is a promise broken.

I do not blame Liberal MPs, but the member is a minister of the Crown and she needs to account for the continual broken promises. Even in the bill before us, the Credit Union Association was promised that it would have two red-tape reduction measures, and there is only one.

When is the government going to start implementing a proper regime of which everyone in this room can be proud? When will the government start keeping its promises?

• (1110)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, in 2015, Canadians had a difficult but clear choice to make. They could either uphold the austerity policies that were having a direct impact on our economy and people's everyday lives or choose to make new investments and create economic growth. The reality is that they chose the second option. They chose the Liberal Party, and that is exactly the approach that we took.

Canadians have created one million new jobs, the unemployment rate is at a historic low and incomes have increased. What is more,

poverty has been reduced by 20%. In fact, 825,000 Canadians, including 300,000 children, have been lifted out of poverty thanks to the Canada child benefit and our tax cuts for the middle class.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed to see we have time allocation on a budget omnibus bill that has things in it that I do not believe belong in it. We are seeing changes to the immigration act and changes that violate the agreements we have for international refugees.

We are seeing the crisis in Mexico. My brother runs the UNHCR office there. He is saying that Canada needs to do more to protect refugees who have serious claims. The United States is not upholding its international commitments. It is not a safe third country.

I am really disappointed, as a new member of Parliament, that the amendments to the legislation that should be in a separate bill are not being debated in this bill.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my congratulations to my hon. colleague. It is a pleasure to see him in the House.

As I mentioned in French, which I will repeat in English, no person will be turned away if he or she is deemed to be at risk and nobody will be removed without an opportunity to be heard. The government is making that commitment.

We are committed to a fair and compassionate refugee system that provides protection to those who need it most, while ensuring the safety of Canadians and keeping our borders secure.

Since my colleague referred to the UNHCR, the UNHCR said that we were, as a government, upholding our international and domestic legal obligations as asylum claimants would still have access to a robust oral hearing subject to appeal whereby they would receive Canada's protection if found to be at risk.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the new finance minister on her appointment. Surely the person responsible for the budget implementation act would be the one put up to answer the questions.

The previous finance minister was most associated with raising taxes. That minister is maybe more associated with giving deals to allow certain people to avoid taxes. Maybe that is a welcome change.

I want to ask a very direct question about the budgetary policy of the government. When does the minister believe the budget should be balanced?

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention for my colleague that he has two in one, a minister of finance and the Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie. It is too bad I did not get any questions regarding my file, because we reinvested \$60 million into tourism, which is one of the most important industries in the country.

What is clear is that in 2015, Canadians had to make a stark choice. They had to decide whether they wanted to continue cuts under the Harper regime or they wanted to have investments in their own lives, in their own neighbourhoods and see the economy grow. That is exactly what they have seen.

Canadians decided to trust a Liberal government that would ensure they would have more money in their pockets at the end of the month. That is what we did with the Canada child benefit. That is why we were able to help Canadians create one million jobs all across the country. That is why Canada has the best performance of the G7.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith the question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1145)

[*English*]

And the bells having rung:

The Speaker: The question is on the motion. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

• (1150)

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

(*Division No. 1332*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baylis	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle

Blair
Bossio
Breton
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chen
Dabrusin
DeCoursey
Dhillon
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Fergus
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser (West Nova)
Freeland
Gerretsen
Goodale
Graham
Hardie
Hébert
Hogg
Housefather
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McDonald
McKay
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Mendès
Mihychuk
Soeurs)
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Robillard
Rogers
Rudd
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Saini
Sangha
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Sheehan
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Simms
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Vandenbeld
Wilkinson
Young

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Fast	Finley
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Gladu	Godin
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Johns	Jolibois
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Kmiec	Kwan
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MacGregor	MacKenzie
Maguire	Manly
Martel	Masse (Windsor West)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Motz
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Nicholson	Obhrai
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The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Candice Bergen: Mr. Speaker, we currently have a very late night vote scheduled for this evening at 11:25 p.m. I know we are all planning on being back here for that vote, but I would like to propose a motion that I have circulated to the other parties, because I think we actually could move the voting to right after Oral Questions. It would probably better organize the business of the day. We sent it earlier.

I would like to propose that notwithstanding any standing or special order or usual practice of the House in relation to the business of the House today, the deferred recorded division on the opposition motion standing in the name of the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, currently scheduled for tonight at 11:25 p.m. be deferred anew to immediately following the time provided for Oral Questions later this day; and that at the conclusion of the consideration of the report stage of Bill C-97 an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2019 and other measures, or statements by members not seeking—

Some hon. members: No.

• (1155)

The Speaker: Order. As the hon. opposition House leader knows, she is seeking the consent of the House to propose the motion. It is clear that there is no unanimous consent for that.

REPORT STAGE

The House resumed from May 31 consideration of Bill C-97, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2019 and other measures, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been here for over 23 years, and I have always spoken to budget bills, whether the Conservatives were in opposition or on the government side. That is because a budget is what defines our economy; a budget is what defines where Canada's economy will move.

My colleagues on this side have highlighted, in very great detail, what is wrong with this budget bill put forward by the Liberal government. Let me start by saying certain things. I have been sitting here and listening to the Liberals when they get up. They like to attack us, calling out Mr. Harper's name all the time. The Liberal members have used Mr. Harper's name more than anybody I have ever heard. Somehow it is in their psyche that the former prime minister should be used to highlight their deficiencies.

Let me just show, using facts, why they are wrong. The international Institute for Management Development puts together a yearly world competitiveness ranking. Within one year, Canada has fallen three spots on the world competitiveness ranking, from 10th in 2018 to 13th this year. We are the lowest of the G7 countries. In 2018-19, the Liberals were in power. We fell from 10th to 13th.

Let me say this. In the same report, previously, from 2007 to 2015, Canada rose from 10th place to fifth place. That was under the Conservative government of former prime minister Harper. Let me repeat that for the Liberals who speak from their points. Under their regime we dropped in the ranking, going from 10th to 13th, the lowest of the G7 countries. During the period when we were in power under former prime minister Harper, which was 2007 to 2015, we rose from 10th place to fifth place. This is something they should take into account every time they talk about it.

When it comes to economic performance, government officials, business efficiency or infrastructure, the institute says we are not in the top five countries in this index. This is terrible management. Business investment in Canada under the Liberal government has fallen by an annualized rate of 10.9%. This is the second time it has fallen by over 10%. What a shame. This is the management record of the Liberal government.

The Liberal government seems totally oblivious to economic conditions. I come from Alberta. We have seen the devastating impact the government has had on my province. In my city of Calgary, the downtown is completely empty. Right now, businesses in the suburban area are suffering from tax hikes, because the downtown, which used to be the core economic sector in Calgary, has half its buildings empty. That is since the Liberals came into power. They had the opportunity to fix that.

The Liberals bought the Trans Mountain pipeline, but even if they started construction on it, what about Bill C-69, and what about Bill C-48, the tanker bill? Those bills are a direct attack on Alberta.

Government Orders

•(1200)

Albertans are now reeling from the disastrous management of the government. When the father of our current Prime Minister was there, that was the first time Alberta was suffering. I was there at that time. The government tried to seize the oil royalties. The finance minister was Marc Lalonde. It was a disastrous result. Since then, the Liberals have never recovered in Alberta. During the election of 2015, the current Prime Minister said that he would do business differently than his father in Alberta. Lo and behold, those sunny days are gone. This is something that, again, he has not fulfilled.

I am talking about Alberta and the energy sector. The energy sector benefits the whole country. It is not only Alberta's sector. It is British Columbia's, Quebec's, Ontario's, the Maritimes', everyone. It is one of our key sectors.

What is very important is that our companies have spent billions of dollars on clean technology. I will give one example. I was on the foreign affairs committee in the opposition. At that time, in the oil fields of Sudan, Talisman, a Canadian company, had a percentage of the operation in Sudan. All these NGOs that are based in western Canada found that it was easy to target a Canadian company, so they went after the Canadian company, accusing it of all kinds of crimes committed against the environment. The ultimate result was that Talisman sold its shares to China and to India. The next day, all the protests were over.

Has oil stopped? No, it has not. Whom will they target? They will target Canadians. Why will they target them? It is an easy way to do it for these environmentalists. All of a sudden, they disappeared. That shows that the targets of these environmentalists are where they are doing it right now.

I want to go on to another issue, which is the media outlets these guys are giving money to. I can tell members why it is going to be a problem. What about the ethnic media? There are a huge number of ethnic media in the country. Are the Liberals going to give money to the ethnic media, or are they only going to give money to the old Canadian media that are sitting here on the national scene? Are they the only ones who are going to benefit? This is a slippery slope. I will accuse them of discrimination if they do not give money to the ethnic media.

On the panel, there sits a guy who is absolutely anti-Conservative. He said the day before yesterday that he has a right to speak freely. Absolutely. We in the Conservative caucus warn their labour union that he is absolutely right that he can speak, but he is not going to sit on an independent panel and decide which media are going to get money. That goes against democracy. That goes against the principles of democracy. It puts all journalists under a cloud. These journalists had better wake up, because they are going to be under a cloud. Can we trust them when they are getting money from the government? Any time anyone else gets money, they oppose that. How can I believe that what these journalists are writing is unbiased? All indications are that the government is using the money it has to buy votes and to buy publicity. It is a slippery road. It is best not to get involved. The whole country has media, so it is easier for the Liberals not to do that.

In my conclusion, let me say clearly that this is an absolute economic disaster by the government.

•(1205)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member is so wrong in his concluding remarks. I would challenge him by saying that over one million jobs have been created by this government working with every region of our country. We can talk about tax breaks for the middle class. We can talk about investing in infrastructure.

This bill today is about the implementation of a series of budgets that have had a profoundly positive impact on Canada's middle class and those who aspire to be part of it. They deal with issues such as poverty among our children and our seniors. This government has lifted hundreds of thousands of them out of poverty. Compared to Harper in his 10 years, it has been absolute night and day.

Does the member not believe that a million jobs and the series of things I just listed are good and that Canadians will make a positive judgment come October 19, based on what I just indicated, compared to what the member opposite has said?

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, those are typical Liberal talking points, nothing more than that. They are the usual huff and bluff sunny ways we are talking about.

He should come down to the ground. He should come down to Alberta and Saskatchewan and talk to the people there who are suffering from job losses. They cannot put food on the table. I do not know which figures the member is talking about. Let us go and talk to them.

The member should walk on the ground and listen to them. He is all about reading Liberal talking points.

•(1210)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague whether he believes the budget implementation bill should have included a clause to eliminate stock options for CEOs, who tend to be quite well-off already. Rich CEOs are still being protected, unlike less wealthy Canadians.

[*English*]

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, the difference between the Conservatives and the NDP, and of course, the NDP is similar to the current Liberal government, is that we allow businesses to make their own decisions. We allow the business community to run businesses out there. Governments do not like interfering in business affairs. We will only interfere if it is in the interest of the public.

In general, businesses in this country, under our government, when we were in power, had a free hand to make proper business decisions, which is why I read the report, and I am going to read it again. Under the Liberal regime, we fell in the world competitive ranking from 10 to 13. During our regime, Canada rose from a ranking of 10 to five, something the Liberals should wake up and smell.

Government Orders

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have had the pleasure of hearing many speeches from my colleague. I was there for his Petro-Canada speech, one of the truly fine moments in Parliament, as well as what I call his wake up and smell the thing speech, which, again, was wonderful.

Our economy is based on exports. The member knows the problem we have been having with China, India and so many countries where we have really lost our position internationally. I would ask my friend, who for so long served as a parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, if he would talk about the importance of Canada in the world and the importance to our economy. Why was that not addressed in the budget?

Hon. Deepak Ohrai: Mr. Speaker, it is simple and straightforward. The government's priority is not the economy. The Liberals have other priorities and have put money in other areas. The economic advantage Canada had and will continue having is not on their agenda.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to address the Chair and our fellow citizens on the subject of the latest budget.

Over the past four years, our government has repeatedly proven that investing in the middle class pays dividends for society as a whole. Once again this year, Canadians can be sure that the government's priorities mirror their own.

Over the past four years, the cause dearest to my heart has been seniors. Meeting the men and women who live in phases I and III of the *Domaine des Forges and Manoir Thérèse Casgrain* has been such a pleasure and has strengthened my dedication to our fellow Canadians in their golden years. That is why it is an honour to belong to a party that, since 2016, has repeatedly demonstrated its dedication to the well-being of our seniors through measures such as increasing the guaranteed income supplement for seniors living alone and restoring the age of eligibility for old age security to 65.

The concerns of our seniors go beyond that. Many of our young retirees still have a lot to contribute to our society, including by extending their career. We have to reward the efforts of those who have already given so much to our country. That is why I commend the decision to increase the GIS exemption. To all those who continue working after they retire, our government is showing that it stands by them and will protect their place in the working world.

In an ever-changing world where automation and digitization threaten so many jobs, we must be proactive to help those who still have a long career ahead of them. Professional training is a fundamental challenge of the upcoming decade. Whether we are talking about skills development or career change, continuing education will help keep the Canadian workforce at the top. The Canada training benefit is a key step toward that goal. It provides money to workers to pay for training costs.

I know how important our skilled workers are. A few weeks ago, I toured the Mecaer Aviation Group plant located in the riding of Marc-Aurèle-Fortin. It made me realize that the quality of a machine counts for nothing without a skilled worker to operate it. These workers are the backbone of our economy and always will be.

Canadians are our government's top priority, no matter what sector they work in, and that will never change.

Besides our economy, health is a central theme in this budget. In the short term, we need to focus on the many Canadians who are still being forced to choose between food and medicine. There is no denying that the path to national pharmacare will be rocky, and we cannot allow ourselves to hasten a process that will change people's lives. That is why I commend the creation of the Canadian drug agency, which represents a decisive step towards fair and equitable access to health for all.

Canadians' health is an urgent issue in the short term, but we also know that the effects of climate change are imminent. Doing nothing now costs more than taking action. The key to a successful ecological transition is to change our consumption habits while maintaining our economic gains. The only way we can afford to make a successful ecological transition is by staying on the path to prosperity that our government put this country on.

• (1215)

Transportation is a key issue because it is both an environmental challenge and a pillar of our economy. Millions of Canadians travel by car every day. With this budget, our government will contribute up to \$5,000 to the purchase of zero-emission vehicles and expand the network of charging and refuelling stations for them.

I want to tell all Canadians that I have full confidence that our government will keep Canada on the path to prosperity. Based on the fact that 900,000 jobs have been created and 825,000 people lifted out of poverty, I am convinced that this budget will only improve their daily lives.

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really want to thank my colleague for his speech.

He spoke about environmental protection and zero-emission vehicles, the creation of a drug agency and how to support and help the average family.

Can he explain the effect all these elements have had on Canadians in general?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before I give the floor to the hon. member from Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, I would like to remind members that they must be in their own seats to ask a question or to speak. I realize that the Chair, too, can make mistakes.

The hon. member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin.

Government Orders

Mr. Yves Robillard: Mr. Speaker, our government is ensuring that Canadians are ready to play a key role in tomorrow's clean economy, notably by helping them purchase zero-emission vehicles. Budget 2019 provides a financial incentive worth up to \$5,000 for the purchase of a zero-emission vehicle. We are reducing greenhouse gas emissions while optimizing our talent and our technology to accelerate the commercialization and adoption of zero-emission vehicles.

• (1220)

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple question for my colleague. This question gets repeated with every budget and every budget implementation bill.

In 2015, his party promised to put an end to omnibus budgets. Year after year, actually, twice a year with budget implementation bills, it has become clear that the Liberals have adopted the Conservative practice of including just about anything in omnibus budgets.

In this particular case, we have changes to the status of the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, measures pertaining to the Hazardous Products Act and amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. That all should have been examined separately, but the Liberals included it in the same bill.

I am trying to understand how my colleague can say that his party fulfilled that formal commitment, made in 2015, to not use omnibus budgets, when they do introduce bills that include items that have nothing to do with the budget.

Mr. Yves Robillard: Mr. Speaker, I do not have time today to explain our position, but I can say that we have created one million jobs in Canada since 2015. We know that some people do not have access to the training they need to benefit from these new good-paying jobs.

Our government is therefore launching the Canada training benefit to help workers find the time and money they need to upgrade their skills. Our government believes that Canadians should be able to gain new skills and take their future in their own hands at any stage of their professional lives.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have just 10 minutes to talk about Bill C-97, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2019 and other measures. I would have liked to have my colleague answer my question, since he had the time and it was not too complicated.

When the Liberals were in opposition and during the 2015 election campaign, they promised to stop this trend of including measures that have absolutely nothing to do with the budget in the budget and budget implementation bills. This is an undemocratic measure and practice. It forces us to vote on the budget, which is a confidence vote, and on measures that should be considered separately from the budget.

The Liberals were critical of this practice for four years, but they continue to utilize this undemocratic process.

I would like to talk about Bill C-97 and the budget in general, not necessarily about what is in the budget or the bill, but about what is

not there. Over the past four years I have raised some very important issues highlighting how the Liberals did not keep their promises.

The first thing that I wanted from Bill C-97 was to see that the Minister of Finance was keeping his promise to address the issue of tax transfers for businesses and farms. The tax transfer issue is important because, at present, an individual who owns a small business or family farm and wants to transfer it to his children or a family member must pay more tax than if he transferred or sold it to a stranger or someone who is not a family member. There is a very simple reason for this. Selling to a stranger triggers a capital gain with a set of exemptions. However, the profits from the sale to children are treated as dividends and fully taxed.

In 2016, I introduced a private member's bill, Bill C-274, to address this issue. The bill sought to ensure that these two types of transactions received equal treatment and that individuals would not be at a disadvantage when selling their assets to their children.

I spent a year working on Bill C-274. I visited many areas of Canada, particularly the maritime provinces, which are represented by 32 Liberal members. I did not go to speak with MPs, but rather to speak with representatives of chambers of commerce and organizations that advocate for fishers and farmers. Everyone agrees that this legislation is necessary. I would even say that the tax treatment involved when businesses and family farms are sold or transferred is one of the top concerns of small business owners.

I worked on this for a year. At the end of that year, when it was time to begin debating the bill, I had the support of about 25 Liberal members. I had the support of the Conservatives, the Bloc Québécois and the independent members of the House. The only thing missing was the support I needed from the Liberals. I was able to get the support of at least 25 members after making citizens aware, citizens who then spoke to their MPs about it.

The bill made it through its first hour of debate, but then, before the start of the second hour, the Minister of Finance made a surprising announcement. He said that the bill was going to cost the government between \$800 million and \$1.2 billion in lost revenue. It was surprising because the tax specialists we hired to study the impacts of the bill estimated the tax loss at between \$90 million and \$100 million, which is hardly peanuts, but still an acceptable cost to insure that we level the playing field, so to say.

Clearly, these are two different price ranges. The Minister of Finance took his department's figures and successfully convinced a string of Liberal MPs that, though he understands how important this bill is for SMEs and family farms, they had to vote against it because losing \$1 billion in tax revenue would be irresponsible. He promised that, by the end of this Parliament, there would be a tax measure in the budget that would truly meet those needs. He promised that.

In the meantime, there have been three budgets and five budget implementation bills. There is still nothing to deal with this inequity, this injustice that exists for owners of small business, family farms, and fish companies who want to transfer their business to their children.

Government Orders

●(1225)

I am appealing to the Liberal members who represent rural and farming regions and who have a lot of SMEs in their riding to think about the consequences of voting against Bill C-274. Once again, there is no measure in this budget bill to address the tax inequity and unfairness. That is the first thing I wanted to note. The Minister of Finance broke the promise he made to his own caucus, to correct the situation in a later budget. The election is fast approaching and this still has not been addressed. My colleagues can be sure that this issue will be raised in a number of ridings come election time. Liberal candidates will have to defend the finance minister's position, as well as his failure.

Another issue that is very important to MPs from rural areas is cell coverage. We hear a lot about investment in high-speed Internet, and clearly, there has been some. Not everyone has access, but there has been some investment. However, none of the new Liberal or Conservative programs have included measures for cell coverage, even though it is so important. In my riding, Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, 13 of the 39 municipalities I represent have little or no cell coverage. Over 1,000 people live in the municipality of Squatec, and they have no cell coverage unless they find exactly the right spot on top of a little hill or on the second floor of the high school.

We have raised this issue repeatedly in the House. The member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue has brought it to the government's attention many times during question period. The government's answers always focus on investment in high-speed Internet. Those are two different things. Investing in high-speed Internet does not mean investing in cell coverage. Essentially, telecom companies are not interested in investing in rural regions without adequate population density. Individual companies will not risk making that investment because it could end up benefiting all the other companies. The government needs to intervene because the market has failed, but the Liberal government has done nothing for four years now.

Several members are concerned about this issue. I am thinking of the member for Laurentides—Labelle and the member for Pontiac, who represent large rural areas and who tentatively bring up this issue from time to time. We voted on a motion moved by the member for Pontiac that emphasized the urgent need for action. That is the problem right there. The government talks about the urgent need to act, but it never does, even though it is in a position to do so. If the government does not want to make the necessary investments so that rural regions and rural residents are no longer treated as second class, then concrete action needs to be taken.

If the government does not want to make real investments, it needs to think of another solution to take the responsibility for making investments away from the companies and give it to an independent Canadian agency, for example. That agency would be funded by the companies as a condition of licence, and it could make investment decisions and acquire the necessary spectrum to do so. That would ensure coverage in all of the regions that would not otherwise have it, and all of the companies that made investments could also benefit from the new coverage. That is one solution that the government could implement. Another solution would be for the

government to invest in cell coverage as it did for high-speed Internet.

There are solutions. All it takes is a little goodwill. However, since we began raising this issue, I have not seen any goodwill from the Liberals in this regard.

I will not have much time to talk about the third item, but I brought it up in my question to my colleague earlier. It is the fact that the Liberals did not keep their promise to table budget bills that actually focus on budget-related issues. Instead they chose to play petty politics and try to speed through their legislative agenda by throwing in tons of measures that have nothing to do with the budget. This Liberal tactic is as politically cynical now as it was when it was first used by the Conservatives from 2011 to 2015.

For all of these reasons, I find myself unable to vote for this bill. I am happy to have had a chance to explain why.

●(1230)

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously, I respect the work of the member, but we have some pretty significant disagreements about the approach in terms of the budget. Therefore, I would ask the member for his perspective on the issue of budget balance, because we hear from the government, essentially, an expectation that the budget would never need to be balanced, it seems.

With the NDP in the last election, we had more discussion of balanced budgets, but we do not hear as much about that now. I am curious about the member's view on whether it is important to balance the budget, what the timeline would be and how that should inform the kinds of spending commitments that are made.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

There are indeed some considerable differences between our respective visions. However, I think his question was interesting, and I will answer it as the economist I am.

When a business wants to borrow money, it assesses its decision to borrow by comparing the rate of return on the planned investment with the amount of interest it will have to pay. If the rate of return is better, it borrows and invests the money. It goes into debt in order to invest and grow, because its investments will be positive.

The same principle applies to a government. If the government can increase productivity and economic growth at a greater rate than the interest it has to pay on its loans, that is not a problem. The problem with the Liberals is that most of the deficit they have run up was supposed to be invested in infrastructure, yet many reports, including those from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, say that there has been far less investment in infrastructure than anticipated and that the returns have not really materialized. A lot of money is being invested, but are we seeing a return, and is it worthwhile?

Those are some of the questions the Liberals will have to answer.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members of the NDP say they are not too sure whether or not the investments that have accrued the deficit were worth it.

The member in essence was referencing infrastructure and there is no doubt that plays a role in it but so does the Canada child benefit program, which has lifted hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty, the increase to the guaranteed income supplement and the tax break to Canada's middle class. Combined, this has all contributed towards a much healthier economy that has ultimately generated over one million jobs since we have been in government and working with Canadians in all regions.

As we get closer to an election, I am wondering if the member could be clear on whether or not we can anticipate the NDP will take the same approach they took in 2015, when they said they would balance the budget.

• (1235)

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, I see that the member is taking the same approach he took in 2015, that is, giving the government full credit for creating jobs, just as the Conservatives did in 2011 and in 2015.

The government can take action to facilitate certain things, but all economists agree that taking full credit for job creation is utterly absurd.

The member mentioned infrastructure. I hope he is reading the Parliamentary Budget Officer's reports, because, in terms of infrastructure, the money is quite simply not there. One of the Liberals' most important promises was to create an infrastructure bank. The infrastructure bank was supposed to support the creation of infrastructure.

For us, it was clear that the bank would be a tool to help privatize infrastructure revenue. In fact, the bank, which was established four years ago and is already weighed down by cumbersome bureaucracy, has managed to make just a single investment. It granted Montreal a loan for its light rail project. That has been its only investment. Actually, it is not even an investment; it is a loan that will be paid back.

I am listening to the Liberals talk about their plans for the upcoming election campaign. They say they are going to do this and that thanks to the infrastructure bank. It makes no sense. It is a huge empty shell. The only reason the infrastructure bank would ever come to fruition would be to satisfy shareholders and their investment funds. We will have to start charging tolls or user fees. Canadians will end up having to pay for their own infrastructure, which they already invested in.

[English]

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when our government was elected in 2015, we promised Canadians that we would fight for the middle class. We have kept that promise. We have created over one million jobs since being elected and an overwhelming majority of those jobs are well-paying, full-time jobs.

Recently, Canada saw its lowest unemployment rate in over 40 years. Recent numbers also show that Canada saw a decrease in the number of people living in poverty, from 10.6% to 9.5%, between 2016 and 2017. That means over 900,000 people have been lifted out of poverty, including 300,000 children, over 150,000 seniors and many adults.

Since we were elected, we have seen a rise in the median after-tax income of Canadians, to \$81,500. In Surrey Centre, our infrastructure investments are paying off, from the \$125-million Simon Fraser sustainable energy and environmental engineering building, completed now with \$45 million from the Government of Canada, to the \$61-million brand new RCMP forensic lab that is about to open, to the over \$900 million given for public transit funding to help renovate Surrey Centre SkyTrain stations, buy new energy-efficient buses and replace the 1976 expo-era SkyTrain cars with new comfortable and quiet cabins. Our plan is working.

The multiplier factor is evident everywhere. Dozens of new IT and health care innovators have opened up. Kwantlen Polytechnic University has built a new urban campus. The Fraser port is growing on a rapid scale and the city is firing on all cylinders. Our transit ridership is the highest in the world, and last year, ridership went up by over 15%.

I was 15 years old when I designed my first home, and by the time I was 16, I was designing homes as a business and for others. Beginning in 1991, I designed over 700 homes in a seven-year period, from the age of 16 to 23. Those were the years of opportunities that helped me launch my career and secure my livelihood. As I see the willingness of young people to work equally hard today, it upsets me to know that they are undoubtedly faced with more barriers to initiate and secure their housing dreams.

The average price for a detached home in greater Vancouver exceeds \$1 million, while the average price of an apartment or condo is \$660,000. These prices often take the prospect of buying a home off the table. In turn, many young people and families are compelled to rent instead of buy. For those who do rent, the prices have become incredibly high as well. Everyone needs a safe and affordable place to call home, but today, too many Canadians are being priced out of the housing market.

As the member for Surrey Centre, I am all too familiar with constituency concerns about housing insecurity, as well as the impact this insecurity has on the overall quality of life of my constituents. Whether they are young persons hoping to start their careers or a couple looking to start a family, buying a first home remains a challenge, with many young people believing that home ownership is increasingly becoming an unattainable goal in their lifetimes.

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Recently, I held a round table in my riding of Surrey Centre with the Minister of Finance's former chief of staff and director of policy. Housing affordability, the stress test and mortgages were the three main points brought up by the Homebuilders Association Vancouver, mortgage associations, the construction industry, home builders, real estate trade organizations and other trade organizations throughout the Lower Mainland. The round table sparked positive conversations on how to mitigate pressure and make home ownership affordable and easier.

By listening to the needs of Canadians and encouraging dialogue, I am proud to say this government has continued its commitment to improving housing affordability in this country, and this is exemplified in budget 2019. The inclusion of the first-time homebuyer incentive will drastically change the housing prospects for current and prospective Surrey Centre residents.

The first-time homebuyer incentive targets young families who wish to enter the market and buy their first homes. This will help people like Karina, from my office, or Julian, who will be able to buy their first homes when this program is implemented. Those with a household income of less than \$120,000 will be eligible to have a 10% reduction in their down payment with the help of CMHC.

● (1240)

In addition, the homebuyers plan helps with the down payment and costs associated with the purchase of a first home. Paying a lower down payment, new homebuyers will pay reduced monthly mortgage payments. The new homeowners, in turn, will require smaller loans and new homeowners will not be beholden to the CMHC for any kind of repayment until the place is sold.

This incentive is inclusive in its objective of making a new home affordable for all Canadians. This includes new Canadians, single parents and youth who could greatly benefit from this break and form of security.

Division 19 of the national housing strategy recognizes the importance of housing to the well-being of all persons in Canada, reflects the key principles of a human rights-based approach to housing and focuses on improving housing outcomes for those in greatest need.

In 2017, the government launched the rental construction financing initiative, which is a four-year program that provides low-cost loans for the construction of new rental housing for modest and middle-income Canadians. To provide more affordable rental options for middle-class Canadians, budget 2019 proposes an additional \$10 billion over nine years in financing through the rental construction financing initiative, extending the program until 2027-28. With this increase, the program will support 42,500 new housing units across Canada, particularly in areas of low rental supply.

The government is also committed to working in partnership with the province and the municipality to ensure a tri-levelled affordable housing strategy for Surrey residents. In conjunction with British Columbia's affordable B.C. plan and Surrey's affordable housing strategy, the government's new homeowner incentive is a proactive measure to ensure that a future in Surrey is possible for young people and families.

In addition to the measures announced on March 15, 2019, the ministers of finance for Canada and British Columbia announced their intention to create an expert panel on housing supply. The panel will examine factors that currently limit housing supply and recommend the actions governments can take to ensure that together we are building better, more affordable and more inclusive communities.

These new incentives add to an already existing, ambitious national housing strategy that was released in 2017. Our government committed over \$40 billion over the following decade to help Canadians from coast to coast to coast with housing affordability. This strategy considers the distinct housing needs of Canadians such as seniors, women and children fleeing domestic violence, indigenous people, persons with disabilities, those dealing with mental health and addiction issues, veterans and young adults.

Our goal is to cut chronic homelessness in half, remove 530,000 families from housing need and invest in the construction of up to 100,000 new homes. However, our government knows that these changes cannot, unfortunately, take place overnight. This is why our government has introduced new measures in budget 2019 to help relieve the pressures on Canadians.

Throughout this government's time in office, we have taken significant steps forward in terms of backing the middle class, and budget 2019 is another step in the right direction. From achieving the lowest unemployment rate in years to instituting the first-time homebuyer incentive, we have shown that we want to invest in Canadians and their families. Additional projects that were established to actively help Canadians hoping to get into the housing market are the rental construction financing initiative and the national housing strategy.

We will continue working hard to ensure that for middle-class Canadians home ownership is not a pipe dream, but rather, an achievable goal.

● (1245)

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I was quite impressed by the fact that my hon. colleague started his speech talking about his own life as an entrepreneur. I do not want to fight about age, but at a young age he had a great talent for creating wealth and I congratulate him.

My question is about the current situation, rather than about when he was young. Four years ago, he was elected on a promise that in 2019 the deficit would be zero. What is the deficit today?

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for making nice comments about my earlier career.

Government Orders

When we were elected, we promised Canadians that we would invest in jobs, infrastructure and the middle class. We have delivered on those promises. We have created more jobs than ever in the history of this country. We have brought the unemployment rate down to the lowest ever recorded in this country. We are the best economy in the G7 when it comes to growth and are the envy of the world currently.

My constituents are extremely happy, as I see that investment and growth right in Surrey Centre with new companies and new businesses opening up. The biggest complaint I ever receive is about not being able to find enough employees. I have yet to receive a complaint about someone not being able to find a job. That is the best indicator of a great economy.

[Translation]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that a budget is always about making choices.

The government is currently making choices by leaving stock option deductions for CEOs in place and subsidizing big oil companies with its pipeline purchase. We are losing billions because of this, while there is a housing crisis going on across the country. The hon. member talked about the crisis in his riding. There is a crisis in my riding too, but it is a hundred times worse in the north, especially in indigenous communities.

The government is putting all sorts of things in the budget, so why did it not take advantage of this latest budget to introduce a targeted housing strategy for indigenous people that includes much-needed funding?

[English]

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Mr. Speaker, I am definitely concerned about housing, especially with respect to indigenous communities and bands. The current housing strategy will benefit thousands of urban aboriginals living in cities. In fact, Surrey is home to one of the largest urban indigenous populations. These measures will help them even more. There is still work to be done. A lot of work is being done on water treatment facilities. No band, no reserve and no place in Canada should have a boil water advisory.

When it comes to indigenous housing, the member is right. The government should and will commit to creating more housing in those communities, so everyone benefits from this great economy.

• (1250)

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from Winnipeg Centre all the way to Surrey Centre, I want the member to know that division 7 of part 4 would amend the Old Age Security Act to provide, in July 2020, a new income exemption for the purpose of calculating the guaranteed income supplement. This new exemption excludes the first \$5,000 of a person's employment and self-employment income, as well as 50% of the person's employment and self-employment income greater than the \$5,000, but not exceeding \$15,000. This will be great for seniors. It will allow them to continue working, while ensuring they receive those benefits.

We are providing our hard-working seniors with the things they need to be successful.

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what I heard from my constituents.

In the summer, prior to the budget, some seniors in my riding came to my "chai with Sarai" events and some of my other programs. They said that they needed a little space, a bit of room. They wanted to work hard and stay active. The cap was set decades ago at \$3,500 and they asked for it to be increased to \$5,000, de-escalating up to \$15,000.

Like the member for Winnipeg Centre, I advocated for that with the Minister of Finance. I was happy to tell seniors that it was included in this budget, and they were ecstatic.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not to sound like a narcissist, but I wonder if we currently have quorum in the House.

And the count having been taken:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): No, we do not. Call in the members.

An hon. member: Are you sure?

And the count having been retaken:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): We now have quorum. They came to hear the speech of the hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, again, not to sound narcissistic, but if we are going to talk, there should be people here to listen.

We are here today to debate the government's bill, which would implement the main measures of the budget. Budgets are highly technical and theoretical, but this gives us a chance to really dig deep.

My first observation is about the budget, as introduced by the minister, election promises and the format of the bill, which is 370 pages long and covers many topics that have nothing to do with the budget. This is called an omnibus bill.

I will remind members that four years ago, back in 2015, the Liberals made a promise. During the election campaign, they made several promises to Canadians in order to get elected. These promises were scrapped, however. The fourth paragraph on page 30 of their election platform states the following:

We will not resort to legislative tricks to avoid scrutiny.

[The former prime minister] has used prorogation to avoid difficult political circumstances. We will not.

[The former prime minister] has also used omnibus bills to prevent Parliament from properly reviewing and debating his proposals.

This is exactly what we are debating today. Today we are debating an omnibus bill into which the government inserted measures that have nothing to do with the budget. Four years ago, the Liberals promised not to do this, but they did it anyway.

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Must I remind the House that, at around the same time last year, we were all here studying the previous budget implementation bill? The government had slipped in a dozen or so pages of legal provisions to allow companies facing prosecution for corruption, among other charges, to sign separate agreements. These provisions were not properly debated by parliamentarians. The Senate asked the minister to testify, but he refused.

That is what gave rise to the SNC-Lavalin scandal. Last year's bill included a process to allow for separate trials or agreements. That led to the director of public prosecutions' decision to proceed to trial on September 4. Ten days later, the former attorney general agreed to this proposal, and that is when partisan politics seeped into the legal process. That is what later led the former attorney general and the former president of the Treasury Board to be booted out of the Liberal caucus for having stood up and told Canadians the truth.

I am talking about this sad episode in Canadian democracy precisely because what we have before us today is a government that was elected under false promises, a government that promised the moon and sought to be pure as the driven snow but, in the end, did not keep its promises. That is essentially it. We have an omnibus bill.

Now let us talk about what is really going on with this bill, the government's budget implementation bill. What is the deal with this budget? Once again, we must not forget that the Liberals got themselves elected on the basis of budget promises they most certainly did not keep. The last paragraph on page 76 of the Liberal Party platform mentions the planning framework, the budgeting framework. It says right there in black and white:

With the Liberal plan, the federal government will have a modest short-term deficit of less than \$10 billion in each of the next two fiscal years....

The platform also stated that the deficit would decline in the third year and that Canada would return to a balanced budget in 2019-20.

That was the promise that got the Liberals elected. Their bold but not-so-brilliant idea was to make a solemn pledge to run small deficits and eliminate the deficit entirely in 2019-20. That deadline has arrived, and what happened? Those modest deficits ballooned into three big deficits in excess of \$70 billion. This is 2019-20, the year they were supposed to get rid of the deficit, but instead, this year's deficit is \$19.8 billion.

● (1255)

Twice now I have asked the Minister of Tourism and the Liberal member for Surrey-Centre, if I remember correctly, to tell me the amount of this year's deficit. They can never come up with the simple and yet very serious figure of \$19.8 billion. How can we trust these people who get elected by promising, hand on heart, that they will generate only small deficits and zero deficit in 2019, when they generated three large deficits plus a huge one on the year they were meant to deliver a zero deficit?

What the Liberals fail to understand is that a deficit is a bill that our children and grandchildren will have to pay. A deficit today is a tax tomorrow. It will have to be paid sooner or later. Why did this happen? Because we are living beyond our means.

I would like to remind the House that, historically speaking, deficits are permitted under special conditions. You will remember that we ran deficits during the war. We had to defeat the Nazi

menace. We will soon be celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Normandy landings on June 6. It was not until Prime Minister Louis Saint-Laurent that fiscal balance was restored, and I am not just saying that because I happen to represent the riding of Louis-Saint-Laurent.

It was in the early 1970s, under the Liberal government led by Pierre Elliott Trudeau, the current Prime Minister's father, that we began running deficits in times of prosperity.

It was unfortunate for the Canadian economy. Indeed, fast forward 50 years and the son of the prime minister who ran deficits in times of growth is doing exactly the same thing, running four huge deficits in a period of rapid global economic expansion.

I truly have a great deal of respect and esteem for the Minister of Finance, as I do for all those who run for election and offer their services to Canadians and who, proud of their personal experience, wish to put it to good use. The Minister of Finance had a stellar career on Bay Street. We might even call him a Bay Street baron for having administered his family's fortune so well. When he was head of the family company, Morneau Shepell, he never ran deficits.

When he was in the private sector, the Minister of Finance never ran a deficit, but since he moved to the public sector, since he has been using taxpayer money, since he has been using money that belongs to Canadian workers, he has been running back-to-back deficits.

How many have there been? There have been one, two, three, four budgets, and there have been one, two, three, four deficits. Four out of four, that is the grand slam of mismanaged public funds, while, in the private sector, he was a model money manager, an example to be followed.

To say the least, he is now neither a model or an example to be followed. Generating deficits during periods of economic growth is the ultimate heresy. No serious economist will tell you that this is a good time to generate a deficit. Quite the contrary, when the economic cycle picks up, it is time to put money aside.

They were very lucky. When they were elected, they took over the G7 country with the best economic track record. When we were in power, we were so intent on serious and rigorous management that we were the first G7 country to recover from the great crisis of 2008-12. That was thanks to the informed and rigorous management of the late Hon. Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance, and Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper. These people inherited the best economic situation among the G7 nations, as well as a \$2.5 billion budget surplus, which will not be the case in five months if Canadians choose us to form the next government.

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Worse still, in the past four years, they have taken advantage of the sensational global economic growth and, of course, the economic strength of the United States, which has been experiencing growth for several years. What did they do with it? They made a huge mess of things, and the monstrous deficits they have been running these past four years will be handed down to our children and grandchildren to pay in the future.

That is why we are strongly opposed to this bill, which flies in the face of two election promises: to do away with omnibus bills, and to only run small deficits before balancing the budget in 2019.

● (1300)

Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my honourable colleague for his speech and for giving us his version of history, but the facts say otherwise.

If we look at Canada's economic history, we see that the Conservative government we replaced generated huge deficits. It racked up more than \$150 billion in debt. Perhaps that was an anomaly, so let us take a look at the previous majority Conservative government, that of Mr. Mulroney. It racked up over \$350 billion in debt. The debt generated by the Conservatives amounts to half a billion dollars. That is huge. Since Canada's national debt is approximately \$700 billion, we could say that the Conservatives are responsible for more than half of it.

How can my colleague criticize our government with any amount of integrity or honesty?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to say that my honourable colleague is my MP when I am in Ottawa, since I live in his riding, on Montcalm Street in Gatineau.

Four years ago, my colleague got elected by saying that the Liberal government would achieve a zero deficit by 2019-20, yet today, it is showing a \$19.8-billion deficit. Must I also remind my honourable colleague that, while the Conservative Party was in power, we faced the worst economic crisis since the Great Recession? Nevertheless, as I said in my speech, although perhaps my colleague was not listening, under our government, Canada was the first G7 nation to recover. That is the exact opposite of what we are seeing now. The government is compulsively running deficits in a period of strong economic growth.

My colleague has a lot of nerve to talk about the former Conservative government, but I would remind him that this former Conservative government succeeded that of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who literally pioneered the running of deficits in times of economic growth.

If my colleague wants to talk about former governments, can I mention the former Liberal government and the sponsorship scandal? When will the Liberal Party reimburse the tens of millions of dollars they pocketed during the sponsorship scandal? That issue has yet to be dealt with.

The election campaign will begin in a few weeks. What credibility will my colleague have when he said that the government would achieve a zero deficit in 2019 and we now have a \$19.8-billion deficit? The Liberals have no credibility at all.

● (1305)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question about the credibility and value of Liberal promises. In a single bill, the Liberals have managed to break three sacred promises they made during the last campaign.

[*English*]

I want to make a couple of comments in English. My friend talks about the 2008 budget, when the Conservatives were forced to spend money. He was not here, but he will recall that the initial iteration of the Conservative budget under Harper, leading into a global recession, was actually meant to massively cut back on expenditures in Canada. It was only when threatened with their own government's demise and having to seek permission from the Governor General to shut down all of Parliament when facing a non-confidence vote that the Conservatives reversed course and made virtue out of a crisis, saying, "Oh, here is our new budget responding to the global recession."

This is an omnibus budget bill. Buried in it are significant changes to our refugee laws. It is obviously not a budget item to change immigration or refugee laws. One of the reasons my colleagues on the Conservative side are not arguing about this today is that they agree with the Liberals. In fact, they pushed the Liberals on these refugee claims, that they should be handled differently, much to the chagrin of many of the refugee advocates who previously advocated for the Liberal government.

Could the member verify if that is true, and maybe fully rectify the historical record of how deficits were first created under the Harper government?

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent has no more than 30 seconds.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, because I so appreciate his presence here in the House, I was going to pay extravagant tribute to my colleague who, unfortunately, will not be running in the next election.

I would simply like to remind him of the facts. Because of our government, Canada was the first G7 country to recover from the crisis. Like my colleague, I admit that I am very disappointed to see what this government does with omnibus bills. It inserts elements that have absolutely nothing to do with the budget. It should have learned from its mistakes in the SNC-Lavalin scandal that cost it so dearly. They had to boot from caucus two former honourable ministers who stood up for the truth, the facts and the law of the land.

[*English*]

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House today to speak to the 2019 budget. This budget is called "Investing in the Middle Class". Improving life for middle-class Canadians has been our number one priority since we were elected.

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Four years ago, the people of Brampton South elected me to represent them. Since 2015, I have been working in Ottawa to deliver on the promises I made throughout my campaign. Everyone in this House has made a commitment to serve Canadians. This is partly done by investing in initiatives that will boost the quality of life for all Canadians. The budget this year is an example of the opportunities that Canada can provide to Canadians.

Our government's commitment to serve Canadians through investment can be seen in Brampton. In 2016-17, Brampton was given almost \$60 million through the gas tax fund, and in 2017-18 we introduced a one-time top-up to the gas tax fund for infrastructure investments. For the 2018-19 fiscal year, Brampton was given over \$33 million.

Since November 2015, we have had millions of dollars in federal funding for infrastructure projects that will benefit the city of Brampton. In addition, Brampton will benefit from a federal investment in the GO Transit Metrolinx regional express rail. From the \$1.9-billion investment, over \$750 million will be invested in the Kitchener corridor to improve commute times for residents of Brampton, Peel, Toronto and Wellington.

People in the middle class deserve a government that recognizes their potential and encourages their growth. I believe that the budget represents our belief in them as it looks toward our promising future. Canadians have put their faith in our government to present new ideas and deliver results. The 2019 budget reflects the needs of families, employees, students and seniors. It is a solid plan to give them a better future.

A better future starts with investing in young people and their education. Students are often kept from pursuing their education because of financial obstacles. The 2019 budget would lower interest rates for students and give them a six-month period to pursue their future plans before gathering interest on loans. The budget also seeks to support students who are parents or have disabilities. It also promotes programs that encourage the enrolment of indigenous students in post-secondary education.

These are just some of the ways in which we advocate for the success of the next generation. Budget 2018 strengthened our economy and ensured a low unemployment rate.

This is also the time to address the climate emergency. Budget 2019 has a strong plan to create eco-friendly solutions while maintaining an affordable lifestyle for Canadians. The budget intends to make zero-emission cars \$5,000 cheaper, as well as encouraging their building. The creation of a home retrofit program will lower electricity and energy bills for Canadians.

We have been fighting climate impact since 2015. We have invested \$1.5 million in Brampton under Public Safety Canada's national disaster mitigation program for the riverwalk study. We committed \$175,000 for an environmental assessment strategic plan and sustainability framework for it as well. We have also committed \$10 million for 10 water projects in Brampton and \$22 million in funding for erosion protection initiatives in the Toronto, Peel and York regions.

Thinking of the future generations also includes supporting new families. An issue we see come up again and again is the struggle for

young families to invest in long-term housing. The 2019 budget introduced the first-time homebuyer incentive, which would encourage home ownership by making housing cheaper. The incentive would help thousands of first-time homebuyers over the next three years. Budget 2019 also makes plans to build 42,000 new rental housing units, as well as to provide \$300 million to begin the housing supply challenge. Through these changes, we are promoting happy homes without unnecessary costs.

• (1310)

Access to affordable housing is essential to promote the security and well-being of all Canadians. When Canadians are provided with a comfortable home life, it is easier for them to do well in the workplace. So far, we have been successful.

However, because our workforce and economy are continuously growing, employees can be left without access to training that improves their professional skills in their present and future jobs. The 2019 budget introduced the Canada training benefit program, which would give working Canadians better and more consistent skills training, financial aid to pay for the training, employment insurance support and job security. This is the next phase in our plan to strengthen the middle class.

While the middle class flourishes, there is still a percentage that has been left behind. Without quality health care, Canadians face some of the highest drug prices, leaving them unable to afford the prescriptions they need. No one should have to choose between buying the medicine they need or putting food on their table.

I am proud to be a member of the health committee, where I helped study the development of a national pharmacare program. We then made 18 recommendations to the government through the report "Pharmacare Now: Prescription Medicine Coverage for All Canadians". I am proud to see the government acting on the report.

Budget 2019 aims to make prescriptions more affordable by announcing plans for the Canadian drug agency, which will work to lower prescription costs. The Canadian drug agency will connect all provinces and territories, giving them access to prescriptions. Through this plan, Canadians will save \$3 billion each year.

With less time spent worrying about their health, housing and job security, Canadians will have more time to focus on the things they care about. For many, this involves becoming more involved in their communities.

Infrastructure funding is necessary to get ahead with local and municipal governments, which is why we are investing an additional \$2.2 billion into infrastructure funding, especially under the circumstances where certain provincial governments have not been doing their part. Budget 2019 recognizes that advances in public transit, housing and community facilities make all the difference.

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Local projects and community services are at the heart of Canadian society. Included in these services are locally based projects that encourage seniors to be active members of the community. Seniors have made significant contributions in these areas and are now more than ever capable and interested in participating.

Budget 2019 aims to maintain the guaranteed income supplement to ensure seniors get the most out of their retirement. It also takes direct action to protect their pensions by automatically registering seniors who are 70 or older but have not applied yet to receive their retirement benefits with the Canada pension plan. This will help tens of thousands of seniors across Canada.

Our budget also supports pay transparency, something our government has pushed for relentlessly. These measures will make it easier for our government to look at wage gaps and begin to solve them. This will help improve the status of women further. We know that when women make only 87¢ on the \$1 compared to men, something is wrong.

Several countries, including the United Kingdom and Germany, have pay transparency measures. Canada needs to join these countries in making wages available for public view. When we can inspire employers to act on unfair wage gaps, we will improve the status of women all over Canada. This is not only the responsible thing to do, but it is morally right.

Budget 2019 is not just a list of numbers, names and affected demographics. It is a detailed plan of action, which can lead Canada into a better and brighter future. By investing in the middle class, we invest in all Canadians. This budget represents what our nation's focus should be. Informed, careful and planned budgeting is what will lead to Canada's prosperity.

I urge my fellow members to support the budget.

• (1315)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the work that the member for Brampton South and I did together on the health committee. I have a question about the budget.

As everyone in the House knows, Oshawa has had some really rough times with the closure of the GM plant. This year the government will have a \$20-billion deficit. Because the world economy has been doing so well, there are \$20 billion in new revenue. I hear my Liberal colleagues talk about creating one million new jobs.

I want to throw out a scary statistic for my Liberal colleagues and also for my colleagues on this side. If we look at a \$20-billion deficit and \$20 billion in revenue, the \$40 billion extra spent this year is enough to have one million Canadians making \$40,000 a year just to sit at home. If this is the type of job creation the Liberals are talking about, I really have a problem with that.

Right now Canada's competitiveness has gone down three points in the G7. We are the point where we have gone down to the 13th least competitive.

My colleague has an auto sector in her community. She has seen job losses. Could she point out in the budget if there is anything that will help the Brampton plant when it is time to acquire a new

mandate for that plant? Is there anything in the budget that will help these plants compete properly with American plants so they can get a new product in those plants?

• (1320)

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, as I said, budget 2019 is not just a list of numbers, names and affected demographics. It is a detailed plan of action that can lead Canada into a better and brighter future.

We have important investments in the innovation sector. We are improving our infrastructure. We are lifting thousands out of poverty. We have helped to create one million new jobs. I know a lot more needs to be done. I know my hon. colleague would prefer that money go into the pockets of the wealthiest 1%, but we know that meaningful changes come with investment in the other 99%. As I said, we need to do a lot more.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member a question through you.

Most people in my riding do not have enough money to buy an RRSP. Many of them have difficulty paying their rent or buying groceries at the end of the week.

How will it help them to be able to buy a house with an RRSP that they do not have?

[*English*]

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, since 2015, we have lifted tens of thousands of people out of poverty and cut the rate by 20%. We know there is more work to do. We launched the first national poverty reduction strategy and that will help to lift more Canadians out of poverty.

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, something that comes to my mind when we talk about the budget and what we have done to help middle-class families is the Canada child benefit, which we changed when we came into power. We started to send it to people tax free. We stopped sending it to the wealthiest people.

Could the member expand on what that has meant for her riding and the people in it? In my riding of Avalon, each year approximately \$48 million go to needy families, which is spend on their children and the necessities they need. It is tax free. Could she please comment on that?

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, when I was door-knocking last Saturday, I had very good feedback. This July, we are doubling the Canada child benefit. It is good news and it benefits the kids. When I meet with their mothers, they are so happy with this. We are lifting 300,000 kids out of poverty with the Canada child benefit. I am very happy with the approach of our government.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address some of the failings of the Liberal government over the last four years and reflect upon just how disastrous it has been.

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The heckling continues over there. The Liberals never miss an opportunity to get some good heckling in. Our colleagues across the way are chirping loud and doing all they can to throw us off. However, it will not work. I have been chirped at by the best and they definitely are not the best.

I rise today to talk to Bill C-97, the budget implementation act. Essentially, it is an extension of the government's attempt to cover up what could be actually the biggest affront to our democracy in our country's history. It has attempted to cover up potentially the biggest corruption at the highest levels of our government, and that is the SNC-Lavalin case. That is what we are seeing here today. I bring us back to that again because I feel I have to. The gallery is packed. I know Canadians from coast to coast to coast knew this speaker was coming up.

I would be remiss if I did not remind Canadians from all across our country that it was day 10 of the 2015 election when the then member of Papineau committed to Canadians that under his government, he would let the debate reign. He said that he would not resort to parliamentary tricks such as omnibus bills or closure of debate. He also told Canadians around that same time that he would balance the budget in 2019. Those are three giant "oops", perhaps disingenuous comments. I do not think he has lived up to any of them at this point.

As of today, the government has invoked closure over 70 times. Why? Because the government does not like what it is hearing. If the Liberals do not like what the opposition is saying and they do not want Canadians to hear the truth, they invoke closure. This means we cannot debate really important legislation. They limit the amount of time for debate on that legislation. The BIA, Bill C-97, is just one of them. Does that sound like letting the debate reign? It does not.

It is interesting that whenever things go sideways for the Prime Minister, a couple of things happen. We see him even less in the House or something always happens to change the channel. That is what we have today.

Bill C-97 is really just a cover-up budget. We have talked about that. It just goes in line with more and more of the government's kinds of wacky ways, where it says it will spend money and perhaps it does it out. However, the money is not really going to things that Canadians need the most.

We see \$600 million in an election year being given to the media, a media that is supposed to be impartial. That is a \$600 million bailout.

We also know that in the previous budget, approximately \$500 million was given to the Asian Infrastructure Bank. That \$500 million is not being spent in Canada for one piece of an infrastructure.

I rose to talk about a few things. One of the things that is really disappointing for me is this. When the Liberals came to power in 2015, a lot of promises were made, and this one hits home for us. I have brought this up time and again in the House. The Liberals said that they would put an end to the softwood lumber dispute.

● (1325)

I think it was in 2016 that the Prime Minister stood in the House and told Canadians that he was going to have a deal done within 100 days. He had a new BFF, the Minister of International Trade Diversification said. Both were just giddy. They were going to get this deal done and put an end to the softwood lumber irritant once and for all, yet last week, we found out from the Senate Liberal leader that the Prime Minister had other priorities ahead of softwood lumber.

Over 140 communities and over 140,000 jobs are tied to forestry in my province of British Columbia. Forestry is a cornerstone industry in my province, yet it was not a priority for the Prime Minister in renegotiating his NAFTA deal.

What we are seeing with the Liberal government is that rural Canadians are just not its focus.

Last week I also met with some real estate folks and some Canadian homebuilder folks. They told me that the Liberal government's B-20 stress test and the shared equity program, which is geared toward trying to get Canadians into homes, is actually hurting that industry. The real estate industry is saying that the B-20 stress test, which was geared more for Toronto and Vancouver markets but is all across the country, impacts rural Canadians negatively.

Almost \$15 billion has been kept out of that industry, meaning that it is harder for Canadians to get into the home ownership they strive for. It is a step into the middle class. People put money toward something they own rather than putting it into something that someone else owns. The government's failed B-20 policy and the shared equity program is hurting Canadians. It is another example of how Canadians are worse off with the Liberal government.

I will bring us to a couple of years ago. The Prime Minister, the Minister of Veterans Affairs and the Minister of National Defence all have it down pat. They can put their hands on their hearts and say that they really care, yet it is the same Prime Minister who told veterans that they were asking for too much.

Yesterday was a very important day, because we saw the closure of the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls commission and we saw its report. The government knew that this day was coming, but did it put any money in the 2019 budget for that? There is nothing.

Government Orders

The Liberals like to say that Canadians are better off than they were under our previous Conservative administration, but it is actually the opposite. Canadians are worse off since the Liberal government took over. Eighty-one per cent of middle-income Canadians are seeing higher taxes since the Liberal government came to power. The average income increase for middle income families is \$840. The government's higher pension plan premiums could eventually cost Canadians up to \$2,200 per household. The Liberals cancelled the family tax cut of up to \$2,000 per household. They cancelled the arts and fitness tax credit of up to \$225 per child. They cancelled the education and textbook tax credits of up to \$560 per student. The government's higher employment insurance premiums are up \$85 per worker. The Liberal carbon tax could cost up to \$1,000 per household and be as high as \$5,000 in the future.

The Prime Minister called small businesses tax cheats. The government's intrusive tax measures for small businesses will raise taxes on thousands of family businesses across Canada.

The list goes on and on. Bill C-97 is just the capping of a scandal-ridden administration, and to that, I say, good riddance.

• (1330)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have issues with the speech given by the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George, particularly when he mentioned the B-20 stress test.

The Liberal government has brought in measures to bring affordability to the housing market. His leader, the Leader of the Opposition, is wishy-washy on this subject. One day he says that he will eliminate the stress test, but the next day he says that he will think about it or revisit it.

Is the hon. member's leader and his party going to take the stress test away, or are they just going to revisit it?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, our leader has been very clear. He has said that he is going to actually fix the government's failed piece of legislation. As a matter of fact, it was brought up at committee, and when asked to study the devastating impact the B-20 stress test is having on the market, the Liberals voted no. They did not want the truth to come out. Plain and simple, it is just another cover-up.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to continue with what the member for Surrey—Newton mentioned on the B-20 stress test, we know that people all across the country have been heavily impacted. None of the measures in the budget will help offset the impact of the B-20 stress test on young people and young families trying to get into housing. I would like the member's comments on this.

About \$480,000 is what the shared equity mortgage plan would allow for, plus the down payment. In the GTA area specifically, when I looked at the price of homes, only about 500 homes out of over 20,000 listings would be eligible for this plan. It would be marginal. That is what CMHC said. It would have a marginal impact on the market. It would not be transformational in any way, but the government would put at risk \$1.25 billion to play the real estate market.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on whether this would be a wise use of our money instead of just fixing the B-20 stress test.

• (1335)

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, what we have seen with the B-20 stress test is that it is forcing new homebuyers, some first-time buyers and millennials, to alternative lending institutions, which, of course, as we know, have higher interest rates. This is actually putting those millennials, the very same people the government says it wants to protect, at more of a disadvantage. We are also seeing that it impacts Canadians in rural communities the most. We are also seeing that if they are being denied a home, they are actually taking some of those funds they were going to put into home ownership and are buying higher-valued vehicles. They are still finding a way to spend that money, just not on home ownership, which is actually putting the Canadian market and Canadians at a further disadvantage.

The government has not thought this through, and it is having a detrimental effect on the industry.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. When answering a question, I mentioned the Canada child benefit, and I just want to correct the record. It is not doubling; it is being indexed to inflation.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Thank you for clarifying that.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, asking for clarity from the Conservative Party is something we really need to do more often. For example, we just asked about the stress test, and I can appreciate the concerns related to that, but there are two other areas I think Canadians deserve some clarity on.

We are still waiting for the Doug Ford approach on what the Conservative Party nationally is going to be doing on the environment. We are told that it will be at the end of the month. I guess Mr. Ford and the Conservative brain trust here in Ottawa are meeting to come up with that on June 28. We are anxiously awaiting that.

There also seems to be a bit of a flip-flop with regard to deficits. Originally, the Conservatives were saying that they could do it in a year, possibly two. Now they are saying four or five years, and so forth.

I wonder if my friend could tell me to what degree he believes the Conservatives are actually being transparent with Canadians, when they are not telling them what their true intentions are. The member wanted to focus on the press, for example. What are their true intentions for the CBC? There are so many issues. So much needs to be more transparent. When can we anticipate that from the Conservative Party?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, that is like the pot calling the kettle black.

Government Orders

We have been clear and transparent right from the very beginning. I would remind my colleague across the way that it was literally two weeks into the 2015 campaign when the Liberals' fully costed plan came out. We will take no lessons from the folks sitting across the way. I would warn them to not get used to the seats across the way, because October is coming, and they will be on their way.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is time to take a look at the Liberals' record. There are two and a half weeks left in this Parliament. The budget implementation bill that is before us today is the government's last. Anything not contained in that bill will have to wait until after the election. Budget 2019 is consistent with this government's approach of saying one thing and doing the opposite.

First, let us talk about this so-called green government. Since the last election, bitumen extraction in Alberta has skyrocketed. We are talking about an increase of 25%. That is no small thing. Extraction grew even faster than under Stephen Harper. In fact, production has grown so much that it has exceeded transport capacity.

Today, the Liberals and the Conservatives would have us believe that there is a pipeline problem, but that is not the case. There is an overproduction problem, which is not the same thing. To limit overproduction, the government is proposing to support new investments in the oil sands with accelerated capital cost allowance. A total of \$2.7 billion in taxpayers' money will be wasted on this tax expenditure.

In one year alone, the government announced \$19 billion in new oil investments. The oil industry certainly got the message. If you look at production estimates, it is clear that the industry wants to maintain the level of growth it has seen the past four years. This will result in more overproduction and cause prices to continue their downturn. This is meant to make us believe that more pipelines are inevitable and that we have no choice but to export and pollute more.

The direct consequence of this government's policies is that energy east will be forced back on us. The Liberal government is working to keep us in the 20th century, bogged down in the tar sands.

Mr. Alain Rayes: Where do you get your gas?

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, at my daughter's school there is a big banner saying "zero tolerance for bullying". The previous Conservative member who spoke accused the Liberals of bullying, and now the member for Victoriaville is hurling epithets and questions at me. There should be zero tolerance for bullying here too. We have a right to speak without being interrupted.

To get back to what I was saying, that is not what we need in Quebec. We have already started to go green. GHG emissions per capita are two and a half times lower in Quebec than in the rest of Canada. A policy for the 21st century is to make polluting expensive and avoiding pollution profitable.

I can already hear the Liberals saying that they created the carbon tax, so let us talk about it. The government imposes a tax, then gives the money back to those who paid it. It is a circle that does not result in any real transfer of wealth from polluters to the good guys. It does

not make it profitable to go green. It will not result in a true green shift. It does not entitle anyone to make green speeches. It is merely an image, just like the government has been since it was elected: an image, no more, no less, but definitely no more.

Let us move on. In the lead-up to the budget, the Bloc québécois reached out to Quebeckers, and what we consistently heard was that their main priorities are health and education. There is nothing about that in the budget. Health transfers have been capped at 3% for two years, and yet, health costs in Quebec have risen by 5.2%. You do not need a Nobel prize in mathematics to see that there is a problem. The healthcare system is stretched to its limit, and wait times are getting longer. Something has to give, and everyone knows it.

Everything I have just said about the healthcare system also applies to education. Teachers are as burnt out as nurses. It is the same problem, except that, in this case, transfers were capped at 3% 15 years ago. Health and education are Quebeckers' two main priorities. There is nothing about that in Bill C-97. The government decided to gradually move away from Quebecker's priorities. That is abundantly clear in Bill C-97.

Now, let us look at the measures the government has taken to stimulate the economy. Its primary measure involves infrastructure. In and of itself, that is a good thing, but the methods used are another story. By multiplying specific programs, each one with very strict criteria, Ottawa has ruined everything. Federal requirements have caused a tug of war with Quebec and will paralyze the entire process. The result is striking: the money is starting to trickle down just before the election. We had to wait a long time. In the first two years of its term, the government spent \$100 per Quebecker and \$700 for each Canadian outside Quebec.

• (1340)

We know the federal government is building precious little infrastructure. It owns barely 2% of all public infrastructure, while the provinces and municipalities own 98%. Through federal transfers, the government is financing infrastructure that does not belong to it, that is not within its jurisdiction and that it does not have the means to prioritize intelligently. The government had good intentions, but the whole undertaking has been a monumental failure on the ground.

The money is not flowing. The federal criteria are too rigid and do not meet communities' needs. During the last election campaign, the Liberals promised to transfer blocks of infrastructure funding. They promised to mind their own business and do their job. That is yet another broken promise, and Quebec is paying the price.

As I said, my leader and I have been travelling around a lot listening to Quebeckers. People do not realize how future-focused Quebec is. Quebeckers are creative and innovative. Yesterday's tinkerers are now developing video games, designing new aircraft and working on artificial intelligence. Year after year, Quebec accounts for between 40% and 45% of Canada's tech exports, even though its share of Canada's economy is only half that much.

Government Orders

In metropolitan areas across Quebec, there are at least 5,000 technology startups. I think of it as Silicon Valley North. What is in Bill C-97 for technology? Is it an aerospace policy? No. Is it patient capital to let our technology start-ups develop here in Canada rather than being bought out by U.S. web giants? It is not that either.

However, there is some venture capital to help out the rest of Canada. That is how it is in all areas. When Quebec succeeds, Ottawa is not there. Take supply management, for example. Our regional agriculture lends itself well to local distribution. That is the future. Instead of helping, the government is hurting agriculture. It has signed three trade agreements with three breaches, and not a single penny has been paid to farmers.

We scoured Bill C-97 for the compensation, but it is not there. Our producers were taken for a ride. They will get nothing before the election. That is also the case for Davie. Does Bill C-97 announce a review of its horrible naval strategy? The answer is obviously no.

The same goes for the fight against tax havens. These loopholes allow banks and multi-millionaires to get out of paying taxes. The government needs to act fast, but instead, it has legalized three new tax havens. In my private member's bill, I proposed a working solution to close the loopholes, but, of course, all the Liberals but one voted it down. Like the sheriff of Nottingham, they would rather defend fat cats than low-income workers. The Conservatives also voted against my bill, but at least they were being true to type. Unlike the Liberals, they do not try to dress up as Robin Hood.

• (1345)

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague, who is also a young MP.

Does he think the government is doing enough on the environment? The government boasts that it is going to meet its targets, yet all the reports released to date, including one from Environment and Climate Change Canada, say that Canada is not on track to meet its targets, even though they were set by the Harper government.

Our greenhouse gas emissions went up by 12 megatonnes over last year. It would take Canada 200 years to meet its reduction targets. The government is still subsidizing the fossil fuel sector. It has no overall plan for moving jobs to renewable energy sectors. There is ample proof that six to eight times more jobs could be created in renewable energy than in fossil fuels.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Salaberry—Suroît for her question. Her comments were very astute.

As I said in my speech, under this government's watch, oil sands extraction has increased by 25%. That says it all. This government says it cares about the environment and that it is polluting less, yet extraction has increased by 25% in four years.

Next, I talked about their notorious carbon tax. They are rewarding those who pollute. This is not a wealth transfer or incentive for those who pollute less, nor is it a penalty for polluters. It is an empty gesture that is meant to sound environmentally responsible, but when we really look at the actions taken, it is not the same thing. That is why Canada's reputation around the world on environmental matters has plummeted to zero. This is simply not

good enough, considering the urgency. Urgent action is needed. We cannot afford to let the situation deteriorate any further. All reports from the IPCC and scientists are telling us that we need to act now, that strong action is needed right away.

These measures could also help Quebec's economy. We have everything we need to transition to a green economy, a forward-looking, 21st century economy. The only thing missing is the will on the other side of the House, which clearly is not there. We hear nothing but empty rhetoric.

• (1350)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on the member's comments with regard to a price on pollution. The Province of Quebec has been very progressive in terms of its attitude on having a price on pollution, and we see that as a very strong positive. I would argue that the national government having a nationwide price on pollution ultimately complements some of the fine work that has taken place in provinces like Quebec.

One of the goals of having a strong national government is to ensure that we have a healthier nation with regard to our environment, or a healthier planet as a direct result. In many different ways, there are lots of positive progressive measures happening in different regions of our country. Quebec is a very good example of the price on pollution.

Would my colleague across the way not agree that it is good that Canada has a national price on pollution?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Winnipeg North for his words of praise for Quebec's carbon pricing system, which is working quite well, though much still remains to be done.

With respect to the national carbon tax, I would say that its criteria are lacking. Major polluters are currently exempt, and only consumers, meaning Canadians, are paying it and receiving a cheque in return.

If we really want to leverage this measure to bring about a change in behaviour, we have to start by going after the main emitters, rewarding those who do good things for the environment and punishing those who increase pollution.

Yes, it is a good idea, and it sounds good, but as for the real, concrete impact, the Bloc Québécois and I believe it is not enough.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Resuming debate.

The hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon will have about eight minutes, and then two minutes when we return, as well as five minutes of questions.

Government Orders

Mr. Jati Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to budget 2019, a budget that makes it easier for Canadians to thrive and join a prosperous middle class.

Housing affordability is a large part of this budget. That is because Canadians have told us that the rising cost of housing is one of the biggest barriers to getting ahead in life. Housing supply has not kept up with demand, which has driven up costs to the point where an adequate place to call home has become out of reach for too many families. This means they do not have the safe, stable base they need to find work, study, raise their families and contribute to their communities.

This is why our government developed a national housing strategy, which includes a number of initiatives to boost the housing supply, focusing primarily on the needs of the most vulnerable populations. These programs are already having an impact on communities across the country by giving more Canadians safe, affordable rental homes. In fact, budget 2019 includes an expansion of the successful rental construction financing program, which will add significantly to the rental housing supply and, in turn, bring down the cost to rent.

Today, I want to speak about an innovative program in the budget that makes it more affordable for young Canadians to buy their first homes. While it is true that whether one rents or owns it is still a home, many Canadians aspire to own their own homes. When first-time homebuyers purchase a home, it frees up even more rental supply and leads to lower rental costs for those in housing need.

Unfortunately, for too many Canadians, home ownership is increasingly out of reach. Beginning in September, the first-time homebuyer incentive will help more young Canadians buy their first homes by reducing their mortgage payments. Eligible buyers who have the minimum down payment required for an insured mortgage will be able to finance a portion of their home purchase through a shared equity mortgage with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

The new program will provide funding of 5% of the purchase price for existing homes and 10% for newly constructed homes. Rather than making ongoing monthly payments on the shared equity portion of the mortgage, the buyer would repay the incentive at a later date. This keeps monthly costs down for homebuyers so they have money for everyday expenses.

Details of the program are being finalized and will be announced at the end of the year. However, I can tell my colleagues in the House that for families a buying \$400,000 home, this program could save as much as \$228 per month and up to \$2,700 per year per family.

Officials at the Department of Finance and CMHC have worked hard to develop a program that is balanced and achieves our objectives of helping first-time buyers without undoing the progress we have already made through measures that prevent excessive borrowing and limit house price inflation. It does this by focusing specifically on those who need help the most.

Younger Canadians who have a household income of about \$120,000 a year or less have trouble affording home ownership. It ensures they do not take on too much debt by limiting total

borrowing to four times their income. In addition, to be sure the program does not end up contributing to the house price inflation, we have capped it at \$1.2 billion over the next three years. The inflation effect will be minimal, less than 0.5% at the most, if that.

• (1355)

This program will make home ownership more affordable for young Canadians in a way that is more effective than the measures some other people have suggested. Measures like reducing the mortgage insurance stress test or extending the maximum amortization period to 30 years would simply put Canadians into greater debt. The rate of home price inflation would be five to six times greater than the maximum anticipated by the first-time homebuyer incentive.

Finally, by doubling the incentive for the purchase of a new home, the new program will encourage new supply to meet housing demands, which in turn keeps prices down for all Canadians.

This program will work in all markets, including Vancouver and Toronto. Even with a cap of four times the household income, first-time buyers will have the option. It may not be a condo in Yaletown or a house in Riverdale, but there are starter homes in both metropolitan areas that could be purchased using this program. In fact, based on last year's activity, more than 2,000 homebuyers in Toronto would have been eligible for this FTHBI, and over 1,000 homeowners in greater Vancouver would have been eligible.

Budget 2019 will also establish a fund to help existing shared equity mortgage providers scale up their businesses and encourage new players to enter the market. The fund will provide up to \$100 million in lending over five years and will be administered by CMHC.

Our support for Canadians trying to purchase their first home does not end there. Budget 2019 also provides first-time buyers greater freedom to invest their RRSP savings by increasing the homebuyer plan withdrawal from \$25,000 to \$35,000.

We have also proposed the new housing supply challenge. This \$300-million initiative will help municipalities and other stakeholder groups to find ways to break down barriers that limit the creation of new housing.

Infrastructure Canada and CMHC will collaborate on designs for the new measures.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

●(1400)

[Translation]

MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the findings of the report on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls are tragic and devastating. We must start by acknowledging the courage of the women and families who broke the silence and testified.

The report's findings should come as no surprise to anyone. We must provide access to basic services and protect fundamental human rights. These findings are, for the most part, the same as those of the Erasmus-Dussault commission, which was held 25 years ago, and those of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The solutions are also very similar.

The recent events in Val-d'Or, the cases of kidnapped indigenous children, and the revelations of sexual abuse, especially on the North Shore, have opened Quebecers' eyes. The thousands of missing and murdered women must serve as a wake-up call for Canada.

We must take real action to change our nation-to-nation relationships and, above all, to put an end to violence and discrimination.

* * *

[English]

RAMADAN

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today Muslims around the world are celebrating Eid al-Fitr to mark the end of Ramadan. This is a time to celebrate the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and his message of harmony, peace and love, while also understanding the importance of giving to others.

Over the past month, it has been an honour to join my Muslim brothers and sisters at *iftars*. I am thankful for the meaningful relations I have been able to form with the Muslim community over my many years of public service.

Many Muslims are celebrating in Surrey-Newton and throughout Canada, and I want to wish them and their loved ones *Eid Mubarak*.

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VETERANS

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to two amazing people from my riding, Sergeant Daryl Minifie and Sergeant Darren Reid.

On Saturday, I presented Daryl with the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation for his ongoing work for other veterans. He is currently legion president as well. I also presented Sergeant Darren Reid with a Legionnaire of the Year Award for his local and national work in support of all veterans.

Daryl and Darren are both Afghanistan veterans, members of the Grey and Simcoe Foresters and actively involved with Flesherton

Statements by Members

Markdale Branch 333 of the Royal Canadian Legion. Both of these men have served their country with honour and distinction.

I am honoured to ask you, Mr. Speaker, and every other member in this House to please join me in thanking them for their tireless work in support of veterans everywhere.

* * *

HEALTH RESEARCH GRANT

Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 77 years ago a couple from Saskatchewan arrived in Hamilton with their young son, looking for work. Last week that boy, Charles Juravinski, and his wife of 63 years, Margaret, astounded us with an endowment of \$100 million to support research at Hamilton's hospitals and universities. It is one of the largest legacy gifts in Canadian history. This is on top of the \$50 million they have already donated to health care. It will create an annual perpetual research grant of up to \$5 million.

At age 90, Charles and Margaret are getting their affairs in order, but thankfully for their friends, they have no thoughts of leaving our social and cultural scene any time soon.

Charles will never forget the lessons he learned growing up in a Ukrainian family in Saskatchewan during the Depression. Charles and Margaret are bequeathing us good health, so we say to them *na zdorovie* and *sto lat*.

* * *

●(1405)

MARGARET-ANN ARMOUR

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week we sadly lost a truly remarkable Canadian. Dr. Margaret-Ann Armour persevered to excel in chemistry, a traditionally male-dominated field. She was recognized globally for her critical research and teaching in hazardous chemical waste handling and disposal.

Later in her career at the University of Alberta, she was appointed associate dean of science for diversity, channelling her unstoppable energy to advocate for women pursuing STEM careers. She co-created Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science and Technology, or WISEST, and the WinSETT Centre. Among my favourite events were the annual presentations by high school students during WISEST summer internships.

Among her many accolades, she was awarded a Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case, a Canada 150 ambassadorship and multiple honorary degrees. Perhaps the most fitting for this scholar, who lived her life by doing science as if people matter, was the naming of an elementary school after her.

Her effervescence and warm hugs will long be remembered by the many women in STEM careers.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

WATERLOO KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Mr. Pierre Breton (Shefford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise to pay tribute to the Waterloo Knights of Columbus, who are celebrating their 100th anniversary this year.

The tremendous work they do for the less fortunate and the support they give to charities and young people are invaluable. For 100 years, these good people have been making charity a part of their daily lives. Considering the many activities they organize in Waterloo, I can confidently say that they are a solid and indispensable pillar of our community.

The members of the Waterloo Knights of Columbus have made a lasting mark on our community. They have improved the lives of thousands of people and helped to make our society better. On behalf of the people of Shefford, I would like to tell them how proud and grateful we are for their commitment and devotion.

Congratulations and happy 100th anniversary.

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[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last evening my constituency received some devastating news: Canfor announced the closure of its mill in Vavenby, and 178 people will lose their jobs. The Canfor mill had been the major employer of Vavenby and the area, and it is tragic news for this community.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated situation. In B.C., companies have been cutting back shifts and closing mills as the lack of log supplies and low prices endure. More closures are expected to come. In fact, the province will likely lose 12 mills in the next decade, according to a report commissioned by Forest Economic Advisors Canada.

It is long past time for the government to take some action. We need to have the Trans Mountain pipeline approved; we need the U. S. softwood lumber tariffs lifted; we need broadband investments, and we need western diversification to support these small towns that must diversify or die. Time is of the essence. Rural Canadians deserve better.

* * *

RAMADAN

Ms. Kamal Khera (Brampton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the billions of Muslims across the world, the past month has been one of reflection, perseverance and gratitude. To mark the end of Ramadan, our Muslim brothers and sisters will celebrate Eid al-Fitr. After a month of fasting and spiritual reflection, it is a time for celebration and to honour the values of Islam.

I was proud to have the opportunity to host an *iftar* dinner in my community of Brampton West, at the Brampton Islamic Centre, and to connect with our Muslim brothers and sisters during the holy month. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the mosques in my riding, Brampton Islamic Centre, Masjid Al-Salam, North Valley

Islamic Centre, Yaseen Musalla and Masjid Mubarak, for all they do in our community and for sharing the values of kindness, peace, unity and generosity, the same values we are proud to share as Canadians.

To all those celebrating in Brampton West, across Canada and around the world, *Eid Mubarak*.

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GREAT CYCLE CHALLENGE

Mr. Jati Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize one person working to make a difference in my riding: Daphaney Doss from Xaxli'p First Nation. Daphaney is preparing for her second Great Cycle Challenge cancer fundraising ride. Last year she travelled 250 kilometres and raised \$1,300.

Daphaney is truly an inspiration. She rides to honour the loss of two family members and to raise cancer awareness for those in her community and surrounding areas. I would like to thank Daphaney for her outstanding community service as she continues to motivate others and make a difference.

I encourage Daphaney to keep up the great work. We are all behind her.

* * *

● (1410)

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised he would bring in some kind of golden age for our immigration system, but four years later it is clear that the reality is completely different. Illegal immigration has ballooned, and those who want to come the right way are very frustrated by the ease with which people are jumping the line. Those who live in China, India or the Philippines cannot just walk across the border into Canada, and people languishing in refugee camps around the world know it is wrong that they do not have the same opportunity to access the refugee system as people living in upstate New York.

The family reunification system is deeply broken, and no action has been taken to improve credential recognition. Meanwhile, organizations seeking to help privately sponsor refugees, Hindus and Sikhs from Afghanistan, Ahmadis and Christians stuck in Thailand, gays and lesbians escaping Iran, Rohingya, Yazidis and many others, organizations wanting to help the world's most vulnerable on their initiative and with their own money, experience road block after road block.

So much for helping refugees. The government is getting in the way of Canadians who want to help the most vulnerable. On immigration and refugees, the Prime Minister is clearly not as advertised.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

CHÂTEAUGUAY—LACOLLE

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to remind the House of some of the things our government has accomplished in my riding since taking office.

First, the hazardous wreck of the *Kathryn Spirit* was quickly and safely dismantled by our government.

Businesses, organizations and municipalities received nearly \$8 million, not counting regional contributions and the doubling of the federal gas tax fund for municipal infrastructure.

Our Canada child benefit put over \$6 million a month back in the pockets of some 11,000 families, tax free.

We organized approximately 30 round tables and consultations with various stakeholders and created our youth council, which is looking into the issue of climate change.

Lastly, I sponsored a bill that is currently before the Senate to change the name of my riding to the more accurate Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville.

A lot has been accomplished, but there is still work to be done.

* * *

MARGUERITE CHARLEBOIS

Mr. Michel Picard (Montarville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few minutes to talk about the fabulous Marguerite Charlebois.

Armed with a great sense of humour and an infectious joie de vivre, this wonderful woman has been serving the House of Commons since January 1981, when Pierre Elliott Trudeau was leading the government.

Marguerite worked as a server in the parliamentary restaurant for 15 years before becoming a hostess, the job she has cheerfully held for the past 23 years. On the eve of her 79th birthday, she is planning to retire for what would actually be the third time.

I know that our beloved Marguerite is with us today. On behalf of all my colleagues, I want to thank her for her 38 years of service to the House. We wish her good health, happiness and fun in her well-deserved retirement.

Marguerite, you are so precious to us. You are one in a million.

* * *

[English]

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, British Columbia is the largest producer of softwood in North America. Forestry is a cornerstone industry in our provincial economy. It generates \$33 billion in output and \$13 billion in GDP. B.C. leads the world in sustainable forestry practices. Over 140,000 jobs are directly attributed to forestry in British Columbia, and over 140 communities in our province are forestry-dependent. About \$8.6 billion in wages are generated by the forestry industry.

However, last week, in the Senate, the Liberal leader said that the Prime Minister missed a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to renegotiate NAFTA with softwood in it and put an end to the softwood lumber dispute once and for all, because he had other priorities. This was not his priority.

Mill closures and work curtailment notices are being seen across our province, yet hard-working forestry families are not the Prime Minister's priority.

* * *

● (1415)

CLOVERDALE—LANGLEY CITY

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the residents of Cloverdale—Langley City. I humbly offer my thanks and gratitude for the honour of serving them in the 42nd Parliament. I have had some great jobs in my life, but this one is by far the best.

I heard their issues on the doorsteps, and that is why I am so proud to be part of this government, which responded.

In our first month in office, we cut taxes for the middle class, saving each person \$720 every year. We introduced the Canada child benefit, which brings \$84 million tax-free annually to Cloverdale—Langley City.

We invested \$1.3 billion in transit south of the Fraser, including \$650,000 for the next phase of the SkyTrain expansion down Fraser Highway toward Clayton and Langley City, and expanded bus services throughout our neighbourhoods. We invested more than \$10 million in our growing communities in Cloverdale-Langley City. Upgrades happened to the Cloverdale Athletic Park, Penzer Park and the Museum of Surrey.

With their support, I will continue the work I started this term in the 43rd Parliament.

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[Translation]

TRIBUTE TO THE WOMEN OF HOCHELAGA

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the riding of Hochelaga is full of talent.

Since we often pay tribute to men, today I want to honour Hochelaga women, like Victoire Du Sault, who became the first female shoemaker in Quebec around 1890. She launched the shoemaking business on which the Dufresne family of Hochelaga built its fortune. Then there is Mary Travers, a very popular singer from the 1930s who performed under the name La Bolduc. She raised a family on Létourneux Street and was the first woman in Quebec to make a living as a singer. There is also Diane Dufresne, a big international rock star, and Louise Harel, an MNA, minister and party leader who is active in provincial and municipal government.

Oral Questions

I could also name plenty of less-known women who founded, supported and exported our many community organizations, such as Jeannelle Bouffard, Jacynthe Ouellette, Manon Bonin, Anne St-Pierre, Monique Blanchet, Johanne Cooper, Nicole Forget Bashonga, Manon Bouchard, Edith Cyr, Jeanne Doré, Jacinthe Larouche, Sylvie Boivin, Barbara Jomphe and Fabienne Larouche. There are many other incredible women in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, but I do not have time to list them all in one minute.

* * *

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, protecting Canada's environment is something that is important to so many Canadians, and we need to look at the current Liberal government's record. It put in place a carbon tax that affects only 8% of major emitters. It has dumped millions of litres of raw sewage into the St. Lawrence River. It has essentially put in place reverse tariffs on Canadian manufacturers while allowing other major emitter countries to import goods like steel into our country. We are buying environmental goods and we are punishing our own manufacturers because of the carbon tax. This is not how we are going to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. A carbon tax does not work.

A Conservative environmental plan will never put in place a cash grab instead of policy that actually reduces greenhouse gas emissions. When it comes to the environment, the Liberal leader is not as advertised.

* * *

[Translation]

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives want to govern, but Canadians have not forgotten their record from the last time.

[English]

Here are a few of the Conservatives' highlights. The previous Liberal government left them a \$13-billion surplus, and the Conservatives turned it into the worst accumulation of debt in Canadian history: almost \$150 billion in 10 years. With pipelines, there is nothing to highlight. On the environment, they did nothing on climate change, but they muzzled scientists.

[Translation]

As far as social programs are concerned, the Conservatives closed veterans services offices, eliminated the court challenges program, cut funding to women's rights organizations and abandoned our seniors, not to mention their contempt for first nations.

In four years, our government has supported the middle class, lowered taxes for small businesses and created one million jobs. The unemployment rate is at its lowest in 40 years, and we have a plan for fighting climate change.

Under the Liberals, poverty among children and seniors is declining. Under the Conservatives, it is Canada that declines.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, middle-class taxes are up \$800 per family under the Liberal government, and it is starting to hurt.

MNP, the accounting firm, reports that almost half of Canadians are less than \$200 away from insolvency every month. In April, over 11,000 Canadians did go insolvent, a 9% annual increase over the previous year.

When will the government realize that Canadians are taxed to the max and cannot afford to pay any more?

● (1420)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government realized back in the fall of 2015 that it needed to lower taxes on middle-class Canadians.

When people say things, it does not make them true. The fact of the matter is that nine million middle-class Canadians have lower taxes, because we lowered the tax bracket between \$45,000 and \$90,000 by 7%. We added on the Canada child benefit, making sure that nine out of 10 families are better off.

The facts are clear. In 2019, a typical family is \$2,000 better off than in 2015 under the previous government.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister does not think anybody who takes the bus is middle class, so he raised their taxes by taking away their transit tax. He does not think that soccer moms and hockey dads are middle class, so he took away their children's fitness tax credit. He does not think students are middle class, so he took away the education and textbook tax credits. That does not even include the carbon and payroll tax increases.

What is worse is what is to come. The government is spending at an unsustainable rate requiring higher taxes, if it is re-elected. Why will the government not tell the truth about the higher costs that Canadians will pay when the Liberals no longer need their votes but still need their money?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that we were able to manage to lower taxes on Canadians even with the \$150 billion of additional debt left to us by the previous government. What we have said is that what we need to continue to do is to ensure that Canadians are successful.

We took away boutique tax credits, because we wanted to make sure that the broad cross-section of Canadians were better off. That is what the Canada child benefit did. That is what the lowering of middle-class taxes did.

The Liberal approach is helping Canadians, not just the friends of Conservatives.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, people who take the bus, people who put their kids in sports, students who go to university and college, I am happy to call those people Conservative friends.

However, they have no friends on that side of the House, because these Liberals will continue to raise taxes on middle-class Canadians, another \$23-billion spending increase and a promise-breaking deficit to go along with it.

Why do the Liberals not just admit that after the election, if, God forbid, they are back, there will be massive tax increases to pay for all of this out-of-control spending?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the continued focus on how Canadians are doing, because we want to reiterate that a typical family of four with two children is \$2,000 better off this year than they were back in 2015.

We will continue our approach to making sure that we help middle-class Canadians, and we will continue to focus on how we can ensure that the economy does well. Our investments have made a really big difference for Canada. We are going to continue to invest in Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance must remember that four years ago, when he decided to offer his services to Canadians as a candidate and Minister of Finance, he promised to run three small deficits and then no deficit in 2019. Four years later, the reality is three huge deficits and a deficit of nearly \$20 billion in 2019. His credibility when it comes to managing public funds has evaporated. Sadly, his word has become worthless, since he promises one thing and does the opposite.

Does he at least realize that a deficit is a tax on future generations?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we made an important promise, to invest in the future of Canada and Canadians. Fortunately, our investments have been very good for our economy. Unemployment is at its lowest in 40 years. More than a million new jobs were created in four years. This is a great economic situation, and things are going very well for Canadians. We will continue with our approach of investing in our future with optimism.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is unfortunate about the Minister of Finance is that back when he was a Bay Street baron, if I may call him that, he managed private sector money very realistically and very responsibly. Throughout his career in the private sector, he never ran up a deficit. Ever since he started taking care of taxpayers' money, however, it has been deficit after deficit. There have been four budgets and four deficits. That is the grand slam of mismanagement of public funds.

Will the minister finally admit that he did not keep his promise and his commitment for a zero deficit in 2019, and that a deficit is a tax on future generations?

•(1425)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in both the private sector and the public sector, it is important to have

Oral Questions

faith in the future. With the faith we have in our country, we have invested in our future. That is a good thing, because we are now in a much better situation than before. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 40 years. That is clear. We began at 7.2% under the previous Conservative government, and it is now 5.8%. That is making a big difference for Canada and for Canadians.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 65 years ago, individuals and corporations paid the same amount of income tax. Since then, the balance has tipped in favour of corporations. Corporate taxes have been cut, and individuals have been forced to make up the difference, because the Liberals and Conservatives refuse to put people ahead of corporations. We have the courage to do things differently.

Will the Liberals commit to helping people and making sure the rich pay their fair share?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we started by changing our approach. We cut taxes for the middle class by 7% for those who earn between \$45,000 and \$90,000 a year. At the same time, we added another bracket for the wealthy. This is important for our country. It is very good for the middle class, and it has helped us develop an economy that is working well right now.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the 1970s, individuals and corporations paid the same amount of tax. Now, corporations pay only a third. Conservatives and Liberals have slashed corporate tax rates and failed to crack down on offshore tax havens.

Who does this benefit? It is not everyday families. They do not use offshore tax havens, but the Westons, Irvings and the richest families in Canada sure do. While the Liberals and Conservatives help the richest save billions, they have failed to invest in housing, health care and pharmacare. Does the government not agree that the rich should pay their fair share?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not really sure where to start, but perhaps we could start with the fact that, yes, we have a corporate tax rate that is competitive with the United States. However, at the same time, what we have been able to do is to ensure our system works for all Canadians.

Oral Questions

We have lowered taxes for middle-class Canadians. We raised taxes on the top one per cent. We went after ensuring that we have an approach to dealing with offshore taxation that could actually work by putting in place rules to ensure that we can see through people's holdings in other countries. We have made important movement on all these fronts, ensuring our tax system works so our economy can work for investing in the future.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are continuing to put the richest ahead of everyday people. They let KPMG off the hook for tax avoidance. They helped Sears financiers over the workers at Sears. They let drug companies protect their profits instead of helping Canadians who cannot afford the cost of medication.

Now Canada ranks 25th out of 37 countries on services for people. Liberals must stop helping their wealthy friends and start investing in people. Why are the Liberals refusing to ensure that the rich pay their fair share?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been investing in Canadians as can be seen through the Canada child benefit where 300,000 kids have been lifted out of poverty. As we see when it comes to the economy, through the leadership of the Minister of Finance, we have one of the fastest growth rates among the G7 countries. When it comes to the economy, there are over one million jobs that have been created since 2015. What is really important to note is that 75% of those jobs are full-time jobs. When it comes to Canadians, their wages have gone up. We will continue to invest in the middle class.

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[Translation]

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have been clear. They are having a hard time making ends meet and are disappointed in the Liberal government. The Liberals cannot take the same old approach as the Conservatives. They must stop spending money to help rich corporations.

Canadians need universal pharmacare and affordable housing. We need to make better choices in order to get better results.

When will the Liberals start putting ordinary people ahead of their friends in high places and their rich corporations?

• (1430)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for giving me the opportunity to talk about the impact our investments are having on the middle class.

First of all, nearly one million jobs have been created, we have the lowest unemployment rate since 1976, and we have one of the strongest levels of economic growth in the developed world. In addition, the size of the debt relative to the economy is dropping, and it too will soon be at its lowest level in 40 years. Lastly, we have the lowest poverty rate in the history of Canada.

This is all great news and demonstrates the importance of investing in the middle class, which helps everyone and the economy.

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[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba Hydro is planning to build a transmission line to the U.S. to export clean green energy. Unlike the useless Liberal carbon tax, the Manitoba–Minnesota transmission project would actually help the environment by increasing the amount of green energy. Five years of consultations have been done and this project has been approved by the National Energy Board and Manitoba's clean energy commission.

Why is the Prime Minister blocking this product and not allowing it to get started?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians understand that for good projects such as this to move ahead and grow the economy, we must protect our environment and respect the rights of indigenous peoples.

We are working hard to ensure that we are discharging our duty to consult with indigenous communities. There are outstanding issues between the proponent and the indigenous communities so we extended the time to give them time to resolve those issues. We hope they will be able to resolve those issues.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is a complete fabrication. The Manitoba Hydro line was approved by two independent regulatory agencies and all outstanding issues have been addressed. This project would reduce emissions by providing clean electricity to areas of the U.S. that currently burn coal. However, the Prime Minister is blocking this green project and costing Manitobans hundreds of millions of dollars and Canadian jobs.

The Prime Minister is politically interfering and trying to kill yet another Canadian energy project. Why?

The Speaker: I encourage the hon. opposition House leader to be judicious in her choice of words.

The hon. Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will not follow the failed process of the Harper era that led to large energy infrastructure projects being challenged in the courts because they failed to put in place meaningful consultation that allows us to fully discharge our duty to consult with indigenous communities. We know that good projects such as this can only move forward when we look after the environment and we are meaningfully engaged with indigenous communities.

We encourage the proponent to continue their conversations with indigenous—

[Translation]

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

*Oral Questions***INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, federal and provincial areas of jurisdiction go back to 1867. A prime minister's job is to maintain healthy, productive and harmonious federal-provincial relations, but this Prime Minister is paternalistic and centralizing.

When will the Prime Minister show some respect for the provincially elected representatives of all Canadian provinces?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, respecting jurisdiction means investing with the provinces.

This gives me an opportunity to talk about the announcement we made yesterday together with the government of Quebec. We are making a historic investment in excess of \$500 million to rehabilitate the Louis-Hippolyte-La Fontaine tunnel and transform the 20th-century bridge-tunnel into a 21st-century piece of infrastructure.

That is what we mean by “working with the provinces”. It was a joint announcement and it is a joint investment. We are going to work together for Quebecers and for all Canadians.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that, in most cases, this Liberal government interferes and makes decisions at the federal level without taking the provinces into account. It does not respect Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick or Quebec, for starters.

Things have gotten so bad that, at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities conference last Friday, the Prime Minister said he was prepared to bypass the provinces to achieve his objectives.

Why does the Liberal government have so little respect for provincial governments and premiers?

• (1435)

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague said, respecting jurisdiction means working with the provinces. That is why I was very happy to be in Halifax on Sunday working with the Province of Nova Scotia to announce two major transportation corridor projects. Our federal government is working with the provinces to make life better for Canadians.

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[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the spring construction season has started but no shovels are in the ground for the Trans Mountain expansion. In 2016, the Liberals delayed their approval by four months and then failed to exert federal jurisdiction, while they actually funded opponents to use every tool to stop it. Last year, the Liberals' consultation mistakes delayed construction by another six months. In April, they delayed their second approval by a month. Now Liberal MPs on the natural resources committee question if a decision will even happen on June 18.

What exactly is the plan for construction to start immediately on June 19?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the hon. member and the members of the official opposition to actually listen to their leader or the premier of Alberta who believe that the process we have put in place is the right process. Maybe they should talk to the energy minister for Alberta as she believes the process is the right process. If they really believe in this process, they should not have voted to defund and kill the process that would allow us to get to a decision on this project by June 18.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this minister has totally and utterly failed his constituents. Under the current Liberals, three companies that wanted to build pipelines in Canada are gone and building them in the U.S. Not an inch of new pipeline is in service in Canada, but the U.S. added 35,000 kilometres of new pipelines since the TMX was proposed.

The Liberals must give a timeline for construction, transparency on costs and a plan to use all federal powers to get the Trans Mountain expansion built. Missing this construction season will cost taxpayers billions more. What is the plan to guarantee construction will start on June 19?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are moving forward on building pipelines. We are the government that gave approval to the Enbridge Line 3, which is almost completely done on the Canadian side. We are the government that gave approval to the Nova Gas line, which is completely done here. We are the government that had been advocating for the Keystone XL pipeline.

We put in place a process to move forward on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion in the right way to ensure that we are engaging with indigenous communities in a meaningful way, a process that the Conservatives tried to kill.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, families told their truths. Sophie Merasty, who lost her sister Rose, said, “We have always known this was a genocide.... The violence we face happens in all aspects of our lives—at every level, in every institution, in every interaction.”

On behalf of all Canadians, will the Prime Minister honour this truth and state clearly that Canada committed genocide against indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people? Will he commit to implementing all recommendations from the inquiry, with dedicated resources and a timeline that is accountable to the public?

Oral Questions

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the inquiry presented its final report, in which it found that the tragic violence that indigenous women and girls have experienced amounts to genocide. As the Prime Minister has said, we accept these findings. Our job now is to develop a national action plan, as called for by the inquiry to implement its recommendations, that is distinctions-based and flexible. The final report makes it clear that action is now required not just from governments and institutions but from all Canadians.

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls released 231 calls for justice to protect indigenous women and children. The calls include providing sufficient and readily available transit between cities in rural and northern communities. I have asked the current Liberal government 18 times to provide safe and affordable transportation in Saskatchewan, following the closure of the STC and the Greyhound service cuts.

Will the Liberals act now to ensure indigenous women and girls have access to safe transportation options?

• (1440)

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is precisely the reason why, after Greyhound pulled out, we decided as a government to work with the provinces that wanted to fill the void left by Greyhound and not filled by other transportation companies. We would be there at the table with them. I am glad to say that, in the case of the Government of British Columbia, we will be co-financing the transportation costs associated with some northern routes, including the Highway of Tears.

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[Translation]

AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is getting in the way of the Auditor General.

Canadians rely on the integrity of our government institutions to be transparent.

We all know that rewarding cronies is the Liberal way of getting favours or keeping officials quiet.

Why is the government prepared to obstruct the work of the Auditor General with impunity, instead of allowing him to do what he is mandated to do, namely to conduct independent audits?

Hon. Joyce Murray (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the Conservatives are finally taking an interest in officers of Parliament. After all, it was their party that cut \$6.4 million from the OAG's budget and fired the auditor general.

We increased the OAG's budget by \$41 million, something the Conservatives voted against. Why?

[English]

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is very unfortunate that the Liberal government has been governing for four years and it takes no responsibility or accountability for anything it has done.

This is the first time in Canadian history that the Auditor General has said that he has not been given the resources to fully audit the Liberal government. His request for new funds was rejected, and now audits have been dropped.

How can the Liberal government always find money for its friends, but when it comes to holding it to account, the cupboards are bare?

Hon. Joyce Murray (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for giving me the opportunity to remind the House of the record of cuts, muzzling and obstruction of the previous government.

This is just another officer of Parliament who the Conservatives do not respect. They have told the PBO that they will not allow him to audit their platform. That is probably because they know their climate non-plan will cost more than ours. Just ask Doug Ford in Ontario.

Where was that member when her party was thinking of burning the AG's budget—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope.

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GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government uses its power to punish its enemies and reward its friends.

If its SNC-Lavalin, the Prime Minister fights to get it out of troublesome court cases. If one is a decorated vice-admiral, that vice-admiral gets a Prime Minister promising that he will be in court before an investigation is even complete. If one is a cabinet minister who speaks truth to power, that cabinet minister is fired and kicked out of the Liberal Party. If its an anti-Conservative group like Unifor, that group gets to decide how to hand out \$600 million to the media in an election year.

When will the Liberals stop trying to stack the deck in their own favour?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us just take a walk down history lane here and look at what the Conservatives have done.

There is only one party in Canada's history that has been found several times to have broken election laws: robocalls, the in-and-out scandal and actually having a member of Parliament go to jail for spending over the limit. That is just the tip of the iceberg. Let us not talk about the so-called Fair Elections Act that they put in place to make it harder for Canadians to vote.

We will take no lessons from the party opposite.

Oral Questions

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government had no problem putting its fingers on the scales of justice in the Mark Norman case. It did not hesitate to try to interfere in the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin. It sees nothing wrong with allowing foreign funding to continue to pour into special interest groups in Canada. It is unapologetic for putting an anti-Conservative group like Unifor on a panel that will decide how to hand out \$600 million to the media that will cover the upcoming election.

Why are the Liberals so desperate to use the power of government to punish their enemies and reward their friends?

• (1445)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it appears my colleague opposite did not hear the answer the last time, so if he does not mind, I will repeat it.

There is only one party in the House that has been found to have broken election laws on numerous occasions. Let us go back. Let us remember the robocalls. Let us remember the in and out. Let us remember that one of its members of Parliament was found to have overspent and actually went to jail.

When it comes to this side of the House, we made it easier for Canadians to vote. We gave the Commissioner of Canada Elections more power to enforce our laws. We have ensured that we are protecting our elections from foreign cyber-threats.

The Speaker: Order, please. I know it will shock members to hear that they will hear things in the House they will not like sometimes, but we still have to allow each other the opportunity to speak despite that.

The hon. member for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls inquiry has called for serious action to help the families of women who have gone missing.

Families across northern Saskatchewan expect action from the Liberal government after the genocide of indigenous women. The families of Happy Charles and Myrna Montgrand need mental health supports and funding to help find their loved ones.

Will the Liberals commit today to provide all the necessary resources toward missing and murdered women in northern Saskatchewan?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ending this national tragedy. We know that the actions and policies of past governments directly led to the loss and extinguishment of indigenous languages, culture and traditional practices.

We are thanking the commission for the report and carefully reviewing all the recommendations. Our job is now to work with the survivors, families and our partners to develop a national action plan to implement those calls for justice.

We must work together to end the ongoing tragedy and Canadians should expect no less, including the people in northern Saskatchewan.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister of Indigenous Services went to Grassy Narrows to sign an agreement based on a two-year-old promise to a community that has been ravaged by mercury poisoning. However, he returned empty-handed.

Today, in committee, adding insult to injury, the minister blamed the chief, saying that the chief just “changed his mind”.

Let me be clear. Grassy Narrows is calling for what it was promised, including a mercury care home and treatment centre. Grassy Narrows deserves justice, not gaslighting.

When will the Liberal government quit the blame game and keep its promise to the people of Grassy Narrows?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was in Grassy Narrows, because building a health facility there is a priority for us. The hope was to sign an agreement to move forward in addressing the needs of the community. It is part of a process of consensus building and negotiation in the best interest of the outcomes for that community and looking after those who are no longer in the community but need attention and care.

These conversations are ongoing. We will continue working with Chief Turtle and his council until we agree on a solution that meets the health needs of Grassy Narrows, not only now but in the long term.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Long Range Mountains, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has been working hard to advance gender equality, and our plan is working. One million jobs have been created and there are now more women working than ever before.

Women's organizations are at the forefront of gender equality, yet they often remain underfunded, undermined, despite the vital role they play.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality please tell the House how our government will change the way government funds women's organizations to make them more sustainable and stable for the future?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, there is very good news for gender equality and the sustainability of the women's movement.

Oral Questions

The new partnerships with the Community Foundations of Canada, the Canadian Women's Foundation and Grand Challenges Canada will bring funding to women's organizations to a level never reached before. Women's groups know first-hand how a decade of being underfunded and undermined by a government can roll back equality rights, but we are standing with them.

I want to thank the hon. member for Long Range Mountains for her great advocacy.

* * *

• (1450)

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has always had excellent relations with Mexico. However, the Liberals' poor management of the border and the cancellation of the visa program for Mexico are creating a safety risk for Canadians. More than 400 individuals linked to Mexican cartels have entered Canada to expand their territory and engage in criminal activity.

Can the minister tell us what steps have been taken to address the situation?

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am rather surprised that the hon. gentleman continues to use statistics that have been totally discredited. In fact, he asked this question in the standing committee yesterday, and I indicated to him that according to the records of the CBSA, the number of Mexicans that had been connected or linked to the alleged cartels was not 400, but in fact three. It is not 300, but three, and they are among those who have been deported from Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for shouting so much. It shows a lot of respect for the House.

That said, the minister mentioned that the number of Mexican cartel members in Canada is three, not 400.

So much the better if this is true. Can the minister tell us where these three individuals are and whether they will be deported to Mexico quickly?

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in all the hubbub of the House, I think the hon. gentleman missed the last part of my previous answer. I indicated that those three, including another 27 who had criminal issues, had all been deported from Canada.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week we learned that the Liberal government offered access into Canada as a reward for many people who sued the government based on the flawed and terribly managed family reunification program. I

do not think there is anyone in this place who would say that access into our country is something that should be frittered away as a result of a lawsuit. This action was described by somebody as likening Canada to a third world country.

Is the government expecting further lawsuits on this issue?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me correct the record with respect to the Conservatives' record on the parent and grandparent program: a backlog of over 167,000 cases, a six to 18 year wait time to sponsor loved ones. They mismanaged the program so badly that it went off the rails for two years.

We have eliminated the backlog and we have reduced the wait times to under two years. So they do not forget, this is exactly what the Conservatives said about this program, a party that now pretends to care about family reunification—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the former Conservative government, we admitted an average of 20,370 people. Under the Liberal government, it was 18,768 in the family reunification.

I am really tired of the minister abdicating his responsibility to manage our border. He cannot allow people to skip the line at Roxham Road and give out access to our country through settlements and court cases, while people who are legally trying to enter this country have to wait.

When are the Liberals going to stop bringing disorder and unfairness to Canada's immigration system?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is what the Conservative Party recently said about the parent and grandparent program. The party describes this program as a “burden” on the federal government in terms of support as well as a drain on provinces. The party that pretends to care about family reunification is at the same time trying to describe parents and grandparents as a drain on Canada, as a drain on provinces.

We are the party that cares about family reunification, not the Conservative Party of Canada.

* * *

• (1455)

[*Translation*]

LABOUR

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government still has no plan to deal with the labour shortage in rural areas like mine, despite the disastrous consequences for many businesses. Everyone agrees that immigration is one solution, but it is a long process. I asked the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to open an office in Saint-Hyacinthe to help SMEs and agri-food companies, but nothing has happened.

Why is the minister ignoring the people in my riding and in rural areas?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the increased volume of labour market impact assessment applications. Due to the fact that we have the lowest unemployment rate ever since we have started measuring, we have a new problem, and that is that it is hard to find labour in all different sectors, including in the agricultural sector.

My department is trying to deal with the 40% surge in applications this year. We have dedicated more money and more resources. We are also looking at the way that we are processing LIMAs to find more efficient ways to get employers the workers they need.

* * *

*[Translation]***RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 13 of the 39 municipalities in my riding have little or no cellphone coverage. While big cities will soon have 5G service, some regions are still fighting to get 3G. Two weeks ago, I asked why the Liberals view and treat people in the regions as second-class citizens when it comes to cellphone service.

The minister told me that telcos will be able to invest more thanks to the accelerated capital cost allowance. However, there is no guarantee that this will result in more investments in the regions. On the contrary, telcos will be able to invest more in the 5G service offered in big cities.

The minister is supposedly responsible for rural economic development. When will she wake up and start working for our regions?

[English]

Hon. Bernadette Jordan (Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know all Canadians need access to broadband as well as mobile networks, to participate in the digital world and also for safety.

That is why our fall economic statement incentivized businesses to expand networks to rural areas. We are also making mobile projects eligible under the CRTC broadband funding.

In budget 2019, we announced our commitment to make sure we have 100% access to high-speed broadband for all Canadians. We have a plan and it is working.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Alberta cancelled the carbon tax and gas prices have fallen across the province. The same thing cannot be said for rural British Columbia.

Yesterday, in Vavenby, Canfor laid off 178 workers. There is no employment, but the Prime Minister is happy to have them pay extra for gas because that is exactly what he wants.

When will the Prime Minister stop punishing rural Canadians and take real steps to address the high price of gas?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear about what Premier Kenney said. He said that climate change is the “flavour of the month”.

This is actually an existential threat. If we look at what is happening in Alberta right now, we see that forest fires are starting even earlier.

I have another fact. It was found that Doug Ford's climate plan costs twice as much to do less. It costs twice as much money for taxpayers.

Taking action on climate change is something we need to do. We can do it in a way that makes life affordable, creates good jobs and ensures we do not leave the biggest debt to future generations through inaction on climate change.

The Speaker: Order. I ask colleagues to show a little respect for each other. I am sure they would want the same shown to them.

The hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.

* * *

*[Translation]***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government is out of touch. Canada's environment commissioner and many organizations, such as the UN, are saying that Canada will not achieve its Paris targets.

In committee, I asked the minister whether Canada was going to meet its targets. She said yes. What a lack of honesty and transparency.

This government needs to be honest. When will it tell Canadians that the Liberals in power will not meet the Paris targets?

● (1500)

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want to know whether the Conservative Party will support our climate emergency motion, which is very simple. It basically states that climate change is real, that it is an emergency and that we need to meet our Paris targets.

I have a simple question. Will the Conservatives join the others and vote in favour of the motion?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I had no problem hearing the question from the hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier. He should listen to the answer, whether he likes it or not, out of respect for the House.

The hon. member for Abbotsford.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals continue to pretend they are going to meet their Paris targets, yet the evidence is overwhelming: Every single credible source, including the minister's own department, says the targets will not be met. Nevertheless, every day the minister gets up in the House and repeats loudly, and sometimes very loudly, something she knows to be patently false, in the hope that Canadians will totally believe it.

When will the minister admit that the Liberals will not meet Canada's Paris targets?

The Speaker: The hon. member for Durham will come to order.

The hon. Minister of Environment.

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not have to repeat talking points. I am just going to say the truth.

The truth is that we have a climate emergency and we need to take action on climate change. Inaction costs us even more.

We just found out that Doug Ford's "climate plan" is actually costing twice as much as our federal climate plan. Taxpayers are paying more to do less.

We need to take action on climate change. Why will the Conservative Party not recognize that the environment and the economy go hand in hand and that we need to take action for the future of our kids?

* * *

*[Translation]***TAXATION**

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the dream of owning a home seems increasingly unrealistic for my constituents in Toronto—Danforth.

[English]

While many of my constituents are trying to save for what will likely be the largest investment of their lives, we continue to see people who are failing to pay their fair share.

[Translation]

Could the Minister of National Revenue update us on the government's progress in combatting tax evasion and tax avoidance in the housing market?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Toronto—Danforth for her interest in an issue that is important to her constituents.

Our government recognizes the importance of ensuring a fair housing market for all Canadians. That is why the CRA has increased audits of real estate transactions in British Columbia and Ontario.

[English]

Since 2015, CRA auditors have reviewed 41,700 files in Ontario and British Columbia, resulting in over \$100 million in penalties, and have identified over \$1 billion in additional taxes.

[Translation]

I can confirm—

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

* * *

*[English]***INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE**

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is easier for small businesses in my province to sell goods all over the world than to other provinces. Due to the Prime Minister's failure to lead, there is still no free trade within our country. This is an absolutely absurd situation.

Provinces are starting to step up. However, the Liberal government would rather defend its protectionist status quo. Will the government do what Canadians are demanding and stand with premiers Kenney, Moe and Pallister for free trade in this great country?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that internal trade in this country needs to be freer. This is a very important issue. The IMF came out recently, when it was looking at Canada, and identified the fact that we could actually increase our GNP if we had freer trade across the country. That is why we are working towards this goal.

We know that most of these barriers are at a provincial level, so I am encouraged to see provincial leaders taking action on this. The federal government has taken significant action. In our most recent budget, we took away all federal constraints, for example, to moving alcohol across our country.

Now we need to work together with the provinces to get this done.

* * *

● (1505)

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, dozens of workers with developmental disabilities were fired from their jobs after the Liberal government shut down the National Archives program that employed them. Liberals have promised to find them meaningful work within government, but nothing has been done. When the Prime Minister was asked about the fate of these workers, he gave empty talking points.

These workers deserve better. They want to know, will the Liberals commit today to replace those jobs they took away?

*Oral Questions***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the eve of our third annual National AccessAbility Week, and of course with Bill C-81 having gone through this House last week, I can assure every Canadian that we will find jobs for these workers. In fact, we are showing them the dignity of giving them meaningful work so that they contribute to government operations.

I have been working with the organization. No one will be without a job.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Geng Tan (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the global transition to a low-carbon economy is among the great challenges and opportunities of our lifetime. Our government has been a leader in the transition to a clean energy future. However, to succeed, we must engage expertise from around the world.

Could the minister update this House on how Canada is showing clear leadership, bringing together international partners from government and industry to solve one of the most important global issues of our time?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Don Valley North for his hard work.

Last week, Canada hosted the Clean Energy Ministerial and Mission Innovation. We brought together over 25 countries to help build a more sustainable energy future that supports workers and communities and creates middle-class jobs.

We highlighted the leadership of women, indigenous peoples and young Canadians in Canada's energy sector, and highlighted why Canada is the place to invest.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Liberals are all talk and no action when it comes to the crisis with China. Today we have learned that the crisis with China is about to get worse. The Chinese government has now set its sights on our livestock industry.

The Canadian Meat Council is telling producers that they cannot count on the Canadian embassy to defend their interests in China. When will the Prime Minister realize that his inaction is devastating Canadian farmers and ranchers?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that we have been working very closely with producers in all sectors for months now. We are monitoring the situation, and reopening the Chinese markets, including the canola market, is our top priority.

A working group is taking a very serious look at this issue, and we are following its recommendations. Yesterday, I confirmed the deadlines for the new advance payments program. I can assure the House that we are working with our farmers and for our farmers.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Canada's family reunification system is wrong-headed. Ottawa terminated immigration services at the embassy in Cuba without notice or explanation. People seeking sponsorship to join family in Quebec have to undergo medical tests in other countries, go back to Cuba, and then come to Quebec and pay thousands of dollars.

What is the government going to do to fix this situation and finally let Quebec and Canadian families be together?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada and Cuba have long enjoyed a special relationship. Immigration plays a key role in preserving the strong ties that unite the people of our two nations.

[*English*]

However, as a government, we have a unique responsibility to protect the health and safety of all our employees. Cuban nationals seeking to apply for travel documents to Canada will continue to have access to services online, and Canadians and permanent residents will continue to be able to submit documents directly to our embassy in Cuba.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that is not an answer.

Children are currently stranded in Cuba without their families because Canada cut consular services. We cannot ask minors to figure out how to get a visa for Mexico, pay to get there, figure out how to get a doctor's appointment and collect all of the necessary paperwork in a foreign country. The families are the ones who suffer.

Can the government tell us when services will be restored? What is the government waiting for?

• (1510)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was in Havana nearly three weeks ago, and I spoke with diplomats at our embassy. I want to thank them for their excellent work, and I want to assure our diplomats and all Canadians that the health and safety of our diplomats and their families is our number one concern.

Government Orders

[English]

PHARMACARE

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, my constituents in Nanaimo—Ladysmith are having an increasingly difficult time paying the rising costs of pharmaceutical drugs. It is clear that it is beyond time to implement a universal pharmacare program. The new NAFTA includes provisions that extend patents on drugs from eight years to 10 years and will keep the cost of drugs high for consumers longer. What is the government prepared to do to keep pharmaceuticals affordable for those who need them, and to stop the excessive profiteering of big pharma?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government believes that no Canadian should have to choose between paying for prescriptions and putting food on the table. That is why we are taking bold steps to help Canadians save billions on drugs, including joining the pan-Canadian pharmaceutical alliance, proposing major reforms to regulations, laying the foundation for national pharmacare in budget 2019 and devoting over \$1 billion to high-cost drugs for rare diseases. We will not rest until all Canadians can get and afford the medications they need.

* * *

[Translation]

FAMILY CAREGIVERS

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am confident that you will find the unanimous consent of the House for the following motion:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should: (a) recognize the contribution that family caregivers make to the well-being of seniors, people who are sick, and people with reduced mobility, as well as the crucial role they play in the context of an aging population; and (b) advocate for a world family caregivers' day at the General Assembly of the United Nations.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

WAYS AND MEANS

MOTION NO. 33

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.) moved that a ways and means motion to introduce an act to amend the Customs Tariff and the Canadian International Trade Tribunal Act be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1550)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 1333)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Aubin	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Barsalou-Duval
Baylis	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Benson
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Boissonnault	Bossio
Boudrias	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Bratina
Breton	Brosseau
Caron	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Choquette
Clement	Cormier
Cullen	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Drouin	Dubé
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Duvall	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Fergus
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland
Gameau	Garrison
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Hajdu
Hardcastle	Hardie
Harvey	Hébert
Hehr	Hogg
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Jolibois
Joly	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Julian	Kang
Khalid	Khera
Kwan	Lambropoulos

Lametti
Lapointe
Lebouthillier
Leslie
Lightbound
Long
Ludwig
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Masse (Windsor West)
May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Moore
Morneau
Murray
Nassif
O'Connell
O'Regan
Paradis
Peschisolido
Philpott
Plamondon
Quach
Ratansi
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Samson
Sansoucy
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sorbara
Ste-Marie
Tan
Thériault
Vandenbeld
Virani
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young

Lamoureux
Laverdière
Lefebvre
Levitt
Lockhart
Longfield
MacGregor
Manly
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Saanchi—Gulf Islands)
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Morrissey
Nantel
Nault
Oliver
Ouellette
Pauzé
Peterson
Picard
Poissant
Qualtrough
Rioux
Rodriguez
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Sangha
Sarai
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sohi
Spengemann
Stetski
Tassi
Vandal
Vaughan
Weir
Wilkinson
Yip
Zahid— 200

NAYS

Members

Albas
Allison
Barlow
Benzen
Berthold
Block
Brassard
Carrie
Cooper
Deltell
Doherty
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Gallant
Genius
Godin
Harder
Kent
Kmiec
Liepert
Lobb
MacKenzie
Martel
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Motz
Nicholson
O'Toole
Poilievre
Reid

Albrecht
Anderson
Barrett
Bergen
Bezan
Boucher
Calkins
Chong
Davidson
Diotte
Egliniski
Falk (Provencher)
Finley
Généreux
Gladu
Gourde
Hoback
Kitchen
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lloyd
Lukiwski
Maguire
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Nater
Nuttall
Paul-Hus
Rayes
Saroya

Government Orders

Schmale
Shiple
Sorenson
Strahl
Sweet
Van Kesteren
Viersen
Warkentin
Webber
Yurdiga

Shields
Sopuck
Stanton
Stubbs
Tilson
Vecchio
Wagantall
Waugh
Wong
Zimmer— 78

PAIRED

Members

Fortin
Gill

Fry
LeBlanc— 4

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2019, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-97, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2019 and other measures, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon has two minutes remaining in his speaking time.

The hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

Mr. Jati Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 100,000 Canadians would be able to buy their first homes. We have already received a great deal of positive reaction to budget 2019 and its progress in boosting affordability. Canadians are pleased with the way it would help young householders realize their dream of home ownership and encourage the construction of new homes.

For example, Heather Tremain, CEO of Options for Homes, had this to say:

The Federal budget takes concrete steps to address Canada's housing affordability problem and will help to improve access to home ownership for middle income earners.

We understand the many benefits that come from having a safe and adequate home that one can afford. Through budget 2019, we are once again demonstrating that the Government of Canada is back in housing. We are delivering an ambitious, comprehensive and realistic plan that would create much needed new housing, protect the affordability of existing homes and include new support for first-time home buyers. This is a plan that would benefit generations to come.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the House to support the budget implementation bill for the benefit of our economy and a more inclusive and prosperous society for all Canadians.

● (1555)

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member spent the last part of his speech talking about this supposedly great new initiative for first-time homebuyers. In the majority of his riding, which is part of Abbotsford, British Columbia, and Mission, British Columbia, there are no homes a person could buy, and receive money, that would qualify for this.

Government Orders

Is the member aware of the top-end limit for this initiative, and could he tell us how many people in Abbotsford and Mission would actually qualify, based on this program, which I can tell him right now, would not apply to his region?

Mr. Jati Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, let us talk about my colleague's riding. I had the privilege to announce \$11.8 million for 67 affordable units. We are going to provide rental units for 30% less than the market price. I also had the privilege to announce \$7 million for 36 units to look after women and children, rental space that will also be offered at 30% less.

These are the good things we are doing in his riding.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, despite what my colleague said about access to housing, I will still be voting against this bill.

I hosted a luncheon in Saint-Hyacinthe on the topic and I learned that there are now over 200 families on the waiting list for low-income housing there. Seniors in the region are also in dire need of it. A number of people have told me that they spend 30% to 50% of their income on housing.

The students and people under 30 in my riding are saying they are in debt. They do not have RRSPs with which to buy a house.

This budget does not reflect the reality of the people in my riding at all. I cannot fathom how my colleague can say that they have solved the housing problem.

[*English*]

Mr. Jati Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, I do not think we need to convince a whole lot of people on this pretty straightforward deal. About 100,000 Canadians will be eligible to buy a home within the next three years. For people who want a \$400,000 home, we will pay a 10% down payment so they can buy it. This is for newly built homes. The federal government will chip in a 5% down payment for someone buying a second-hand home. I think this is very good news for first-time homebuyers.

Our government is making home ownership more affordable for the first time, allowing people to lower their monthly mortgage payments. I urge both sides of the House to pass this piece of legislation.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening all day to the Liberals say they have created a million jobs. I have a number for my colleagues and I would like them to pay attention to it.

This past year alone, the deficit was \$20 billion, and because the world economy is doing so well, there has been a \$20 billion increase in income. That is \$40 billion. If the Liberals had decided to create jobs, this year alone they could have paid one million Canadians to sit at home and do absolutely nothing. They could have given each and every one of them \$40,000 with the amount of debt the government is going into.

Right now, there is nothing in the budget to help with our competitiveness and productivity. The scary thing is that in my community and in those like mine that depend on manufacturing, we have to get more competitive.

Is the government going to choose deficit jobs that are created due to government deficit and spending, which do not really add anything to our productivity, or is it going to do something serious to help manufacturing jobs in my community?

Mr. Jati Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for bringing up the one million jobs we created in the country, 75% of which are full-time jobs.

We lifted 300,000 children over the poverty line. Our 10% increase in GIS benefited 900,000 seniors, putting many over the poverty line. The unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in our country for the last 40 years. We have the lowest tax rate for small businesses out of the G7 countries. The list goes on.

When people work, they bring more taxes into our coffers. I think we are going in the right direction. We will continue to help Canadians.

• (1600)

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on this bittersweet day to speak for the last time in this storied institution.

On June 28, 2004, the fine people of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound elected me for the first time. It is an honour and a privilege that I have never taken lightly. They have sent me back here four more times.

I was born and raised on a farm in Amabel Township, the oldest of seven children. I attended a one-room rural school for six years before moving to a huge three-room rural school for grades seven and eight. I then attended Warton District High School. In May of 1972, while in grade 11, due to irreconcilable differences, along with a bit of Irish stubbornness, I left school while still only 15. It is not something I am proud of, but sometimes we all make mistakes in life. We have to live with those decisions and learn from them.

The reason I even mention this is that one of the things that makes Canada so great is that, with hard work and determination, we can be anything or do anything we put our minds to.

I had always wanted a farm, so after taking a couple of farm business management courses at Georgian College, and with the help of my parents, I started to piece together my future. Later that summer, I met this cute blonde girl from the other side of the tracks and on August 26, both at age 16, we had our first date. Three years later, on July 26, 1975, we got married. We raised our three sons, Brett, Curt and Cole, on our 330-head cow calf farm just south of Warton in Keppel Township.

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I never had political aspirations but politics seemed to find me. In November 1991, I ran for township council as a councillor. I also served terms as deputy reeve and reeve in Keppel Township before being elected as the first mayor of the amalgamated Township of Georgian Bluffs in 2000 and then elected warden of Grey County in 2002. After being re-elected as mayor in November of 2003, I decided to seek the CPC nomination on March 2, 2004. I was successful and the rest is history.

Here we are, 15 years later, after five federal elections. I am very proud of having two private member's bills passed in this House unanimously: the Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act and the Transboundary Waters Protection Act. I also worked very hard to see the end of the long-gun registry in 2012, something that was very important to my riding.

I have always been a constituency MP. That is what got me elected and that is what has kept me elected.

I will not miss the weekly trips to Ottawa or the political BS that comes with this place, but I can tell members I will sincerely miss the many good people I have met in my time here, like former colleagues Loyola Hearn of Newfoundland; Gail Shea of P.E.I.; Denis Lebel of Quebec; Stella Ambler and Daryl Kramp of Ontario; Leona Aglukkaq of Nunavut; Merv Tweed of Manitoba; Lynne Yelich of Saskatchewan; Rick Casson, James Rajotte and Monte Solberg of Alberta; and John Duncan of B.C. We still stay in touch and we will always remain friends.

The many Hill staff I have worked with, and this is only some of them, are such great people that I want to name some of the ones I have had special relationships with over the years. They are Amy Mills, Kelly Williams, Ann Marie Keeley, Kim Purchase, Regan Watts, Bryan Rogers, Semhar Tekeste, Luwam Ghebre and Sean Murphy, just to name a few. They are the people who do the work behind the scenes and are sometimes not appreciated. However, I have valued working with them.

●(1605)

I have worked across party lines with people like the member for Sydney—Victoria, heck, I have even been to his farm, and the member for Cape Breton—Canso, who could not be here today I understand. However, while I have tried to overlook the fact that he is a Liberal, I just cannot accept the fact that he still cheers for a hockey team that has not won a Stanley Cup in over 52 years instead of cheering for my beloved Boston Bruins. It is just shameful. As well, I have worked with the member for Malpeque, whom I have butted heads with on the agriculture committee many times, but I have always respected him as we both always worked hard to try to make things better for farmers and agriculture across this country.

I also want to thank my staff, both present staff who are here today and former staff. Dianne Ackert has been with me for 12 years. She is unable to be here, as her mom is very ill and in the hospice. Our thoughts are with her mom. Chad Richards has been with me for seven years; Shea Angus, four years; Pam Sparkes, three years; as well as Kim Davis, who is also here, who has joined us in the last year. I thank all of you for your hard work over the years.

I also want to recognize former staff, and some are here today, Anna Marie Young, Genielle Hay, Dianne Byczok, Madi Murariu,

Deborah Ingraham, Carol Weir, Kyleigh Benninger and Clarissa Sookram-Whipple, whom I am still thankful to call friends as well. I also want to thank my EDA, my five campaign managers and all the volunteers who worked tirelessly on my behalf in five elections.

To my present colleagues, what a team. It is indeed an honour to have worked with all of you. Please stay in touch. To my leader, I am proud that we were both elected on the same day in 2004, and I look forward to seeing you become Prime Minister in October.

I want to thank my and Darlene's good friends, Lisa and Carm Myles, who drove seven hours last night to be here today. As well, I wish them a happy 36th anniversary today. However, there is something wrong when people drive to Ottawa on their anniversary but we appreciate their being here.

I want to thank my siblings, Linda, Tom, Jerry, Brad, Mary Lou and Paul, my nieces and nephews, and their spouses, for their support over the years, as well as my two biggest fans, my mom and dad, who are no longer with us but I know are watching down on us today.

To Colonel Alex Ruff, who has earned the right to try to replace me in October, thanks for being here today and good luck this fall.

Lastly, to my wife Darlene. Your mom told you to never marry a farmer or a politician. You ended up with both, so being a bit of a black sheep, how did that advice work out for you? You have always supported me in everything I have tackled. I could not have done this without you. Thank you.

In closing, I have been so fortunate to have served in this grand place for 15 years and to have been a part of some great accomplishments, but I also reflect on some sad times. Losing my great friend, Jim Flaherty in April 2014; the shooting on October 22, 2014; and losing my seatmate, Gord Brown, just over a year ago will always stay with me.

However, it is time for me and my family to move on. It is time for me to spend more time with my four beautiful grandkids. Chesney, Shailan, Brookelin and Liam, here I come. It is time for more fishing and hunting, and much, much less politics. After 10 elections, my wife and I are both elected out. Darlene says that my "give a darn" button is busted. She is right.

It has truly been a slice, Mr. Speaker, but I am out of here.

●(1610)

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to give some of my thoughts about my good friend from Owen Sound. As the two of us ride off in the sunset in our tractors and leave this wonderful place, I will say a few things.

We were on the agriculture committee together when we were in opposition in government, but I never noticed much difference. We both worked hard together. It was a pleasure working with him, especially on agriculture.

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Whether it was at committee, or at community centres across the country or in people's farmhouse kitchens, we were always there for the farmers and the people who produced the agriculture products for our country. I appreciate the work he has done. We are from different areas, but we worked well together.

I wish him, Darlene and his family all the best.

I would like to ask him a question. He came to our farm, ate the Eyking eggs and stayed with us. Will he and his lovely wife Darlene come back and have a feed of lobsters down on our beach?

The Deputy Speaker: We will do a couple of rounds of questions and then come back to the hon. member for a brief comment at the end.

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to join our colleagues in thanking the member for his service. We had a brief time sitting on committee together. However, as members of the House know, MPs who travel together stay together in a sense. The most cross-partisan friendships that one will find are usually among those who have had the chance to travel together, as the member and I did.

I want to thank him. I know when we go through a variety of issues, or miss our families, or have health issues or whatnot that crop up, it takes a lot to be here. The amount of service that goes into it by members who have been here as long as he has is probably underappreciated by the public, and I will say that on the record.

On behalf of the New Democratic caucus and myself for having had the opportunity to work with him, I want to thank him for his service.

I certainly hope he makes the best of that time. A lot goes on in this place, but at the end of the day, there are things beyond this place that are far more important to us both for our health, but especially for our happiness. I thank the member very much.

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too, like all my colleagues on both sides of the House, want to wish all the very best to the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound. I knew him for about six years prior to his election in 2004. We both had the privilege of sitting on the Niagara Escarpment Commission. For the record, we did not always agree on preserving the escarpment commission, etc, but we certainly enjoyed each other's company.

I remember being so pleased and proud when he obtained the candidacy in 2004. I was completely confident, certainly hoped and prayed, that we would have the opportunity to continue to serve together. It has been a great 15 years for me serving with the hon. member, and a great six and a half years on the escarpment commission.

I, too, wish him all the very best.

•(1615)

Mr. Larry Miller: Mr. Speaker, for the member for Sydney—Victoria, yes, my wife and I enjoyed our last trip there. I searched and searched to find eggs in stores that did not have the name of “Eyking” on them.

Having said that, a lot of the time in politics partisanship goes way too far. We all put our socks and underwear on the same way, no matter what our different beliefs are, and I enjoyed that. The member

mentioned lobster. An old friend of mine who I used to hunt with but who has moved on had a saying, “If you don't want me to come, don't invite me”. So yes, we will be there.

My hon. colleague from the NDP is right. We served on committee for a year or a year and a half. I have a lot of respect and time for him. We may have disagreed there, and that democracy is all about that. However, the respect was always there, coming from both ways. I sincerely thank him for his comments.

My hon. friend and colleague from Niagara Falls talks about the Niagara Escarpment Commission. Yes, those were tough years to deal with. While my hon. colleague tried to destroy the escarpment, I did my best to help save it.

I have short story. I knew the member for Niagara Falls had been in this place for nine years, from 1984 to 1993, and I had no idea he was going to put his name forth. When I called him to tell him I had won the nomination, he said, “Mine's tomorrow night.” I said, “Thanks for telling me.”

I am going to miss all my colleagues in this place, and I thank him for his comments.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for those watching, I would like to say that we just heard our colleague from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound say farewell. I would certainly like to join the other members of the House in thanking him for his service to Canadians.

Today, I am speaking to my constituents in Gatineau, a number of whom have been through quite a lot in recent years, including tornadoes and flooding. These last four years, we have made tremendous progress together under this government. I am of course referring to the Canada child benefit, which, in Gatineau alone, has put over \$6 million in tax-free cash back into the pockets of parents every month. Furthermore, with summer fast approaching, students are working hard and benefiting from the fact that we doubled funding for summer jobs. We also brought back order, respect and stability to our public service, which had important needs to meet, challenges to face and growth to achieve given this government's ambitions.

I could have talked about any of those things, which were all of great benefit to the people of Gatineau. However, I want to focus on two or three of the innovative measures set out in this budget that I care about, both as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and as the member for Gatineau.

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This budget implementation bill explores new opportunities for entrepreneurs. Gatineau is home to many construction companies and tradespeople. Every year, these people build houses and office buildings, thereby enabling the Government of Canada to continue its work through federal construction projects. We owe a great deal to the people of Gatineau who work hard and use their hands and their heads to help us build the infrastructure the Government of Canada needs.

This budget implementation bill will enshrine the prompt payment principles in law. We worked with some of our colleagues, including the member for Humber River—Black Creek, the member for King—Vaughan and many others, to follow the lead of some of the provinces, including Ontario, that have legislated to ensure that the contractors working on major construction projects, the subcontractors, the subcontractors' subcontractors and all those who are part of the supply chain get paid on time in accordance with the terms of their contract. That means that suppliers will be paid, materials will be paid for and everything will be done in a smooth and orderly fashion in accordance with the principles of justice, transparency and fairness. These are Canadian values, Liberal values, that I believe we should all support.

This is a major modernization in the management of our construction projects. This principle aims to ensure that a formal contract award process can be launched in the event that an agreement cannot be reached with the contractor. This very fast and inexpensive process will ensure that subcontractors, and by extension their employees, such as trades people and construction workers, for example, are paid in accordance with current standards and their contractual terms.

• (1620)

The Government of Canada is proud to be taking a leadership role. Public Services and Procurement Canada is now acting as an administrator. We have provided this leadership through a 14-point plan and the new legislative measure in the Liberal government's fourth budget. We are proud to be ensuring timely payments in the construction industry.

The second thing I want to discuss was also a very important issue of general interest to the riding of Gatineau, if not the entire national capital region. We have invested considerable sums in the Terrasses de la Chaudière complex, the Place du Portage complex, the Lester B. Pearson building and all the Parliament buildings, for example. We are making significant investments to repair and upgrade our institutions and federal buildings. We are doing so as a sign of respect not only towards the machinery of government, but also, of course, towards those who work in it.

I was proud to launch the new concept of “co-working”, which involves making offices available in the suburbs, in Orléans or at Place de la Cité in my own riding of Gatineau. There will be offices where employees of certain departments will be able to work if their child has a dentist appointment, for example. They can work closer to home that day. This is another show of respect and another investment in our infrastructure.

The Government of Canada is stepping up. My colleagues in the House may think it is not necessarily a good political move for the government to invest in its own offices. However, it is very

important for the government and for the public service in the national capital region.

Since Confederation, the Government of Canada has also had the solemn responsibility of ensuring that Canadians are able to travel between both sides of the Ottawa River. We have five bridges, including the most recent one built in 1973. At the time there were 650,000 people in the entire national capital region. Now there are nearly 1.5 million people, and not a single lane has been added since 1973.

The City of Ottawa and the City of Gatineau have plans to invest in public transit. These are necessary investments and the Government of Canada will help with traffic flow by investing more than \$80 million in the renovation of the bridges that are in service. The Alexandra Bridge will be replaced. What is of most interest to the people of Gatineau is the construction of a sixth crossing between Gatineau and Ottawa in the east end.

We will update the pertinent data and work with our partners. I have committed to being the champion of this new bridge. I believe I have really helped advance this project, but the work is not done. There is more to do, and we must continue to advocate for this project. I want to reassure those watching that we have made considerable progress. I invite them to continue supporting our efforts so that we can build a sixth crossing in the national capital region.

We will continue to invest in our public services, our public servants and our government. In the national capital region, we are honoured to be part of the effort to build the best country on earth, Canada.

• (1625)

[English]

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague's comments about the Canada summer jobs initiative and about increasing the number of students and so on. While we are grateful for that, what he did not say is where the money is coming from. We now have a \$20-billion deficit added to the previous deficits. We are borrowing money, paying huge amounts in interest to pay for student summer jobs.

Does the member realize that the current debt is costing Canadians over \$26 billion every year in interest payments alone? How can he justify using borrowed money to pay students who, when they graduate and when they have children, will have to pay back these huge debts and all of the accumulated interest as well?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I am rather shocked and surprised. The member may be surprised to realize that we have one thing in common: We both come from an area that graduates a heck of a lot of students. There are two universities, maybe a college, in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. Certainly in the Ottawa-Gatineau area there are l'UQO, Ottawa University, Saint Paul and Carleton, of course. We are very proud of our institutions of higher learning.

Government Orders

These students require these investments in summer jobs. These students require the first start that these grants to employers and other public institutions give. After his party left us an environmental debt of \$150 billion in borrowed money, I am very shocked to hear the member now question the money we are investing to make sure young people continue to contribute to this country. I am very surprised at that.

• (1630)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since my colleague talked about something other than Bill C-97, I will do the same and talk about something that he must have forgotten in his speech, and that is the problems with the Phoenix pay system, which affect so many people in his riding.

This topic is fresh on the minds of public servants in Sherbrooke, and that must be the case in his riding as well. The unions are still very angry with the government for making nice promises that it did not keep. The problems with the Phoenix pay system persist and are getting worse over time. My colleague is well aware of that, since he is in charge of this government file. He did not keep his promises.

Two budgets ago, the Liberals announced the end of the Phoenix pay system. Today, as we speak, in June 2019, Phoenix is still the pay system being used by the federal public service.

In 2015, he made a promise, but he failed to fulfill that promise before the end of his term. He is asking his constituents to put their trust in him again. He thinks that this time he will fix the problem. I wonder what message that sends to public servants, the public service and the people of his riding.

What does he say to his constituents who are fed up and disappointed with his performance within the Liberal government?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, of course our hearts go out to all the public servants who are still having problems with the Phoenix pay system.

I can assure my hon. colleague that we have rebuilt capacity within government by hiring about 1,000 compensation advisors. We have invested hundreds of millions of dollars. That is an indication of just how poorly planned the botched system we inherited from the Conservatives was. It was a total fiasco. They saved money and balanced their budget by firing some 700 compensation advisors, but none of that savings was real, and it ended up costing public servants dearly. They cut so many corners with the supplier that the Phoenix pay system could not function as required and staff did not get the training they needed to do the job properly. At the same time, they took away the old system. We did not have a choice between the old system and the new system. We had a choice between Phoenix and no pay system.

We promised to deliver a new pay system that meets public servants' needs and expectations, and that is what we are going to do. Pilot projects are launching this fall. We are making the necessary investments. In the meantime, we have one-third fewer outstanding transactions than we had last year. We will not rest until all the outstanding transactions have been processed and we can be sure that our public servants are being paid accurately and on time.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Vancouver East, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, Poverty; the hon. member for Drummond, Social Development.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to be standing in this place to give my thoughts on the bill that is before us. It is unfortunate that with yet another omnibus bill, one that clocks in at almost 400 pages, we are unfortunately having to debate this bill under the yoke of time allocation, which was moved earlier this morning. I believe this gives us five hours for report stage and five hours for third reading for a bill of this magnitude.

This is the fourth Liberal budget I have had to sit through. I was one of those members who were elected in 2015 and have served the entire duration thus far. I have noticed two things with respect to the Liberals and their budgets. They like to always repeat two things. Number one is that they were the ones who brought in a middle-class tax cut, and number two is that they are lifting all of these children out of poverty with the child benefit. Let me address the first one before the government House leader cheers too loudly on that front.

I want to point out two facts. Number one is that in 2017, according to Statistics Canada, the average income in Canada was \$46,700, and the median income was \$35,000. Now the Liberals are claiming this as a middle-class tax cut, when in fact it is actually the middle-income tax bracket cut, which they lowered by 1.5%. This is very important, because they keep on perpetuating this basic thing. The middle-income tax bracket starts at \$46,000 and goes up to \$93,000. This means that this benefit is not going to help the average Canadian. I can also clearly speak for most of my constituents. They do not have incomes that go into that range, or if they do, they are getting maybe the first amount.

What the Liberals did, however, by giving that tax cut for that bracket was give themselves all the maximum tax cut of about \$675,000, because a member of Parliament's salary allows the member to command the full benefits of that tax cut, when most Canadians, as evidenced by Statistics Canada, are not in fact benefiting from that tax cut. I have spent almost four years in this place listening to Liberals talk about that, and the evidence does not back them up. It is not the middle class. It is a middle-income tax cut of 1.5%, and the wealthiest of Canadians under \$200,000 of income are the ones who benefited the most. Let us get that out of the way.

Government Orders

The other thing is with the child benefit. I will give it to the Liberals that for a lot of families it was absolutely great to see an increase to child benefits. There is a big “however” to that. When I go door knocking in my riding, especially in the south end, in Langford, which is populated by a lot of young families, the biggest concern they have is with the availability and affordability of child care. There are simply not enough spaces. Yes, it is nice to get that bump up in child benefits, but if the primary caregiver, whether it be one partner or the other, wants to go out and get a second job, it is actually the lack of availability of spaces that is really holding that parent back.

Furthermore, I talk to small businesses in the region that have three, four or five employees. When they lose one employee because that person is going on maternity leave, they are losing a huge part of their workforce. If small businesses could have that national child care system the NDP has been advocating, that would help them, because that employee could make a return to work in a timely manner, safe in the knowledge that his or her child has a space to go to. It makes economic sense, which is why we have had chambers of commerce talk about it.

As to this particular bill, I want to talk about some of the things that are missing. In British Columbia we have an opioid crisis, which has absolutely ravaged our province. I believe we lost 4,000 people across the country in 2017. It has been absolutely devastating, yet in this budget we do not see any further resources to help those front-line workers who are dealing with this. We do not see any move by the federal government to match the government of B.C. in declaring this a national emergency under the federal Emergencies Act, which would allow the federal government to deploy more resources.

● (1635)

Pharmacare was a missed opportunity. I brought this up during the Adjournment Proceedings debate last night, when I was following up on a question I had asked in February. It needs to be said again.

The Liberal Party first promised a national pharmacare system in 1997, 22 years ago. The Liberals have had the benefit of having had majority governments in 1993, 1997, 2000 and again in this mandate, the 2015 mandate. Here we are, at the very tail end of the Liberal government's majority mandate, and what do we have? We have an expert panel that will release more recommendations, which are probably going to be a repeat of what we all know, that a national pharmacare system would save Canadians money. We know it has to be comprehensive, universal and fully public. It is the missing part of our national medicare system.

The Liberal government likes to make a great big deal about its national housing strategy, but when we look at the numbers, the lion's share of the money actually starts flowing after the next federal election. I appreciate that the Liberals keep on getting up and talking about all the things that are coming. I have dug into the numbers in my riding. A lot of the funding announcements are actually federal funding that was already in place before the national housing strategy.

If the Liberals want to raise the issue, I have the phone number for Mayor Stew Young of the City of Langford, one of the fastest growing municipalities in all of British Columbia, if not Canada. He

could tell them where the federal government has been. MIA is what he will say.

I have a lot of students in my area. My riding is home to Royal Roads University. We have Vancouver Island University, the Cowichan campus. Of course not too far away, we have the great University of Victoria, which is where I attended school.

The price of tuition has gone up considerably since I went to university. I remember I thought it was fairly high back in my day. However, these days I look at the costs that students are paying, the debt they are being saddled with and the fact that the federal government is still collecting interest off that debt.

When a person gets into their late 20s and early 30, those are supposed to be the most productive years of their lives. We are asking them to start a family, start that new job. However, if they are saddled with that crushing debt and having to pay interest on it, interest which the federal government is collecting, that is a missed opportunity. I do not know why we are profiting off this crushing student debt. That opportunity was missed. I certainly hope that the students who are intending to vote take note of that and take note of where the different political parties stand on that issue.

I will end with the total missed opportunity that comes with the federal government's continued subsidies on oil and gas. This was a clear Liberal promise on which they have failed to deliver. We can look at the billions of dollars go into an industry, which we know we have to start levelling off if we are to meet our climate targets. We have a carbon budget. We are not meeting it.

For people who complain about the cost of doing so or the cost of transition, I would ask them to look at the forecast for the wildfire budget in British Columbia for this year. What will the costs be of mitigating and adapting to climate change? What about the billions of dollars we will have to spend to help people when their homes are flooded out, when their farms are burned or when they cannot even produce a crop because of successive droughts and/or floods.

These costs are coming our way and they are going to be momentous. They are going dwarf to anything. The fact is that the government is continuing to subsidize this industry when the new economy of the future, the renewable energy economy of the future is the one that is growing. It is the one where the jobs are and it is the one demanding the skill sets of many of our oil and gas workers.

We need to stop subsidizing oil and gas. We need to put our money in the economy of the future. This is a missed opportunity to proclaim loudly that in 2019 we understand the science, that we know the deadline we were working against and that we absolutely must honour not only the present but our children's future by making that transition. It will require a Herculean effort. Unfortunately, what I have seen thus far is not matching the reality in which we live.

With that, I will be voting against Bill C-97. Again, it is full of missed opportunities. We could have done so much better.

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•(1640)

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as has been pointed out in this chamber many times, the member and his colleagues ran on a solemn vow to balance the budget at all costs and made some extravagant promises. We knew the NDP would not keep that commitment.

We know that every time members of New Democratic Party stand in the House and say that we are not going far enough on this or we are not spending enough on that, they know very well that they would not have been able to do as much as this government has done, whether it is in child poverty, the environment, economic development, or on giving the middle class a tax break. None of those things would have been possible under an NDP platform.

It has been four years and the NDP has never furnished us with a proper explanation. Why does he espouse these views now when he ran on a pledge that would have prevented him from accomplishing any of that?

•(1645)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, I will paraphrase a quote, that generals who fight the last war are doomed to lose the next one. If the hon. member wants to rehash what went on in the 2015 election, that is fine, I will entertain his wish.

What he is neglecting to say is the source of revenue the government has consistently neglected to go after. The Liberals are putting policies in place for the upper 1% by not going after tax cheats, tax dodgers and tax havens. That is where it can find the revenue.

Furthermore, if the government had put in a national child care system by making those investments and allowing more parents to enter the workforce, who can then pay income tax, it would have found the additional revenue.

I did run under that platform. We were proud to support it. However, the member is neglecting to tell the other half of the story. The Liberals consistently do this when they bring the issue up in the House of Commons. I would remind the hon. member that it is 2019.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford has pointed out that the Liberals are now trying to hold the NDP to its electoral promises, when they break so many of their own. It is quite funny.

Bill C-97, the omnibus legislation, includes a few things on which both of our ridings would agree, although we probably would want to have some discussions on them.

The first is that the Canadian Credit Union Association was promised two red tape reduction measures in the budget. There is only one in it. What does the member think about that?

Second, instead of actively campaigning to work with provincial premiers to open up the wines of his region and my region, the federal government is abdicating completely. It has eliminated any reference in the Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act in the omnibus bill. Then they are trying to sell it like they are somehow opening up opportunities. Really what they are doing is abdicating

the field. What does the member think about that part and what do these things mean for his riding?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, I have been a proud member of a credit union for a number of years, simply because I find it is more responsive to the needs of local communities. Credit unions have local representation. They are involved in this. They make those investments that really matter. They have democratic control over how policies are made.

I would love nothing more than for the House of Commons to enjoy the fine wines of the Cowichan region, whether it is Emandare, or Averill Creek or a whole host of others. I know our two regions are certainly big wine producing regions in British Columbia. I wish people in other provinces could enjoy the fruits of labour of the incredible farmers we both have.

Yes, there are missed opportunities. I am glad the member highlighted those facts. It is important to remind Canadians of what we could have achieved with this opportunity in the dying days of the 42nd Parliament.

Ms. Kamal Khara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-97, the budget implementation act.

The bill would help bring the proposal outlined in budget 2019 to life and help improve the lives of Canadians, including my constituents in Brampton West.

For the past four years, I have had the opportunity to speak to many pieces of legislation in the House and provide my voice on how our government's policies would improve the lives of my constituents in Brampton West. Budget 2019 is the accumulation of four years of making Canada a better place to live for all Canadians.

Let me talk about the current economic situation.

First and foremost, for the last three and a half years, Canada's economy has been booming. We have been investing in our middle class. One of the first things we did was cut taxes for the middle class. We introduced initiatives like the Canada child benefit. We are putting more money in the hands of those who need it the most. With that, we have created an environment of growth.

Since November 2015, under the leadership of our Prime Minister and the finance minister, Canadians have created over one million jobs. One million more families are better off than they were before. If we compare our record, that is one million more jobs created in the last three and a half years than the Harper Conservatives could do in 10 years. The majority of these jobs are full-time. The unemployment level is the lowest it has been in decades. We have lifted more than 300,000 children out of poverty. A typical Canadian family is \$2,000 better off under our plan than it was under the Stephen Harper plan back in 2015. That is real change, and we know our plan is working.

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While it is important to celebrate the milestones that we have achieved, it is also important to acknowledge that a lot of work needs to be done.

Today in Canada, especially where my constituents live in Brampton West, once affordable properties are now out of reach due to high demand. Therefore, in budget 2016 and in budget 2017, we established Canada's first-ever housing strategy that would invest \$40 billion over 10 years to build and repair affordable housing units. This gives future homeowners greater options when looking at the housing market and makes housing accessible to more people than ever before.

In budget 2019, we are taking another step to support first-time homebuyers, including new immigrant families in Brampton West. To help make home ownership more affordable for first-time homebuyers, budget 2019 introduces the first-time homebuyer incentive. This incentive would allow eligible first-time homebuyers, who have the minimum down payment of an insured mortgage, to finance a portion of their home purchase through a shared equity mortgage with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Budget 2019 also proposes to increase the homebuyers plan withdrawal limit from \$25,000 to \$35,000, providing first-time homebuyers greater access to their registered retirement savings plan to buy a home. I know this initiative will benefit many young families in Brampton West looking to purchase a home or a condo. It gives them the option to put more money down by accessing a larger portion of their savings and helps them deal with the cost of living by lowering their monthly mortgage payments.

I would like to talk a bit about our health care.

Our health system is one of which Canadians are extremely proud. We all recognize that it is one of the best systems in the world. From my background as a registered nurse, I have seen the impact it has not just in our communities, but in hospitals. We also recognize that the cost of prescription medication is a significant barrier to many Canadians to get the treatment they need. No Canadian should have to choose between paying for a prescription and putting food on the table or going without needed medication simply because he or she cannot afford it.

To address these challenges, budget 2019 announces steps to move forward with a national pharmacare program. This is very important to my constituents in Brampton West. We have been advocating for this with the government and in my previous role as parliamentary secretary to the minister of health.

● (1650)

We are establishing the Canadian drug agency. This new national drug agency would build on existing provincial and territorial successes and take a coordinated approach to assessing effectiveness and negotiating prescription drug prices on behalf of Canadians. Negotiating better prices could help lower the cost of prescription drugs for Canadians up to \$3 billion per year in the long term. The extra savings would mean more money going to my constituents and more investments in Canadians.

We are also creating a national formulary, a comprehensive, evidence-based list of prescribed drugs, to be developed as part of the Canadian drug agency. This would provide the basis for a

consistent approach to formulary listing and patient access across the country. It would set out a clear path toward a national pharmacare program.

In addition to these essential steps, we are introducing a national strategy for high-cost drugs for rare diseases, to help Canadians get better access to the effective treatments they need.

These changes will put the foundation in place as we wait to hear from the advisory council later this year on the implementation of national pharmacare.

This budget provides more money directly to the communities and municipalities that need it. Through a doubling of the gas tax fund infrastructure top-up, our government will be transferring more money directly to municipalities so they can fund projects that are important to their communities.

It is unfortunate that the provincial government in Ontario is impeding the flow of federal dollars to our municipalities. This has been having a tremendous effect in my community in Brampton.

We are working directly with our municipalities to ensure that essential projects move forward. I am proud to be part of a government that is working with municipalities on behalf of Canadians and delivering for them.

Brampton will be receiving close to \$50 million through this fund so that it can invest in services that Bramptonians rely on most, such as public transportation, recreation centres and our parks.

We have seen what is happening in Ontario. While the provincial Conservative government is failing and continuing to make cuts on the backs of Canadians, our government continues to deliver for Canadians.

Our government is also thinking forward by investing in the new frontier for our safety. That frontier is cybersecurity. Digital technologies are increasingly knitted into the lives of Canadians, so in order to protect our information, we need a plan. Canada's skilled workforce and world-class universities can help us become leaders in cybersecurity research and development.

To promote collaboration among Canadian cybersecurity centres of expertise, budget 2019 proposes to provide \$80 million over four years to support Canadian cybersecurity networks across Canada that are affiliated with post-secondary institutions. The funding proposed in budget 2019 would mean that institutions like the Ryerson University cybersecurity centre in Brampton will get the funding they need to create well-paying jobs and solidify our cybersecurity infrastructure.

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This cybersecurity centre was part of a project by Ryerson University to establish a full satellite campus in Brampton, something the Brampton community and all members from Brampton advocated for years. The campus would have provided a post-secondary education experience for young Bramptonians closer to home. It would have created jobs and attracted new talent to Brampton. The project was unfortunately, once again, gutted by the current provincial Conservative government.

Where it made cuts to our health care, education and communities, we will continue to invest in and for Bramptonians and make those investments.

Canadians are among the most skilled and highly educated workers in the world. However, today the evolving nature of work means that people may change jobs many times over the course of their working lives or may require new skills to keep their jobs in a changing economy.

That is why we are providing Canadians with a tool called the Canada training benefit. This program would help provide more choices for my constituents so they can find the jobs they need to be successful in fulfilling their careers, while also not endangering their current employment.

• (1655)

The changes we have brought forward over the last four years and the changes included in this budget make me extremely proud of our government, which recognizes the importance of investing in the middle class. I hope to be part of this truly progressive government over the years so we can continue to bring real change and keep bringing investments into Brampton so our constituents can continue to thrive, not just in Brampton but in communities all across Canada.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the first-time homebuyer incentive, the shared equity mortgage program, I looked up Brampton and I could find only 98 listings that would qualify for this particular initiative, because it caps at \$120,000, the maximum price of the home is \$480,000, and it is 5% down on a previous property or 10% down on a new one. When we make the calculation, the officials at CMHC could not tell me where they got the 100,000 from, and it does not offset the impact of the B-20 stress test. In fact, I asked every single organization involved in real estate, whether on construction sites, realtors or brokers, and they all said that it would not offset the impact of the B-20 stress test, which has seen, in one year, 33% of first-time homebuyers drop out of the market. It is a punishing decision by the government to insist on continuing with the B-20 stress test.

How can the member support a government policy that would not achieve any of the goals and, instead, would throw away \$1.25 billion, when there is an easier, simpler and cheaper solution?

• (1700)

Ms. Kamal Khera: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my remarks, everyone needs a safe and affordable place to call home, yet too many Canadians are being priced out of the housing market.

For 10 years, the Conservatives, such as the Leader of the Opposition, did absolutely nothing to address this issue, whereas we have actually invested \$40 billion in the national housing strategy. In Brampton alone, just two weeks ago, we announced 89 affordable

housing units through the national housing strategy. With this budget, particularly with the first-time homebuyer incentive, we are making home ownership more affordable for first-time homebuyers, like the ones in my community.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, the difference between the Liberal Party of Canada, which my colleague is a member of, and the New Democratic Party, could not have been any clearer.

The NDP announced an ambitious plan to transition to green energy and a green economy. The estimated cost of this transition is \$15 billion. This announcement, made in Montreal by our leader, is only the beginning.

The Liberals already have plans to invest these \$15 billion into a pipeline project that has already cost Canadian taxpayers \$4.5 billion. If the expansion goes ahead and a second pipeline is built, the government will spend an additional \$10 billion. We are talking about approximately \$15 billion for a pipeline that transports dilbit from the oil sands.

What does my colleague tell her constituents who care about the environment? Which plan should they choose, the one that invests \$15 billion into the energy transition or the one that gives the fossil fuel industry \$15 billion?

[*English*]

Ms. Kamal Khera: Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for the member, as we sat on the finance committee together, but it is hard to take New Democrats seriously. They have flip-flopped on so many issues. They wanted to balance the budget at all costs on the backs of Canadians in 2015. They voted against the Canada child benefit and the middle-class tax cut. They say one thing and do another.

Our plan for the environment has been very clear. We are putting a price on pollution and investing in public transit. Those are things that matter to my constituents. I am extremely proud of what we have been able to do, and I am really looking forward to what we will be able to achieve in the coming years.

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Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for touching on so many things in a short period of time, but she really got my attention when talking about training people in new technologies as workforces change. She was a nurse and my wife was a nurse. My wife saw a lot of change over the years, going to the metric system and the new technologies in nursing. Could the member comment on how this could help health care in Canada?

Ms. Kamal Khara: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for all the work he does on behalf of his constituents, and to thank his wife as well, who served as a nurse.

With this budget, we introduced the Canada training credit. This would help working Canadians get the skills they need to succeed in the changing world. This is a new tool that would help working Canadians find the time and money to upgrade their skills and progress in their careers.

This is extremely important for health care. We are moving in such a way that people need more training. The digital economy is here, and we need to be innovative in everything we do, which is exactly why we are ensuring that people are prepared for the new skills of the future.

• (1705)

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to Bill C-97, an honour but also a concern.

It is also an honour and a privilege to bring the concerns of my constituents of North Okanagan—Shuswap to this House and debate them as their member of Parliament. Perhaps the greatest honour I have ever known, aside from being blessed with a loving wife and becoming a parent, is to represent the people who have entrusted me to carry their issues and best interests forward, on their behalf and for the good of Canada.

We all come to this place with the intention of representing our ridings and the great people in them, and some of us are very successful at it. What I have seen over the last three and a half years is a government and a Prime Minister who have strayed away from representing the people. The Liberals have put in place a bureaucracy and a larger government with priorities far ahead of what the average Canadian's needs are. The most glaring example of that is the government's out-of-control spending, the lavish sense of entitlement of the Prime Minister and the ballooning budgets that we see year after year after year.

Bill C-97 is an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2019. It is 396 pages, which is not a massive omnibus bill, but it is massive in its own right. This budget adds almost another \$20 billion in deficit. This has been happening for multiple years now, with the government and its out-of-control spending.

Most people have difficulty envisioning what \$20 billion would look like; a big \$20-billion pile is very hard to envision. Most average Canadians cannot quite put that picture together. When I am talking to the good people in my riding of North Okanagan—Shuswap, I explain to them that the \$20-billion increase to debt that the government seems to be putting forward every year works out to

about \$540 for every man, woman, child, veteran, senior and grandparent. It is another \$540 per year, year after year after year, that the government is taking out of their pockets.

Then I ask people if they can envision what those dollars would look like in their hands and what they could do with that money in their pockets. That is when they start to get really angry, as they realize they could do far better with the dollars in their pockets rather than sending them to an out-of-control government with out-of-control spending habits. Then I also explain to them, especially those in the workforce, that they are actually on the hook for double that amount. It is over \$1,000 for every working person, because only 50% of Canadians are employed full time and might be able to pay back some of this debt the government is piling on. That is when they get really upset and ask what we can do, and ask that we do everything we can to eliminate the out-of-control government and its out-of-control spending.

Average Canadians must base their lives on what they can earn, borrow and pay back within their working years. Average Canadians understand these principles. They strive to pay off their debts and provide a starter investment for their children or leave a bit of inheritance for their children or grandchildren, whatever that may be.

In contrast, we currently have a Liberal government that thinks nothing of spending beyond not just its means but the taxpayers' means. What it really comes down to is a government that is spending beyond the taxpayers' means right now and adding debt year after year after year.

• (1710)

This is a government that does not believe in setting aside anything for a rainy day. Instead of leaving something in the bank for future generations, it is passing on a massive debt load that current and future taxpayers will have to pay back.

On top of this increasing debt load the government is passing on, it has spent hundreds of millions of dollars offshore. Upon joining the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the government committed Canada to a roughly 1% share of the bank, worth about \$256 million. This will all be spent over the next five years.

When I explain this to the good people back home in North Okanagan—Shuswap, they start to envision what that kind of money could have done back home. When I talk to people there, they think of the projects we talked about in the pre-budget consultations I do every year. I go around to every community, every first nation and the chambers of commerce to meet with their boards and ask what they would like to see in the budget. I compile all that information in a condensed, concise version and provide it in a letter to the finance minister well in advance of the annual budget each year. Unfortunately, what we see in return is not reflective of what average Canadians need.

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The dollars being spent offshore in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank are going to build pipelines in China. They are going to build major projects overseas, but no Canadian operations will be involved in those projects. All that funding will simply go offshore rather than being used to put Canadians to work.

That really upsets the people back home when I tell them. They have requested funding and support for youth space in their small communities, such as in the village of Chase, so that their youth can have a place to be active rather than out on the street. The Sicamous community has put forward the idea of a joint project involving the community and the local first nation band, the Splatsin. They can see what these projects can do for the community and they can see the revenue generation it could create. However, those funds are not there, partly because the government has decided to send them offshore.

I have seen requests from communities asking for help in purchasing emergency equipment or in upgrading their fire halls. Again, that funding is not available, because it has been sent offshore or has been spent to service the increasing debt, as we have heard in some of the speeches this afternoon. These are debt service costs from the increasing deficit the government continues to pile on.

I have also heard communities ask for a bit of a kick-start in developing economic plans. First nations bands and small communities have asked me about this. They want to know how they could possibly get some assistance and guidance in putting an economic plan together. Again, the money is not available, because it was spent elsewhere.

We have heard much talk about the mortgage stress test. I hear a lot back home about the shortage of affordable housing. I use the term “housing that is affordable”. The term “affordable housing” rings to most people as low-income, income-assisted or payment-assisted housing. However, it is housing that is affordable at all levels that we need. I believe that it is not just in my community but right across the country. For every chance we have to move someone into a first home or into a retirement home or into a rental home, an opportunity is opened up for someone else.

Those are the kinds of things I see average Canadians in my riding asking for.

• (1715)

They are asking for things like highway improvements. They are asking for things like electrification for the small community of Seymour Arm, which is currently off the grid and using diesel generation to power the community. These kinds of things would really help small communities move forward and get together, but the funds are not available, because the current government is deciding to use them on lavish vacations or offshore spending or for servicing the debt.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the hon. member's speech, and indeed, fiscal responsibility should always be a guiding principle in public administration. However, it is also responsible and forward-looking to make investments for the future. As a matter of fact, when we talk about investing, we talk about a return at some time in the future.

I would like to ask the member a question regarding a project that is taking place in Montreal. It is a \$6-billion project, to which the government is contributing \$1.3 billion. This is a light rail system that will benefit future generations that have to take light rail to school. It will improve productivity in the future and bring about greater economic growth.

Should this project have been put on hold, awaiting the balancing of the budget, or is it a good investment for the future and for future generations?

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, on those types of big projects, infrastructure projects here in Canada, I cannot disagree that they are worthwhile projects. However, when we have a government that is sending money offshore, building pipelines in China and spending \$4.8 billion on a pipeline here in Canada but is refusing to move forward on the investment to expand that pipeline to build our Canadian economy, I say that we have a government that has failed.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were talking about the Canada Infrastructure Bank, and one of our members on this side mentioned one project. We also have the GO Transit project in southern Ontario, with \$2 billion in debt financing to open up GO. As well, we can think about what providing electric trains in our region is going to mean for the future of transportation in southern Ontario and within the member's riding. There has also been an investment in a seniors residence for indigenous seniors.

Would the hon. member not agree that investing in our future and investing in projects such as these is good for Canada and good for each of our communities?

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, the member is referring to some projects the Liberals have actually managed to get off the ground in Canada. However, the bigger project, the one that would really benefit western Canada, which seems to be ignored or just kicked down the road further and further, is the Trans Mountain pipeline.

When I did a survey of my constituents in my riding, I asked if they felt that projects like the Trans Mountain pipeline should move forward in the best interest of Canada. The response I got back was almost 80% supportive. I believe that 79.4% were supportive of that project, yet we have a government that has been here for almost four years and has failed to move that project one inch closer to the goal line.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague made the comment that people cannot visualize what \$1 billion is. Well, the Liberals this time around this year had a \$20-billion deficit. They also had \$20 billion in extra revenue because the world economy is doing so well. That is \$40 billion they spent that they did not plan on and that no one planned on having. To put that in perspective, that is like giving one million Canadians a cheque for \$40,000 and allowing them to sit at home doing nothing. If this is the Liberal idea of a job creation plan, I think we have to question that.

I would like to ask my colleague a very important question. If the Liberals continue to go down this route of deficit spending, which we have seen in Ontario, where Ontario became the worst sub-national government in the world, and these deficits become the taxes of the future and the cuts of the future, what does the member think will happen to our country? Will it be exactly what has happened to Ontario?

•(1720)

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague on this side of the House for putting forward a question that is really relevant to what is happening here, which is increasing debt.

I come from a small business background, which many of the people in my riding of North Okanagan—Shuswap are from. They understand that small businesses can invest when times are good but need to put something away for those rainy days when times are not so good.

We know about global economic cycles, especially the North American economic cycle we go through about every eight to 12 years. Indications are that we are now coming to a cycle where we could be looking at a major slowdown. All the current government has done over the past four years of moderate economic growth is pile up so much debt that the cost, in a few years' time, if we have a slowdown, is going to be an increasing burden, and we are going to have no choice: We can either push the country further into debt, which is the absolute worst thing we can do, or try to find efficiencies in the way we manage government. The way the government is operating, it is harder—

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand in the House tonight to speak to this important budget, budget 2019.

As members and Canadians know, the economy has been moving very quickly and successfully. Canadians have created over one million jobs since 2015, and over 110,000 jobs in the last month alone. That is extremely impressive.

We have also seen, with our investment of the Canada child benefit, that we lifted over 300,000 Canadians out of poverty. That is another very important signal of success that we have moved forward on for our economy. As well, we have seen and are seeing the lowest unemployment rate in 45 years. When we took office here, the unemployment rate was at 7.1%. It is now at 5.7% to 5.8%. That is a strong indication of how strong our economy is moving forward. That is because of the budgets and investments we have made over the last four years. This budget is a continuation of that philosophy.

I want to talk about veterans. As members know, I have the largest number of veterans in Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia has the highest number in the country per capita. We have made some big investments over the last three and a half years for veterans, of over \$10 billion. Even in this budget, we have again made some major steps forward.

The first budget was on transition. We have been working hard to find a seamless approach with a joint committee between DND and Veterans Affairs. It is in place and we are seeing some very positive steps forward in that area. However, we were only focusing that transition on ill and disabled veterans. Now we have included, in this bill, non-ill veterans, which is another very important factor.

We have enhanced the education and training benefit for veterans, which is \$40,000 for six years of service or \$80,000 for 12 years. We have now added the reservists to the list of those who can benefit

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from those programs. Those are very big steps that the veterans community was asking for and that we were able to put forward.

The other investment is the veterans survivor fund. Prior to this budget, the benefits and pensions of veterans who got married after the age of 60 would not be moved over to their spouse or partner. We made sure that we would bring forward investments to correct that as well, which was another important ask from our veterans community.

There are also investments in the Juno Beach Centre. We are celebrating, on June 6, the 75th anniversary of D-Day. We want to remember the loss of over 14,000 Canadians during that important time.

That is just a quick run-through of some of the investments in the veterans sector. Let us talk about the young people in this country.

We need to make sure that we are helping those young individuals to move forward and we have included some major steps in this last budget. Regarding student loans, we know that if students get a job they have to make over \$25,000. We talked about that in previous budgets. Now we are saying that they will pay a prime rate but will not have to pay the plus 3%, which was a big one. Also we said that there will be no interest on the loan and no payments for the first six months, which is a big change as well.

For first-time homebuyers, we have set up an opportunity for young people. If they are purchasing a home for \$400,000, they would have to put 5% down, which would be \$20,000, so their loan would be \$380,000. However, with the shared-equity strategy that we have put in place, their loan now is \$340,000 and that is major. That is a savings of \$225 per month. If I run that through for 30 years, it is \$81,000 that an individual would save. That is a very important investment, as members can note.

•(1725)

As for student summer jobs, when the Conservatives were in power the number of summer jobs was the lowest that had existed in this country. Now that we are in 2019, there is the greatest number of summer jobs. In my riding alone, there are 255 individuals who are going to or are working in those summer jobs. That is \$770,000 invested in that portfolio for students in my riding. As members can see, it is a broad approach that we are bringing forward, a coordinated strategy.

Then, we have brought in some investments in the Canada training program, which is a very important new program. It is tax free and people can save up to \$250 a year, \$1,000 every four years, for upgrading. That is something that we did not have access to. All members in the House know that young people today will often change jobs. The technology is moving so rapidly that this training is essential. We also have a program where people can draw from EI during the four weeks they are attending upgrading courses, which is extremely important.

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We need to talk about seniors. We know that by 2034, seniors will represent about 25% of Canadians. That is a very high number. In the Atlantic provinces, the number is even higher than that. We need to focus on seniors. My riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook in Nova Scotia had the highest increase between 2011 and 2016. The Conservatives were going to move the retirement age to 67 and we said that was unacceptable. Canadians who have worked up to the age of 65, if they so desire to retire, they should be able to retire in dignity. Therefore, we ensured that the age of retirement stayed at 65, which was a crucial investment.

We have made investments to the GIS, the guaranteed income supplement, in two areas. The first one is a big investment of approximately \$950, which allowed 700,000 seniors to move above the poverty line. That was very important, as well.

On health care, pharmacare, we are going to move forward. We have had a committee study a national pharmacare program. We should be able to deliver that in the very near future. We have made some investments in the Canadian drug agency to lower the costs. A national dementia strategy is very important. I met with a group in Sackville last week, in my riding. Northwood is trying to open an adult day program for dementia patients. Again, that is very important as well.

I must also include some of the investments on reconciliation with indigenous peoples. We have eliminated over 80-some boil water advisories. We have promised that by 2021 there will be no more boil water advisories. There is an investment for indigenous peoples for entrepreneurship and economic development, and for start-ups and expansion for Métis small businesses. Those are big investments for indigenous people.

I would like to finish off, of course, with the African Nova Scotian community. We have made some major investments there as well. The black community is the oldest black intergenerational community in Canada. It has the biggest Black Cultural Centre in Canada. Two months ago, the Prime Minister was in the Preston area. It was the first time a Prime Minister ever stepped into the Preston area.

There are some very successful initiatives that we are moving forward on. One is the anti-racism strategy investment, which will allow community-based focus groups to come forward with all kinds of different projects. There is also some capital investment, up to \$25 million over five years, for projects and capital assistance to help the vibrant black community continue to grow.

I have to close with the trade deals. We have brought three trade deals to the table, successfully. That is 1.5 billion people trading in and out of Canada.

• (1730)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC) moved that Bill C-206, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (abuse of vulnerable persons), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about seniors and vulnerable persons in our society, whether they are physically handicapped, have a mental condition or other. Bill C-206 focuses on the sentencing of individuals who perpetrate crimes against people specifically because of who they are: vulnerable.

The bill would amend section 718.2 of the Criminal Code by bringing further protection to seniors and other vulnerable persons to ensure that they live in safety, dignity and without fear.

As a former Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer for many years, I have seen many horrific crimes, brutality, theft and suicide. Fortunately for me, I have been able to take all the bad, the ugliness and the violence and push it to the back of my mind and I can forget about it. How much good we did and the people we helped save and set on the right course in life is very important to me.

However, there was always one type of crime I felt I could not accept, the lack of appropriate penalties in our Canadian Criminal Code, specifically for crimes against vulnerable persons. My bill would introduce tougher penalties for those who consciously use the weakness of vulnerable groups to financially, physically, sexually or emotionally abuse them.

It is difficult for the abused to admit to people that they are victims of abuse, especially at the hands of someone they know and trust. When trust is abused, the penalties should be severe. Perpetrators should be held to account with firm punishment. We must have harsher sentences for these types of perpetrators.

Criminals who target the elderly should know that they will not get away with it. Older people should not have to fear being targeted. We need stronger penalties to deter and tackle criminals who target the elderly and the disabled. There are hundreds of cases of abuse in which the offenders did not, in my opinion, receive fair punishment for their actions.

We should not tolerate or express any sort of sympathy toward conscious cruelty against seniors and other vulnerable groups. Their security should be of concern to us in Canada and their abuse should be treated as a human rights issue of the utmost importance.

Private Members' Business

I must point out that technically a judge already considers the vulnerability of a victim, including age and disabilities, when deciding on a sentencing term. It is just not specifically stated on paper or in the act. The bill would simply add it on paper as a requirement.

As people grow older, they become more isolated, so the risk of abuse increases. Punishment fails to deter would-be abusers who see older people as a soft target and we must do more to protect older people and vulnerable people. Bill C-206 would change that.

A large part of the Canadian population is either a senior or will soon be one, including me. I am already there. The demographic data released by Statistics Canada in the 2016 census shows there are approximately 5.9 million seniors in Canada.

• (1735)

According to government statistics, by 2031, around eight million people will be aged 65 or older. That will be almost a quarter of Canada's population. Many Canadians require care and assistance, and that number is only growing.

Offenders who exploit their weaknesses for their self-benefit and decrease the self-worth and dignity of vulnerable adults and seniors must face greater punishments in law. Statistics provided by the Department of Justice state that approximately 24% of disabled persons were victimized at least one in their lives and about 45% of seniors aged 65 and older reported experiencing some form of abuse. This is scary, especially when a quarter of our population will be in that age bracket very shortly.

However, according to the Canadian Association for Retired Persons, only 20% of elder abuse comes to the attention of responsible authorities. Why? Because many of the victims do not want to report the abuse for various reasons. These reasons include the dependence upon a caregiver who is abusive, fear of not being believed or even deep shame and humiliation because of what happened to them.

Moreover, in 32% of the reported elder abuse cases, the offender is related to the victim as a child or an extended family member. That is shocking. We can only imagine how many cases of such abuse remain unreported as the elderly are reluctant to bring charges against their family members or relatives.

It is therefore the responsibility of all of us in the House of Commons to protect those who cannot stand up for themselves by adopting measures that would deter potential offenders from committing these crimes. This is exactly what my bill is designed to do. Adopting it would mean two things: prescribing tougher penalties for the offenders and justice for the victims.

Bill C-206 covers four forms of abuse: financial, physical, sexual and emotional. I will speak about each to show how they affect vulnerable people.

The first is financial abuse, one of the most common forms of abuse against vulnerable groups.

In 2014, *CBC News* reported that Toronto police arrested a wife and husband who defrauded a 94-year-old woman, within four years, of \$25,000 in cash, jewellery and furniture. The wife was hired as a

housekeeper and became involved in the everyday activities of this victim. At some point, she forced the elderly lady into a smaller room and moved into the apartment with her husband. If it were not for a courier from a local pharmacy who, during his weekly deliveries, noticed that something was wrong when an unknown person answered the door, the consequences for that woman could have been more grave than just the money.

• (1740)

Under the Department of Justice, not a single reported Canadian case contains a definition of "elder abuse". In fairness, there are some cases where the extreme age of the victim was taken into the sentencing factor, which is very good. However, my bill, Bill C-206, would take away the use of discretionary decisions and make it mandatory for the sentence to be increased due to the fact the aggravated crime was committed against a vulnerable person. This is not new in Canadian law. It is missing in certain parts of the Criminal Code and I want it to be used more broadly, especially for the crimes about which I have been talking.

In another example in the same year, 3,000 kilometres away in Edmonton, *Global News* wrote an article on a man who was accused of defrauding his grandmother of \$265,000. He acted as his grandmother's attorney under a power of attorney agreement.

Fraud and financial abuse in general can occur not only among family members, but also with people who the victims trust the most. These cases are connected to the victim's trust and dependency on the caregiver who is abusing the victim and, due to the simple fear of being physically abused, the victim will not report the caregiver. This is not acceptable today. These abuses are happening because offenders do not get fair punishments. They rely on the vulnerability of others and take advantage of them.

Physical abuse is the second form of abuse I want to address.

Statistics show that people with disabilities are more likely to be assaulted compared to people with no disabilities. Another disturbing case happened in Ottawa involving a personal support worker who pleaded guilty to assault charges for an incident at a retirement home. He delivered 10 punches to an 89-year-old man suffering from Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

In my many years in law enforcement, this is one of the worst types of crimes I have ever encountered. Should such offenders be treated equally to those assaulting healthy and capable people? I do not think so. Their punishments should reflect the gravity of their crimes. Currently, those abusers, even if convicted, rarely get punished.

Advocates for people with disabilities have confirmed that vulnerable groups are often abused. If we look back at the report that came out yesterday, people who are vulnerable are being picked on.

Private Members' Business

In October 2014, the CBC posted a story about a 19-year-old mentally disabled woman being sexually assaulted on a bus in Winnipeg, while her support worker was sitting a couple of rows ahead. I am a father and a grandfather. To me, a 19-year-old is still a child. What this child experienced was traumatic for both her and her parents. She has a right to be safe. That is why we need a stronger law.

In the spring of 2017, a support worker in Ontario walked away with a guilty plea for only one count of assault and no criminal record in exchange for the court withdrawing 13 counts of sexual assault.

We need to be stiffer in our penalties. This is where my bill, Bill C-206, would come into play. The vulnerable in our society should enjoy an increased level of protection. They need to be confident in our legal system and must be assured that those who would try to use their vulnerability will always get a fair punishment.

The last but not least form of abuse I would like to cover today is the emotional or psychological form of abuse. I would like to add that all previously discussed forms of abuse are very much connected to emotional abuse in the sense that they have a great psychological effect on the victims.

There is no dignity in disrespecting a vulnerable person. There is no dignity in taking advantage of a vulnerable person. It is a crime and it must be punished in a greater way than it is being punished now. The cases I have talked about are not single cases; there are hundreds of them out there.

How do we change this? Canada needs harsher penalties for those who exploit vulnerable people and take advantage of their weaknesses. Tougher penalties for the abuse of vulnerable persons would make abusers think twice before committing these kinds of offences and would provide more safety for those who cannot protect themselves.

My bill would ensure that those criminals who would disrespect and use the weakness of others would not be able to get away with a simple conviction or a guilty plea, leaving the families and friends of victims desperate and disappointed in our criminal justice system.

● (1745)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Yellowhead for his advocacy.

As the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Seniors, I know first-hand that abuse to seniors is a lot more prevalent than we probably know, and I want to thank him for bringing the bill forward.

Given the fact that my colleague has worked in the field of policing and given his comments tonight, I would like to ask him what his thoughts are with respect to our decision to create a ministry of seniors. Also, in budget 2019, we brought forward financial increases to the new horizons for seniors program specifically to help elder abuse, elder fraud and isolation.

I would like to get my colleague's opinion on those initiatives.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Mr. Speaker, any committee that is formed to assist seniors in any capacity will definitely help. However, my bill

does not only stick with seniors; it is anybody who is in a vulnerable position. We need to ensure that in our courts, when people are found guilty, they will be dealt with more severely if they have assaulted a 95-year-old man or a person in a wheelchair

What I am trying to get to with Bill C-206 is that there have to be consequences if someone picks on vulnerable people just because they are vulnerable.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's dedication to preserving the dignity of seniors.

In the last Parliament, almost all parties agreed with the proposed elder abuse legislation. In that bill was an aggravating factor with respect to when someone either physically or financially assaulted a senior. That needed to be taken into consideration when sentencing after someone had his or her day in court.

Could the member explain how his legislation is different and why it is appropriate today?

● (1750)

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Mr. Speaker, it is different in two ways.

First, it would make it mandatory. Right now is at the discretion of the prosecutor or the judge to look at the aggravated sentencing. Let us take that away. Automatically, people will be punished greater if they assault a vulnerable person than if they assault someone else, just as if someone defrauds, steals or takes advantage of a vulnerable person.

The second part that comes into play is the fact that there are criminals out there. There are people who prey upon the vulnerable. The public needs to know that if people prey on a vulnerable person, they will pay a greater penalty if caught than if they were to prey on another person.

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, given that the member has a large amount of personal experience in these things, what is one thing he would like to ensure people in his riding know about this legislation, as well as the people in this room and Canadians in general?

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Mr. Speaker, the message I want to get out to all Canadians is that vulnerable people must be respected regardless of their vulnerability, whether it is age, a disability, the way they were brought up or lifestyle. If people choose to perpetrate crimes against vulnerable persons, I want to get the message out that they are the worst types of criminals and we need to deal with them in a more severe manner than we do today.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the second reading debate on Private Member's bill, Bill C-206, an act to amend the Criminal Code.

At the outset, I want to acknowledge the laudable objective of the bill and thank the member from Yellowhead for giving us the opportunity to debate this important social issue this evening.

Private Members' Business

[Translation]

Bill C-206 amends the Criminal Code to specify that the physical, emotional, sexual or financial abuse of a person over the age of 65 or of a person 18 years of age or older who depends on others for their care because of a mental or physical disability is to be considered an aggravating circumstance for sentencing purposes.

The member for Yellowhead said that the bill seeks to give vulnerable seniors further protections to ensure that they can live safely and in dignity, while protecting them against exploitation.

The bill would fulfill that objective by imposing harsher sentences on offenders who abuse these vulnerable victims, whether financially, physically or psychologically.

[English]

I am in full agreement with the member for Yellowhead that we must do everything to address the physical, financial and emotional exploitation of our seniors and other vulnerable Canadians who depend on others for their care because of a disability.

I hear about this issue in my work here in Ottawa, in my work around the country and also in my riding of Parkdale—High Park. Constituents speak to me about the statistics, which are problematic. Those statistics show that seniors and Canadians with disabilities are at a higher risk of being victims of crimes.

For instance, while older Canadians have historically reported low victimization rates, the physical disabilities and cognitive impairments experienced by some seniors may increase their vulnerability and make them more prone to certain kinds of abuse, such as online financial crime, neglect, financial exploitation and family-related violence.

By 2036 the size of Canada's senior population will increase about twofold, and persons aged 65 and over will represent approximately one quarter of the Canadian population in total.

Given Canada's aging population, Statistics Canada notes that police-reported violence committed against seniors will continue to increase if it is left unaddressed.

[Translation]

According to police data, Canadian seniors were more likely to be the victim of family violence in 2017 than they were 10 years ago. In 2007, Statistics Canada reported that the overall rate of police-reported violence against seniors had increased by 20% between 1998 and 2005. From 2009 to 2017, the rate of police-reported family violence against seniors rose 7%.

In 2014, people with a disability were about twice as likely to be victims of a violent crime than people who did not have a disability, and women and men with cognitive disabilities or mental health-related disabilities reported violent victimization approximately four times more often than their counterparts who did not have a disability.

• (1755)

[English]

Elder abuse, senior isolation and the abuse of vulnerable persons are completely unacceptable. Our government is working hard to

provide Canadian seniors with greater security and a better quality of life. That is what compelled us to appoint and name a Minister of Seniors to the federal cabinet.

We have also invested in the new horizons for seniors program, which, through budget 2019, will receive an additional \$100 million over the next five years. One of the key initiatives of that program is to tackle elder abuse and fraud.

Several legislative amendments have been enacted by Parliament to address the problem of elder abuse. For instance, in 2011, the Standing Up for Victims of White Collar Crime Act enacted an aggravating factor to the fraud offence found at section 380.1 of the Criminal Code. This was referenced in the earlier part of tonight's debate.

This provision directs a judge to treat evidence that the offence had a significant impact on the victim, having regard to "their personal circumstances including their age, health and financial situation", as an aggravating factor at sentencing.

In 2012, there was also legislation enacted called Protecting Canada's Seniors Act, which enacted a provision that directed courts to treat evidence that the offence had a significant impact on the victim, having regard to his or her age and other personal circumstances, including health and financial situation, as an aggravating factor at sentencing.

[Translation]

These two legislative amendments essentially codified the current sentencing practices. In other words, when these legislative amendments were proposed, the law already required the courts to consider all aggravating and mitigating circumstances related to the offence and the offender's degree of responsibility, including the effect of an offence on a particular victim under all circumstances. In a given case, this can obviously include the victims' age and their vulnerability.

In summary, by codifying the aggravating circumstances, parliamentarians clarified the sentencing law for all Canadians and sent a message to the courts that it is important to consider these aggravating circumstances in sentencing decisions.

Private Members' Business

[English]

The Criminal Code includes a broad range of offences that apply equally to protect all Canadians, including vulnerable and elderly Canadians, as well as specific offences that take into account the vulnerability of the victim. For instance, the offences of assault, assault with bodily harm and aggravated assault apply to protect everyone, regardless of age, health or gender. However, there are also specific offences that target the abuse of vulnerable persons, such as in section 153.1 of the Criminal Code, which applies to the sexual exploitation of a person with a disability. The code also lists several aggravating factors that can apply in cases involving abuse of an elderly or vulnerable person who depends on others for care because of a mental or physical disability.

There are four aggravating factors: one, evidence and offences motivated by bias, prejudice or hate or based on, for instance, age or mental or physical disability; two, the fact that the offenders abuse their spouse or common-law partner; three, the fact that offenders abused a position of trust or authority in relation to the victim; and four, evidence that the offence had a significant impact on the victim having regard to their age or other personal circumstance, including their health or financial situation.

[Translation]

Based on my interpretation of the aggravating circumstance proposed in Bill C-206, I have to wonder if the amendment proposed in the bill could overlap with the circumstances already set out in the Criminal Code. I wonder if the amendment fixes any flaws in the law regarding the abuse of seniors and other vulnerable persons.

I look forward to hearing other members' thoughts about whether this conduct is already covered by the Criminal Code and how this amendment would affect the criminal justice system. For example, if we were to adopt an aggravating circumstance that is similar to the ones already in the Criminal Code, would there be an increase in the number of cases related to determining the scope of the new provision and how it differs from the aggravating circumstances set out in the Criminal Code?

● (1800)

[English]

Moreover, I wonder about the implications of setting a chronological age distinction of above 65 as the hard limit in the Criminal Code for assessing a person's vulnerability. Witnesses who testified before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights as part of its study of former Bill C-36 emphasized that the impact of a crime on an elderly victim is not necessarily dependent on chronological age, but rather on the combined unique characteristics of that elderly victim.

This leads me to question whether an individual's vulnerability is not best assessed by weighing a combination of factors, such as mental and physical health, financial situation and degree of autonomy. I am sure members of this House can come up with examples of when age is not the best indicator of a person's level of vulnerability. For these reasons, I look forward to a thorough debate on these important policy questions.

[Translation]

During second reading debate of the former Bill C-36, the member for Pierrefonds—Dollard at the time said that if we focus only on legal measures, we will be missing a very important point. Non-legislative measures can also significantly help address the problem.

[English]

In total, I would underscore that the bill proposed by the member for Yellowhead targets a very important and laudable objective. I look forward to the important debate continuing on this issue and on the issue of combatting elder abuse.

[Translation]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Yellowhead for introducing the bill we are debating today. I also thank him for his years of service in another life.

We serve together on the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. While I tend to disagree with the Conservatives on matters of justice or public safety, I have to say that I often nod my head when the hon. member asks questions or makes proposals in committee. That speaks volumes about the work he does in committee, and I thank him for that.

I also thank him for drawing the attention of the House to the important issue of elder abuse. This abuse can take different forms, as has been pointed out in the speeches we have heard so far. It can be physical, sexual, financial or emotional. I think it is important for the House to address this issue.

The NDP has always cared about this issue and has always understood the importance of judicial sentencing discretion. That is why I am pleased to tell my colleague that I will be supporting the bill at second reading so that the committee can examine this issue more thoroughly, given how serious it is.

As mentioned earlier, not only will our aging population continue to grow in the years to come, but statistics show that abuse is unfortunately becoming increasingly common in our society. This phenomenon is growing at an alarming rate, and it is underestimated and all too often under-reported.

I would like to use this debate as an opportunity to talk briefly about initiatives being taken in my riding. I must say, I am proud to support them in various ways. I became aware of the abuse that can be directed at seniors because of these initiatives.

First of all, I would like to recognize the contribution of the seniors' forum that is held in Chambly every October. It is organized mainly by the Association québécoise de défense des droits des personnes retraitées et préretraitées. I want to salute Ginette Grenier, among others, from the Centre d'écoute Montérégie. I will come back to this in a moment.

Private Members' Business

The fair brings together almost every stakeholder in the territory. It brings together MPs, including me and my Quebec counterpart, as well as representatives of the Régie intermunicipale de police Richelieu-Saint-Laurent. It also brings together organizations that work to break the isolation of seniors in different ways and that consider issues directly related to my colleague's bill. The fair takes place at the Chambly seniors' centre every year. It is a prime opportunity to learn more about this issue which plagues our society.

It is disturbing to hear what the police have to say. The team that works at my riding office is at our booth to talk about the services offered to seniors. Our booth allows me to meet with representatives of various organizations. When police talk about the various forms of elder abuse, they tell us that this abuse is often perpetrated by caregivers, family members and friends.

We have heard many stories of abuse in our society. These stories involve not only seniors, but all vulnerable individuals, including children. The abuse suffered by these individuals is often perpetrated by the people who are meant to help them, such as family members, for example. That is unconscionable, and it is a problem that society overlooks.

After all, when we see a neighbour or someone who lives in our building helping a senior, we think that neighbour must be a very nice person. It may be the senior's niece, nephew or child who comes to help the senior every weekend. We tend to believe that the person is acting in good faith, in the interests of the senior, who may unfortunately have lost their independence and need help from their family as they get older. However, those family members may be treating the senior inappropriately, which could have a serious impact on the senior's finances and physical well-being, among other things. These can be horrible situations.

● (1805)

The seniors' forum led me to support the Réseau actif de dépistage des aînés à risque or RADAR, a network that identifies and helps at-risk seniors. It is an initiative that is being undertaken in the area served by the Richelieu and Patriotes local community service centres, which covers most of the riding of Beloeil—Chambly. This initiative was mainly funded by community stakeholders and the Government of Quebec and was supported by the efforts of members from both levels of government.

I would be remiss if I failed to talk about the stakeholders who worked on this project. Many organizations attended the seniors' forum, but the police were also there. That is important to point out, because the bill before us was introduced by a member who used to be a police officer. The police are on the front lines when it comes to identifying at-risk seniors. They see the horrible crimes committed against seniors. It is therefore crucial that they be included in this type of project, which also includes social workers from health and social service centres and local community service centres.

The frontline workers in Quebec will correct me if I am wrong, but I believe that this initiative is quite novel and commendable. This is something rare that could be a model for creating other similar initiatives across Quebec and Canada to tackle this scourge.

We may think that seniors are not vulnerable because they are supported by family members, but we sometimes learn, to our utter

dismay, that it is those same family members who commit acts of violence against them. This type of project seeks to bring them help from their community.

Now I would like to take this opportunity to give a shout-out to the people at the Centre d'écoute Montérégie and talk about their work. I am proud to have had the chance to work with them to secure a federal grant that enabled them to hire a young man in his twenties to answer the help line. There are volunteers, but there are also employees. The centre also underwent a major renovation. It is located in an outdated building in the older part of Chambly, where zoning regulations make renovation extremely difficult. The people who work at the centre know what I mean, because we talked about it at length last time I visited. It is very expensive to maintain heritage buildings in old Chambly, which makes sense considering everything that has happened there lately. I am not saying that preserving our built heritage is not important, but it is a major burden for organizations.

I am proud to highlight this achievement, but the people at the centre deserve all the credit. I mentioned Ginette Grenier, whom I have known since I was first elected in 2011. She helped me understand why the organization's work is so important. These people dedicate time to a call centre to help seniors overcome isolation. Many of the people involved with the Centre d'écoute Montérégie are also involved in other initiatives.

The Centre d'écoute Montérégie's logo appears on the projetradar.org website because the centre is partly responsible for the success of this new initiative, which is just a few years old. The Centre d'écoute Montérégie works to help seniors overcome isolation, which is a significant factor in much of the abuse my colleague wants to tackle.

I would like to take this opportunity to talk about what is being done in my riding because everyone on the ground is aware of this issue, including organizations, police forces, elected representatives and municipal officials.

This bill shows that we can do more, through the Criminal Code, to ensure that crimes are punished in a way that raises public awareness. The population is aging and abuse is increasingly common, so we must get people to understand that any abuse is unacceptable in our society.

● (1810)

In closing, I would like to thank my colleague and reiterate my support for this bill at second reading, so that we can further study the issue. I hope that we can all work together to eradicate this scourge in every riding across Canada, because our seniors deserve better. They deserve to live with dignity, and we owe them that, at least.

Private Members' Business

[English]

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House today in support of a very important piece of legislation, private member's bill, Bill C-206, an act to amend the Criminal Code to expand powers ensuring protection against the abuse of vulnerable persons, such as the elderly and people with various disabilities, put forward by my friend, the member of Parliament for Yellowhead.

Our criminal justice system needs to be strengthened to protect the most vulnerable in our society. This legislation looks to close some of the gaps in our system that negatively impact vulnerable Canadians across our country every day.

The physical, emotional, sexual or financial abuse of a person over the age of 65 or a person with a mental or physical disability should be considered an aggravating circumstance. This legislation would ensure criminals who take advantage of vulnerable persons get stricter sentences for their crimes.

First, I would like to discuss elder abuse. Elder abuse can take many forms, and both the mental and physical impairments seniors face increase their vulnerability in our society. Roughly 8% to 10% of seniors in Canada experience elder abuse. This means over 750,000 seniors have been subject to unfair physical, financial or psychological abuse. Elder abuse is severely under-reported in Canada, with an estimated 20% of abuse victims never coming forward and never receiving the justice they deserve.

Looking for the appropriate care in their later years, our elderly often unknowingly entrust their finances, health and futures into the hands of individuals who do not have their best interests at heart. I have heard stories of caregivers stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars from the purses of their wards. I have heard of physical abuse cases going largely unreported. I have heard of elderly couples afraid to report their injustices for fear of losing their homes and their independence.

In my riding, an elderly gentleman living alone in a remote area had his home broken into. The robbers stole his precious belongings and beat him to the point where he had to be hospitalized. Though the perpetrators were later caught, they were released after only serving part of their sentence. After their release, those same criminals went back to the elderly man's home and beat him again to within an inch of death. That elderly man will now spend the rest of his life in a nursing home, as the injuries he sustained took away his independence entirely.

Our broken system does not have strict enough sentences for criminals, and it is failing victims. It is not just individuals perpetrating crimes of elder abuse. Studies show abuses are taking place in over 99% of care homes across the country. These bonds of both necessity and trust are too often taken advantage of by ill-fitted caregivers.

We need to put more legislation in place to protect our most vulnerable, as our elderly are our family and friends. Some victims are dependent on their caregivers, some fear retaliation and social shaming, some fear they will not be believed by resource providers and others do not have the right tools at their disposal to report elder

abuse, being impaired by their own disabilities to an extent to which they cannot reach out.

One day we will all be in their shoes. We need to act today to ensure a better future for all Canadians in their golden years.

Canadians who suffer from various mental or physical disabilities are also at risk of abuse. Imagine people living their lives, unable to fully care of themselves, having their independence stripped away at no fault of their own, and being forced to entrust their lives into the hands of others.

People with disabilities are twice as likely to be abused than any other group. In fact, people with disabilities are more likely to experience workplace, domestic, medical, financial and sexual abuse than any other demographic. Instances of abuse against Canadians with disabilities are on the rise. Forty per cent of incidents of violent crime happen to people with disabilities.

Much like elder abuse, people with disabilities are most often abused by people they know. Caregivers, spouses, common-law partners or other family members are the most common perpetrators of this crime.

• (1815)

Alberta's human services website provided testimony from a man living in an apartment building for persons with disabilities. He spoke on his experiences with assisted care. He wrote, "When the person who is supposed to be my care aide came in the morning to help me get up and dressed, we had a disagreement. We argued for a while. And then the care aide looked at me and said, 'So did you want to get out of bed today?'" Too many caregivers are using a victim's dependence as a bargaining tool to ensure they get what they want, rather than providing the best care possible.

There needs to be stricter punishment for the mental, physical and psychological harm this abuse leaves its victims. The abuse of vulnerable persons is too often overlooked at the national level and the signs of abuse are easily missed. Anyone can become a victim of abuse, including our mothers, fathers, children, neighbours and friends. We need the right tools to recognize abuse and put a stop to it now.

Aside from changing the culture surrounding the treatment for our most vulnerable, we also need stricter laws and punishments surrounding these heinous crimes. Often victims of abuse are forgotten and overlooked by our bustling society, as we are so consumed with the here and now. It is time we pause and recognize these largely forgotten victims.

My colleague and I in the House today are determined to get vulnerable persons the support and services they need to stay independent and stay safe. I am grateful for the member for Yellowhead's bill, which will hopefully shed more light on this important issue. It is time we give a voice back to the hundreds of thousands of people who have been silenced by the injustice of our broken system.

Private Members' Business

These vulnerable persons feel isolated and alone and often these caregivers are their only connection to the real world. However, we, the Canadian government, are also their caregivers and we have a duty to stand up and protect these people when they cannot protect themselves. Abuse can happen to anyone at any time, but it is far more dubious to commit abuses against individuals without the means to protect themselves.

As our society changes, our government needs to equip itself with the right legislation to confront our current issues and provide a safer future for all. Bill C-206 would provide just that: a method to provide a safer future for all Canadians, especially Canada's most vulnerable.

In closing, I would like to thank the member for Yellowhead and everyone who spoke today in support of this bill.

• (1820)

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for having an opportunity to speak on the second reading debate of Bill C-206, an act to amend the Criminal Code regarding the abuse of vulnerable persons.

I would like to begin by thanking my colleague from Yellowhead for giving us the opportunity to discuss this important social issue as well as for the excellent work he has done in his riding and here in the House of Commons over a number of years.

From what I understand about this complex social issue, we will need a multi-faceted approach to effectively address exploitative and abusive conduct toward seniors.

Bill C-206 proposes to amend paragraph 718.2(a) of the Criminal Code to list as an additional aggravating factor acts that target abuse toward seniors and vulnerable adults who depend on others for their care because of their mental or physical disabilities. The objective of the bill is to bring further protections to seniors and other vulnerable persons by imposing tougher penalties on offenders who commit crimes of abuse against these types of victims.

The Criminal Code presently includes a number of offences of general application that offer equal protection to all Canadians from abusive criminal conduct. Additionally, the Criminal Code directs a sentencing court to account for all aggravating and mitigating circumstances relating to the offence or the offender. It explicitly lists a number of aggravating factors that can apply in cases involving the abuse of elderly or vulnerable persons. These aggravating factors include evidence that an offence was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on age or the mental or physical disabilities of the individual.

This last aggravating factor was enacted by Bill C-36, the Protecting Canada's Seniors Act, which essentially codified common law sentencing practices, because courts were already required by case law to consider the specific impact an offence had on a particular victim, given all their circumstances.

If a sentencing court is already required under the current law to consider all aggravating or mitigating factors relating to the commission of the offence and the offender, including consideration that the offence had a significant impact on the victim, having regard for his or her age or other personal circumstances, including, of

course, health and financial situation, I am interested to hear from the member for Yellowhead what situations he is imagining would be covered by his proposed amendment that are not currently covered under the Criminal Code.

It is important to acknowledge that the investigation and prosecution of crime involving elder abuse or abuse of persons with disabilities in Canada is predominantly undertaken by the provinces. As such, it may be wise to consider the impact Bill C-206 would have on the provinces, including the potential for increased litigation relating to interpreting the scope of the proposed aggravating factor, in light of what is already in the Criminal Code.

While it is important to address any gaps in the law with respect to protecting offended seniors or other vulnerable persons, non-legislative responses, such as public education campaigns about the protection offered by the law and further investments in services and programs, are also important measures for Parliament to consider. Non-legislative measures can target the socio-economic factors that increase the susceptibility of these victims to be exploited or abused.

• (1825)

I recall the testimony of Ms. Susan Eng, a representative of the Canadian Association for Retired Persons, who testified before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights on Bill C-36, the Protecting Canada's Seniors Act, that the aggravating factors proposed in that bill, on their own, were "but one element in a comprehensive strategy needed to prevent, detect, report, investigate, and ultimately prosecute elder abuse."

I agree with Ms. Eng. I know that there are a number of non-legislative initiatives the federal government has spearheaded to support the needs, and prevent the abuse, of the victims referred to in Bill C-206.

The federal victims strategy initiative, led by Justice Canada, aims to give victims a more effective voice in the criminal justice system. For instance, the victims fund, which is available through the federal victims strategy, is accessible to provincial and territorial governments and non-governmental organizations to support projects that address the needs of victims and survivors of crime in the criminal justice system. It is my understanding that the victims fund can support projects that meet the needs of the victims who are the focus of Bill C-206.

In 2016, Justice Canada issued a call for proposals, under the victims fund, to non-governmental organizations for projects that would help address gaps in supports and services, raise awareness or advance research to benefit victims and survivors of crime with disabilities, including seniors with disabilities. Seven projects are currently being funded.

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In one project, researchers at the University of Toronto worked with three organizations, Womenatthecentre, DAWN Canada and Brain Injury Canada, to address existing gaps in supports and services for women with disabilities who are survivors of crime. The focus of the research project was women who experience intimate partner violence who have sustained disabling, permanent traumatic brain injuries. As a result of this work, a toolkit was developed to provide knowledge of intimate partner violence through educational materials for front-line staff who are supporting women survivors of intimate partner violence who have sustained traumatic brain injuries.

As well, the University of Toronto worked with indigenous organizations across Canada to raise awareness with respect to women with disabilities who are survivors of crime and to expand a toolkit that is specific to the indigenous context.

I am also aware that through the federal victims strategy, Justice Canada hosts knowledge-building events that are designed to provide information about elder abuse and supporting victims who are seniors.

In addition to commemorating the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3, 2018, Justice Canada hosted an information session to explore various approaches in supporting and empowering women victims and survivors with disabilities, including senior women with disabilities who are victims of domestic violence. These knowledge-exchange information sessions are available to victims and survivors of crime, victims advocates, victims service providers, police officers and legal professionals.

I am also aware of the Justice Canada component of the federal family violence initiative, an initiative that is led by the Public Health Agency of Canada. It provides project funding to support the development of models, strategies and tools to improve the criminal justice system's response to family violence, including elder abuse.

The family violence initiative also addresses elder abuse by providing resources for the public. One helpful tool is the booklet published by the Department of Justice on its website entitled "Elder Abuse is Wrong". The publication is designed for seniors who may be suffering from abuse by someone they know, such as an intimate partner, spouse, family member or caregiver.

• (1830)

Educating these vulnerable people about the resources available, as well as making investments in the services and programs that will address these victims' needs, can have an extremely positive impact on curbing these forms of abuse and exploitation.

The objective of protecting elders and other vulnerable victims is of great importance, and I look forward to hearing the views of other members as we continue to explore a full range of issues that come forward in considering Bill C-206.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

MEMBERS NOT SEEKING RE-ELECTION TO THE 43RD PARLIAMENT

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 6:32 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 28, the House will now proceed to statements by members not seeking re-election in the 43rd Parliament.

[Translation]

Before we begin this evening's debate, I would like to remind hon. members of how the proceedings will unfold.

[English]

Each member speaking will be allotted 10 minutes. Speeches are not subject to a question and comment period.

[Translation]

Pursuant to the same order, this evening's debate will be interrupted after three hours or when no member rises to speak.

[English]

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate this opportunity. I hesitated to give my farewell speech, because this is the third farewell speech I have given. I have had a rather zigzag career, so members have to pay attention, because I am going to outline it.

I was first elected in 1988 as a Progressive Conservative. Then, in 1993, I was defeated by a Liberal, if members can believe that. Then, in 1997, I was recycled as a Progressive Conservative and elected again. Several elections later, Mr. Harper came along and changed the party to the Conservative Party of Canada, and I ran for that party. He invited me to sit as an independent, which I did. Then, in 2009, I resigned my seat for health reasons, thinking I would never come back. I made a farewell speech at that time, which I just read, and it was kind of interesting.

Here I am, back again. In my last farewell speech, I said I had sat 6,149 days, and I figure that now I have spent something like 7,499 days in the House.

I want everyone to know that every single day has been fantastic. It has been the most interesting thing anyone could ever do, and I encourage people to consider running for office. The hours are long and the stress is awful, but representing people in a riding is the most wonderful job a person can do. For me, it has been a great honour and a great pleasure.

I do not know if Canadians knows this, but this place works. It really works well. We have a government, which could be one party or another, and we have opposition parties. The opposition parties have a job to do and the government has a job to do. Between them, they keep Canada between the rails of a highway, as I like to think of it. If the government goes too far to the left and hits the guardrail, the opposition brings it back. If it goes too far to the right and hits the guardrail, it will come back. This keeps Canada on the straight and narrow, and we never vary too much. We are very fortunate to have this system.

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We are also really fortunate to have this system because, as a backbencher, I know that every single day the ministers are going to be here. I can walk across the floor and talk to them if I have an urgent issue from a constituent. I actually do this. The same thing goes for opposition members. I do not know of another system on the planet that has that availability of ministers to backbenchers and other members of Parliament. It is a good system and it works.

I also think that every single member of Parliament I have ever met has brought something to the table. If a person can get through the nomination process in this country and then get through the election process to get a seat in the House, he or she brings something to the table. Members bring experience, knowledge and personality to the table, and every single member of Parliament adds value, with the possible exception of the member for Cape Breton—Canso, but he is all right.

I want to acknowledge the contribution made by backbench MPs, as often the focus is on cabinet. Backbench MPs do a lot of good things, and I think they are not recognized enough.

I sit on the health committee. We have a great health committee, with NDP, Liberal and Conservative members. We are there for one reason only: to hear about the health concerns of Canadians. Nothing else matters. We have philosophical differences, but mostly we are there to deal with the health concerns of Canadians.

Today we heard about violence against health care workers. I had no idea this was an issue until witnesses came to our committee. It sounds like a frightening situation. Hopefully the backbenchers on that committee can advise the health minister on how we might be able to make a difference.

Committees work, and the backbenchers do a good job.

Another thing backbenchers do is propose private members' bills, and these change the lives of Canadians. I want to run through a few of them. As it happens, the five I will mention are from members of Parliament from Nova Scotia.

The member for Halifax brought forward a motion to ensure that sound environmental consultations are completed before infrastructure investments are made. I think this is a great idea.

The member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour established a national strategy for safe disposal of lamps containing mercury. His mother, Joy, is my constituent, and she is my favourite constituent.

The member for West Nova brought forward a bill ensuring that Remembrance Day is formally recognized as a federal holiday. I always thought it was.

The member for South Shore—St. Margarets moved a motion ensuring that abandoned and derelict vessels are taken care of in a sound manner. That is now national policy coast to coast.

●(1835)

I, the very distinguished member for Cumberland—Colchester, had a bill asking the government to establish a system to help indigenous groups repatriate their artifacts. That passed unanimously.

There is another one I want to mention. The member for Calgary Confederation, a Conservative member, brought a private member's bill to enhance organ donation in this country. We are way behind in this. His bill is simple, and it is important that it get passed. It passed in this House unanimously. It is stuck in the Senate, and I hope it can move along with my bill and many others.

My point is that private members make a difference in the lives and the environment and the health of all Canadians. They deserve a lot of credit, and sometimes that is overlooked.

When I made my last speech, I did not know I was going to come back. I thought I was done. I had health issues and did not think I would ever see this place again. However, in 2014, I got an email from the leader of the Liberal Party, which was in third place at the time. He asked if I would be interested in running. These are the people who defeated me back in 1993, but I felt very comfortable with them. I had gotten to know the member for Papineau when I sat over there as an independent with him. It has been a very productive three and a half years.

I am so glad that through Parks Canada we designated the Acadian village of Beaubassin as a national historic site. Parks Canada has now erected a pavilion and commemorative plaques and is going to have signage right away that will enhance that location.

Another project was Isle Haute, a wonderful pristine island in the Bay of Fundy. In 2001, the government was considering divesting it. It took from then to now, but just three weeks ago we designated it a wilderness preserve, and it is preserved forever. I am so grateful for that.

I am really glad that the issue of rising sea levels and climate change is being recognized, because I live at the head of the Bay of Fundy, and everything at the Bay of Fundy is exaggerated. The tides at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy are five or six feet; at the head of the Bay of Fundy, they are 50 feet. They are exaggerated, so a little rise in sea level at the mouth is a big rise at the head of the Bay of Fundy. The Government of Canada has now identified two different programs to deal with erosion and rising sea levels, which are critical.

In a month, we are going to recognize the Amherst prisoner of war camp. It was the biggest prisoner of war camp in Canada in World War I. It is going to have its 100th anniversary, and the ceremony will include the entire German Luftwaffe band. I encourage everybody to go to amherstpwcamp.ca and have a look.

In this short time, I have a lot of thanks to give and I am going to rush them because I am running out of time. They should not be rushed; they do not deserve it.

I want to thank my staff in Amherst, Truro and Ottawa: Sandra, Jon, Deby, Trish and Joel, and all those staff who helped me over the years to make me a successful member of Parliament. Every single one of them is dedicated to helping people and giving the help they need.

I want to thank the security people on the Hill, everywhere. They help us all the time. They protect us, but they also help us.

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I thank the pages, who make sure we know what we are doing and where we are.

I want to thank the clerk and the table officials. They understand this place like none of us do. We can go to them and find out what is going on all the time. Not only that, but they remember every single one of our names, somehow.

Of course, I want to thank the voters who sent me here under three different party flags and as an independent. I am truly honoured to represent the interests of Cumberland—Colchester. I am grateful to every single person in the riding, whether that person voted for me or not. I appreciate them very much. This has been an honour, off and on for 30 years, and I will never forget it.

I want to thank our Liberal caucus, our Nova Scotia caucus, Atlantic caucus and national caucus. I went to the first Liberal caucus and on the way home I called my wife and said, “You know what? They laugh at the Liberal caucus.” It has been a great experience to get to know everybody, and I have made some great friends.

Finally, I want to thank my family. My number one person in my life is Rosemary, my wife of 49 years and five months. Everybody everywhere should know that this job is hard on spouses. We see the cut and thrust, but we also see that when the cameras are off we get along pretty well. All they see is the cut and thrust, and I find that it puts an awful strain on spouses. Everybody should keep that in mind. It is a very difficult job for spouses; it is hard on them.

I want to thank our children, Michael, Holly and Allison. I am very proud of them all. They are working their way through life and they have made a sacrifice for 7,499 days while I was a member of Parliament as well. I appreciate it. I want to recognize our grandchildren, Willow, Jasper and Autumn. They bring joy to our life, and they even seem to like us.

● (1840)

With that, I want to say thanks for this opportunity. I want to thank everybody in this House, from all parties and all positions, for the opportunity to work with them. It has been an honour. I am not done yet. I am going to be here for a while, but this is my opportunity to speak. It is truly an honour to be part of this, in this building and the other building. I could not have done anything for 30 years that would have been more rewarding, more satisfying and more interesting. Thanks very much.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when I first put forward my name for nomination, an older friend asked me if I knew the similarity between politicians and babies' diapers. I said I did not but I bet he was going to tell me, and he said they should be changed often and for the same reason. Here we are, 19 years later, after six elections, and it is a time for a change for all of us.

I am here tonight to say thanks, first to the people of southwestern Saskatchewan, the best people in the world. Cypress Hills—Grasslands is a place where common sense still exists, where people feel both freedom and responsibility and where hard work is expected and rewarded. They have been exceptional in their incredible and unwavering support and it has been my privilege to represent Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

I have gained so many friends over the years. When one takes this job on, everything changes. Friendships, casual relationships, all of them, change. Much of the challenge for me has come from the massive size of my riding and the 10- to 12-hour one-way commute from home to Ottawa. Being gone much of the time, it was a challenge to keep up the friendships I have had in the past, but I need to thank our lifelong neighbours. Many of them have helped Sheila and me time and time again with renovations, blowing snow off the roads, feeding cats and dogs, and checking our house when we were gone. There are too many to mention, but that is just one more benefit of living in a small community.

As time went on, we made so many other friendships throughout the riding: small town leaders, grocery store owners, hockey parents, professionals, business people, fellow motorcyclists and people I met on the ferry. Yes, we do have a ferry in southwestern Saskatchewan.

It takes a while when we get here for members to settle in. The pace is crazy right from the beginning and there is not much of a training program, but over time, we cross paths with those who work here, in the cafeterias, on the bus and every time we enter a building. Over time, we become friends as we share small parts of our lives, including family issues, vacation plans and always the weather. Sometimes it amounts to more than just the Hill. I remember going motorcycling with some of the folks who work here on the Hill. I had the only Harley. It was the one that gave trouble and I was the one they gave grief to, but we went out together a few more times.

I need to especially mention Lynn, who serves us so faithfully on Wednesday morning. One of my most satisfying experiences has been the weekly prayer breakfast at 7 a.m. on Wednesday that has changed and cemented so many relationships here over the years. Lynn has served us for many years on Wednesday mornings.

I want to thank the young Conservative staff who have worked behind the scenes and made us look good. I want to thank my six elections' worth of colleagues. We have gone to war together. We have had victories and we have had losses, personal and political, and it has been my privilege to serve with them.

I would like to give a special thanks to those who have helped in the constituency and have been involved with us politically, some from the very beginning and others who joined later and put so much time and effort into helping us out. My friend Wayne Elhart showed up at our doorstep in mid-summer 2000 to encourage me to run. We chased him off, but he came back about three weeks later with my sister Wendy and her husband Wendell. We sat down together, had a conversation and began to pursue this. They were stuck with farming while I came and went, and now, 19 years later, their son Jeremy is running in the nomination in my riding to replace me.

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I remember going to Swift Current for the first time to look for support and meeting with a small group. I got two things out that meeting: one person told me to go get a haircut and some decent clothes, and Alice Wall, who was the first person in Swift Current to say she would help me. She and John have been with me ever since and I thank them. Many others have been part of six campaigns and 20 years of board activities and fundraisers and all that goes with political life in a riding.

I am so grateful for my staff. Three of my four current staff members have been with me for over 10 years. They have had an incredible capacity to do the work. They addressed the issues, they gave great service to my constituents and they are known for that. It feels a bit like I am deserting them. This is where I have the most mixed emotions.

Over the years, many of them have become more than just workers. They have become friends. Many of them are here with me tonight. Victoria, Erin, Carla, Sarah, Justin, Craig and Patrick, thanks for joining us. Leanne, Naomi, Tim and Aaron are sorry that they could not be here. I hope I have not missed anyone on that list. It is fun for me to see past staff members running for nominations for our party and two of them are now candidates for 2019.

• (1845)

I have said our work here is often like getting a free world-class master's program; the best in the world are available to us if we are interested. We have done lots of work in our office, from Canadian Wheat Board stuff that took 12 years to get completed, to agriculture and trade work, as well as working on a motion declaring Parliament's support for religious freedom, and serving as a PS to 10 ministers, including natural resources, agriculture and foreign affairs, and then spending almost the last 10 years focused on human rights and religious freedom.

I want to thank Sheila, who is my love and my conscience. She is the one who has kept us going all these years and the one who has sacrificed more than anyone will know. We will be spending more time together.

To Amy, Andrew and Charis, Josiah and Ellis, and to Angela, who has become part of our family along with Hunter and Harley, we love them and thank them for being willing to pay the price so that I would have the privilege to do this job.

I want to thank my mother, Betty, who has prayed for me for decades.

I should mention that during my first campaign in 2000 there was a couple from Herbert, Saskatchewan, who helped me out, and at every turn, they mentioned their son-in-law, who was also running in Crowfoot, Alberta. When we came down here, the member from Crowfoot and I met. In our travel schedules of 10 hours to 12 hours one way for each of us, we both decided staying in hotels was not working very well for us and became roommates in early 2001. That must be some sort of record for Ottawa. I have to thank Darlene Sorenson, who has allowed her husband to share an apartment with me for almost 20 years. We have far outlasted much more well-publicized roommate relationships such as the one of the members for Cape Breton—Canso and Sydney—Victoria, who were elected at the same time.

Last and definitely not least, I thank God, whom I know is real. That knowing has changed every aspect of my life and is what brought me here. It is also what is taking me away. Although I do not know what the future will be, I do know that being an MP has given me a great opportunity and responsibility. It is our privilege to be a very small part of his work, and I hope and pray that I have been faithful in some way.

It is my expectation that my colleagues will form the next Government of Canada. While I know I will miss being here, I give them my support and best wishes. I will miss serving the people of Cypress Hills—Grasslands in the future. May God bless Parliament and may God bless Canada.

• (1850)

Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of hard acts to follow.

I want to start by telling parliamentarians of this wonderful, blessed life that I have had. I am a very fortunate man.

I have been blessed in many ways in my life of 75 short years. Two of my blessings have been the wonderful wives that I have had. My first wife, Carol, was a superb mother who lovingly raised our two children, Jeffrey and Lonna Lea, to be the most incredible parents that anyone could ever have. I am the proud grandfather of seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. It is hard to believe that a young man like me could be a great-grandfather.

After my wife, Carol, passed away in 1988, it was a barren time but my two children and I became very close friends. The bond grew closer and closer. I stayed widowed for 17 years until a wonderful lady by the name of Frances came into my life. We met in October of 1999.

I had never been part of any political party, belonged to a political organization or even attended a political meeting at that time, but somehow I was inspired to put my name in as a candidate for the Canadian Alliance Party of Canada in Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry. Believe it or not, I spent about two months on the road with my brother, Ed, and my wife, Frances, or “constant companion” as the press used to refer to her. We used to have a dog and pony show where we would go to small communities around the riding of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, put an ad in the paper, have a meeting where eight or 10 people would come out and listen to Guy give his wonderful speech, and then we would sell two or three memberships. Eventually, we sold enough memberships to win the Canadian Alliance nomination in 2000.

I did not know a thing about campaigning, but in 2000, we came within 2,900 votes of being successful. However, I got the bug and from then on I decided I wanted to be a member of Parliament.

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I was dating Frances at that time and date nights became church suppers and every social event that was going on anywhere in Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry where there were more than a dozen people. That was our date. I would take Frances there and spend the big money, and we would have a church supper, have great pie and those kinds of things, and then I would take her home. However, that was successful. I did that for four years and, believe it or not, in June 28, 2004, I had the good fortune to be elected the member of Parliament for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

Everyone in the House knows, but cannot express to other people, how exhilarating it is to be elected a member of Parliament, but it is also so humbling. When I realized that my peers had said “Guy, we trust you”, it was the most humbling, wonderful experience that I have ever had. The past 15 years and four re-elections since have been a true blessing.

I served as deputy whip for a period and also as the parliamentary secretary to the minister of agriculture. I had the distinct honour to act as the national caucus chair for the Conservative government for eight wonderful years. I will be forever grateful to Prime Minister Stephen Harper for honouring me with the great privilege to serve my colleagues, the Conservative Party of Canada and the Conservative government, as well as to serve him.

How do I thank the great constituents of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry for the best 15 years of my life? Personally, I feel totally inadequate to express the sincere gratitude that I have in my heart for the hundreds and thousands of supporters and volunteers who have trusted me with the great honour of being their member of Parliament. I will be truly grateful to the wonderful constituents of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, and I will continue to serve them in any way possible.

• (1855)

I want to thank my staff past and present. Currently, Francine, Denise, Sue, Nicole, Adrian and my almost full-time volunteer, my wonderful sister Claire, provide the best service any constituency office across Canada can provide. I challenge anyone to top that.

I also want to especially thank my executive assistant, Eric Duncan, who was with me for nine years. He drank the Kool-Aid and now is a candidate for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry in the October election. Eric was my caucus coordinator during the eight years I was caucus chair. I am sure he will serve the constituents of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry very well. As a matter of fact, I am starting to refer to him as the new improved version of Guy Lauzon, and younger I should say. He is only 31-years old.

Staff is so invaluable. Ninety per cent of the clients of the constituency of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry do not deal with me; they deal with my staff. I go out on weekends to social events and everybody tells me that they went to my office and had great service. I tell my staff that I get wonderful feedback from constituents, and I want them to know it. I keep getting re-elected because of them. I have been re-elected four times. They do all the work and I get all the glory. However, I tell them that if I keep my job, they keep theirs. That seems to work for them.

I want to thank my colleagues on all sides of the House. It truly has been an honour to sit in the chamber and serve the constituents of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry as well as the citizens of Canada.

To the citizens of Canada, to all the staff in Parliament and all my colleagues, I say “Thank you”. God bless them and may God bless Canada.

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I suspect that this will be one of the final times I will get to speak in this amazing place. What an honour it has been.

I come from southwestern Ontario, from a little place called Denfield, which one cannot find on a map. All my life, all I ever wanted to do was farm. For those who have ever had a dream and lived it, that was my dream.

I graduated from agriculture college and had the great opportunity to become a dairy farmer and a cash crop farmer. It was an opportunity in my life when we exported cattle nationally and internationally. I also remember at that time, which was the 1980s, that for those of us who were in the business, who were expanding our business or who were buying farms and those types of things, 23% interest was a little more than a challenge. For people who were retired, it was a blessing. I was a long way from being retired. There were major bumps in the road.

Also at this time, I had been married to this amazing woman called Barb. Over those years, she has been with me with me, and together we went through those times. We survived it. We became stronger along with our three children.

Over 35 years ago, I got a call. I was asked if I would become a fence viewer for Lobo Township. I will not go into the details because likely nobody knows what a fence viewer is. Following that, I got a call asking if I would sit on the planning board for the township.

We had just finished planting soybeans when my councillor drove into the yard. He said that he was not running in the fall and asked me if I would run in his place. After 20 years, being a councillor, then deputy, then for 16 years being reeve, mayor and then warden of the county, it was time for him to step back. At that time, when that call came for the job of fence viewer, little did I know it would be the beginning of a political career.

It was a bit of a challenge because when Barb indicated that it would be a great idea to get married, she said she would never marry a politician. At any rate, she has been there with me all this time. Never in my life did I ever think I would be in politics.

After 20 years in municipal politics, some people showed up at my door and said they would like me to consider putting my name in to run for the Conservative Party of Canada. I said that it was not on my radar screen and it never had been. I told Barb and she said, “I think we need to pray about this.” This was the same beautiful woman who many years before had talked about me not being in politics. We prayed about it. Prayer has been one of the solid things in our lives and in our marriage. She said to me, “Whatever your decision is, I’ll be there with you.”

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I ran in 2004 and lost, and that was good. Not many people would say that, but there were things that happened in the two years before 2006 that make me thankful I was at home with our family.

● (1900)

Then on January 23, 2006, the people of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex allowed me to be the member of Parliament for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex. There should never be an election in the winter, not in Canada.

At any rate, for those who have been through this, there is no staff, no office and, as I found out, had a limited understanding of what the load would be with this job. I have referenced it as being like trying to drink water out of a fire hydrant. After a while, the hose gets smaller and then to gets to where a cup can be put under it and the water can be nourished and drank. It does all come together.

I am thankful and privileged to have served under the Right. Hon. Stephen Harper, a man of wisdom and a man of integrity. During that time, we all had our things, and I was so fortunate to have two private members' motions become legislation. The first focused on agriculture, which was the harmonization of the science for the registration of agriculture inputs. The next one was a motion that would end up, because of my colleague from Grasslands, establishing the Office of Religious Freedom. It would fall under the Minister of Foreign Affairs and would be responsible for monitoring religious persecution around the world. What an honour it was to have representatives from parties in the House support in those motions.

Now we have a new leader, who I believe has a new clear vision for Canada and who I believe will become the prime minister in October.

I want to thank the member from Yorkton for the prayer breakfasts we have on Wednesday mornings. What a stabilizer it is for those of us who have a strong faith.

After nearly 14 years, I could describe this as a walk in life because of the amazing people around me. That, my friends, is what makes it a journey.

I want to thank the special people in my life: my wife Barb, our three children, Cheryl, Greg and Chris, and our 10 grandchildren, with whom I will get to spend much more time.

I thank the incredible people who became my staff over the years and those who carried me through, people like Yvonne Hundey and Pat Davis, who have been there since day one; Stephanie Cattrysse, Todd Gurd and Sarah Brown, who is my corporal in Ottawa. To all the staff who have worked for me, they made a mark in my life and I thank them very much for that.

How do I thank neighbours and friends, the people who take care of things when I am not there? They look after my home and ensure Barb is safe when I am not there. I hope my thanks is enough.

Larry Weatherhead is an unsung hero. He would be embarrassed, but he is a friend and an employee. He carried a lot of the farm workload while I was not there over the years. I thank him.

To my colleagues in this place of all party stripes, I thank them for the friendships we have built and sustained.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank all the people who supported me as well as the ones who did not but who put up with me.

● (1905)

I pass the torch to Leanne Rood, the candidate for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex in October 2019. May the torch be held high.

May God bless each and everyone in this Parliament and may God bless this great country of Canada.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak this evening. More than anything, I appreciate the opportunity I have had to serve in the House. I wanted to tell my story of how I got here and at the same time, thank all of the people who have contributed so immensely over the years.

I would like to begin by thanking my wife and my kids for allowing me to leave, and forgiving me for leaving, every single week to come to this place and do what we know is a passion for each of us. That passion is serving our country.

I would like to thank my mom and dad, my mom who is an activist and my father who knocked on doors. I cannot tell members how badly the man, who is 40-some years older than me, shamed me by being a better door knocker than me and going more quickly than me over the years, in election after election.

I thank the friends who gave so much time and effort to help me achieve my dreams; the president, John Thornton; Bruce MacGregor; Lynn Kelman, who served in the new riding of Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte since its inception in 2013; and the board of directors who guided us.

Finally, I thank the staff who served in the offices in Barrie and here in Ottawa over the years: Amanda, Matt, Dion, Emrys, Stephen, Filip, Tiana, Laura, Kathryn and Naomi. I can tell members that their service was not just to me as the member of Parliament, but to the people of Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte and the people of Canada. That can never be forgotten or erased. I want to thank them for all of the hard work they put in.

My story with politics started when I was 15 years old. I was more likely to be smoking pot in the forest beside the high school than I was to be in the high school where I was supposed to be. Mike Harris changed the education curriculum in the first year of the double cohort and created civics and careers. I took that civics class and I fell in love because I realized that something could be done to improve the lives of those people around me and my situation and my family.

The next part of the class was careers. At the end was a project, “What are you going to do when you grow up?” It was not an entry-level job like it is now, but naturally I chose Prime Minister of Canada. I also chose member of Parliament, and I have been able to work toward that since then.

Government Orders

When I was 18 years old, I ran for city council. I ran against my principal after dropping out of high school to run for council and I lost. Surprise, surprise. I went to speak at a Christian businessmen's association lunch and there was a guy named Arch Brown who created Canadian Tire money, that stuff they used to have and just brought back. He asked me if I was going to run again. I said, "I don't know. Who wants an 18-year-old running a council of a city of 100,000 people?" He said, "Alex, 17- and 18-year-olds signed up, went to Europe, fought for their country and died for their country so you could have the freedom to run here today." He is no longer with us, but thank God he said those words to me that day, because they have never left. In fact, someone reminded me of them just a few days ago.

After that, at 21 years of age, I ran against my grade 4 teacher and my boss in Patrick Brown's office, but this time I beat the authority and I won as a city councillor. I was re-elected at age 25 to Barrie city council. Eventually, at the age of 30, I had my opportunity to run for member of Parliament, the goal that I set when I was 15 years of age. This time I ran against the president of the college that I attended, another authority figure in my life.

I had no idea when we started that election there would be literally \$400,000 or \$500,000 spent on the election and it would come down to 86 votes, that 51,000 people would vote in this riding and 86 people would be the determinant as to what would happen in terms of success, whether it be Liberal or Conservative.

● (1910)

When I came here, I was nothing but an idealistic Conservative, through and through. I certainly still hold those beliefs to this day.

When I walked into this chamber, I believed that Conservatives were good and others were bad. Quite frankly, it was a very divisive attitude. I was young, and still am, and I certainly did not understand the people around me, the perspectives they had and why they believed what they believed.

I can say today that I have grown as a human being. I have learned lessons. I will never forget to respect people on the other side of the aisle, to respect those beside me and to understand them.

What is incredible is that what saved me as a 15-year-old kid is the same thing I am seeing fall apart. I see the destructive behaviours of divisiveness and of calling each other either fascists or communists. The politics are the same now as they were then, and we must stop the destructive behaviours.

I am seeing it in our young people, as I travel from university to university serving in the shadow cabinet, serving an incredible leader. Our young people are becoming as polarized as the debates we are having both inside and outside the House.

I would like to take this opportunity to mention a couple of members from other parties whom I have grown to respect. My colleagues know how much I respect them, because we get to talk about it all the time.

When I first came here, I was on the industry committee. The member for Pierrefonds—Dollard and I were on opposite sides, and we had arguments for the first three or four weeks. It was not long before we realized that we wanted to achieve the exact same things,

so we worked together. Since then, I have seen him work with members on all sides, certainly those in his caucus and mine, to fight for what he believes in terms of democracy, opportunity and hope for Canadians. I have seen that in every member in this place in one way or another.

While I am not running in this election, I hope the one lasting impression I leave on members of the House who are running is this. When they are out campaigning and speaking to the Canadian people, with the Canadian people, for the Canadian people, members should bridge the gap. They should not make it any larger than it is, because by doing so, in the end, nobody wins. The only people all of us want to see win are the Canadian people.

I am thankful for this opportunity. God bless Canada.

● (1915)

The Speaker: Allow me to thank the member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte. Let me also offer my very best wishes.

It was great getting to know you. I was thinking of someone you did leave a permanent impression on, but we will not get into that. It has been fun having you here, having you sit close. We have had some great conversations and interactions over the past. It has been a lot of fun. All the best.

The hon. member for Cape Breton—Canso.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is pretty cool. I am just wondering, looking in the gallery, if there is an open bar in the gallery for the first time. This is a great treat. I want to commend the House leaders for allowing this to happen, for members to come out and have a final speech. There have been some really cool things said in the chamber.

As many members who have been here for a while and through a few Parliaments would know, not every parliamentarian necessarily gets a final speech. Sometimes it is a concession speech back at headquarters. This is far more civilized. I am really happy that I am able to join in with so many colleagues I have served with over the last number of years.

I rewrote this thing about 12 times. I am a bit nervous, although not as nervous as the first time I almost spoke in this House. I would like to share that story here. Our chief of staff in the whip's office, Charles-Eric, was on the whip's desk at the time. I was a newly minted parliamentarian. My good friend and colleague from Sydney—Victoria and I had come here, and we did not know a lot about parliamentary procedures or anything. We were elected in November. We sat for about a week, just to get some housekeeping done. Then we had the Christmas break and came back in February.

It was about the third week back, and I had not had an opportunity to do my maiden speech yet. I did not know a whole lot about the mechanics of the House. I walked into the government lobby, and Charles-Eric said, "Mr. Cuzner, we have to have you speak. We can't let the debate die. You have to do a speech." I said, "Chuck, I have never spoken in the House before. I don't know what to do." He said, "No, no. Here's the speech from Marlene Jennings."

Government Orders

Some of you would have served with Marlene, a great member of Parliament, strong on women's issues. She always pushed the issue of women of colour and opportunities for women of colour. He said, "She hasn't shown up and the debate is going to collapse. You have to do the speech." My reading skills are not bad, so I said, "Yeah, I'll do it, give me the speech."

He gave me the speech. I was sitting where my good friend from Niagara Falls is. We were on the rump over there. I had the speech in hand, and I ran around. Reg Bélair was the Deputy Speaker at the time. I said, "Reg, what do I do?" He said, "I'll give the one-minute warning to the Speaker, and then I'll call your riding. You'll get up and begin to speak." I thought, okay, I can do that.

I started reading the speech, and I got halfway through the second paragraph when I saw the one finger go up. Next thing I saw was the beads of sweat dropping on the paper. I said to myself that I did not have time to read it, so I had better scan it. I scanned it, and it was five pages of French. Now, going through my mind was, okay, what is the tempo. I was thinking, "Mr. Speaker," trying to get the tempo down.

He was ready to go. As you do, Mr. Speaker, he did not have the technology of the lowering arm at the time. He was edging out of his seat, and my heart was just pumping and I was sweating. I had a five-page speech for 10 minutes of air time. Marlene Jennings came racing through the doors. She was in the top row over there. She took her place, huffing and puffing. Reg Bélair got up and said, "The hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine." He looked over me and said, "You're off the hook."

I had the speech and I was in a state. I was trying to get settled down. I was looking at the last paragraph in the speech, "Growing up in Montreal as a young black woman". I know that I was in such a state that I would have read that into the record that day. I am glad I did not. It is in the record now.

● (1920)

I am going to try not to be partisan or too emotional because my good friend, the Minister of Veterans Affairs said his bladder is too close to his eyes. He said that is something that no speaker should want. I am also not going to be too long.

I just want to thank some people, and obviously the good people of Cape Breton—Canso. Six times, they have put their trust in me and asked me to represent them here in the chamber. They should know that every day I go to work it is with respect to the trust that they have put in me. That is how I go about my business. I would do anything for them except re-offer. However, it was an absolute pleasure to work with them and to see so many good things happen within our riding.

I want to thank the volunteers. I have a big rural riding. I have 54 volunteer fire departments, so it is a big, expansive rural riding. We had a lot of fun with the elections and the volunteers came out. It is just their level of commitment. We have, with all parties, those party stalwarts who come out and believe in the democratic process. They want their team to win and they come out and do everything they can. I continue to be amazed by them and inspired by them. I want to thank them for their work over so many years. We should all thank our volunteers.

I want to thank my staff: Rosemary MacIntyre; Jill Horwath; Geoff MacLellan; Derek Jerrott; Laurel Munroe; Kris Kolanko; Cathy Coffin who has been with me so long; Joel Bowen, with whom we solved a lot of the world's problems late at night; Pete Cullen, who is here tonight, and I hired him twice so it is Pete and re-Pete; and Dalton Wakely and we still do not know what Dalton did but I am sure he did a great job.

I served as the chief opposition whip for two years. I want to thank the whip staff: Nathalie, Mélanie and Patrick. Again, we can all sort of relate to that. I brought Vince MacNeil over from the Senate, and Vince was a great addition to our team here on the Commons side after a career on the Senate side.

As we live here and work on the Hill, everybody appreciates the work that the House officers do. The security guys, the maintenance staff and the whole crew were wonderful at their jobs. I thank so much my caucus colleagues, past and present, and also my old roommate from Sydney—Victoria, 13 years. Our thoughts are with our good friend from Beauséjour, the Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs. I thank our past leaders.

A.J. MacDougall, former warden of Inverness County, said this right after we got elected and Rodney MacDonald was a minister in the Progressive Conservative government in Nova Scotia. He said that the people in Inverness County will expect us to work together and get along to provide for the people. I have always tried to do that.

I will just share my favourite story and I will wrap up.

There have been a lot of great moments in this House and a lot of concerning moments in this House. In the wake of 9/11 and the United States going into Iraq, I was serving as Prime Minister Chrétien's parliamentary secretary at the time. I came to his office in preparation for QP. There was a phone call earlier in the day and he was speaking with Tony Blair. He was sort of the elder statesman on the scene, so Mr. Chrétien took the call and leaned back in his chair in Mr. Chrétien's style and said, "Hello Tony". They had a conversation and Mr. Chrétien said that if we did not have the multilateral support of the UN on this, Canada would not be going in.

● (1925)

Anyway, Tony Blair made the decision to go in and we know how that turned out. At the time, Mr. Chrétien said that there was going to be a mess left behind, and how do we clean that up? We were getting pounded hard every day by the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Harper was hitting him every day. However, he knew that he would stand alone and defend that position, and I think the history books show that decision was a great moment for this country.

Government Orders

I also want to thank the journalists. I think they are a key pillar to this democracy.

I am not sad to go. I am just happy to have had the opportunity to be here. Everybody talks about the poems and asks if I am going to do a poem, but no, there is an entertainment tax with the poems. I took my responsibilities seriously but I never took myself seriously.

I will close by taking the chance to say to you, Mr. Speaker, who have been a good friend for a long time: Rodger, over and out.

The Speaker: Order.

Before the member for Cape Breton—Canso shakes any more hands, I want to say a word or two, having, as he said, known him for a long time.

In fact, I first met the hon. member for Cape Breton—Canso in 1975. I was 15 and I was at Al MacNeil's hockey school in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. Rodger was one of the coaches. Rodger, I think you were 50, were you not? No, but he was maybe 17 or 18, a junior star. Based on the coaching he gave me then, I attribute my skills and success entirely to him. I am awfully glad that he does not have a chance to rebut that.

It has been great working with you over the years. We have had a lot of fun working together. I want to wish you, Lynn and your family all the best, and I hope to see you often. You know that you are always welcome at my house, and I think I may have to come and see you on the Mira sometime. All the best.

• (1930)

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF): Mr. Speaker, those of us who have had the privilege of serving in this 42nd Parliament have experienced some truly historic moments. We celebrated the 150th anniversary of this Parliament. We welcomed President Barack Obama into this House to speak to us. We witnessed the return of the CCF after half a century, contributing to the largest number of independent MPs in Canadian history. We served in the Centre Block and in this new House.

I was honoured to be part of that history, but my interest in politics has always been motivated by an interest in public policy, so I want to talk about some of the issues that I have raised in this Parliament, both as a member of the NDP caucus and as an independent MP.

During my time in the NDP caucus, I was the first MP in the House to call for federal funding to help restore bus service in Saskatchewan. I was also the first MP to call for a federal role in keeping SaskTel public. As part of the NDP caucus, I even managed to sneak in one member's statement advocating for the use of Regina-made steel in the Trans Mountain expansion. It has been even easier to advocate for Regina-made steel as an independent MP.

In the NDP caucus I tried to raise the idea of border adjustments to carbon pricing to ensure a level playing field for our Canadian workers. As members know, I got into some trouble with my party leadership for debating that issue, which brings me to my time as an independent. Of course, I have been more free to speak up for the use of Regina steel in Trans Mountain and for extending federal carbon pricing to the carbon content of imports while rebating it on Canadian-made exports.

I have been the only member of this Parliament to advocate for restoring VIA Rail service to Regina and for a federal investigation of the Regina bypass. I was the first member of the House to advocate for federal assistance to our canola farmers when China closed its market.

In addition to the issues that I have been proud to raise on the floor of this House, I also want to speak to some of the issues that I have been able to work on through committees.

In this 42nd Parliament, I was the only western Canadian MP to serve on the all-party steel caucus. We travelled to Washington to advocate for a Canadian exemption from American steel tariffs and I am extremely pleased to see that goal has been achieved.

I served as the NDP vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Erin Weir: I hear some of my colleagues from that committee. I think it was a very co-operative committee and I actually went to the same high school as the chair of that committee. I think it is probably a rare thing in this Parliament to have a committee chair and a vice-chair from the same high school, Campbell Collegiate in Regina, in this case.

At that committee I was able to ask about the Phoenix pay system, even before it became a national scandal. I pushed to keep the government's feet to the fire on paying our federal public servants correctly and on time.

Our committee also conducted a major study on the future of Canada Post. Talking about Canada Post, one of my proud moments in this House was occupying the Prime Minister's chair during committee of the whole to speak up for collective bargaining rights in response to back-to-work legislation for postal workers.

The government operations committee also undertook a major study of whistle-blower protection in the federal public service. The report that we prepared was a truly unanimous report without any dissenting or supplementary reports from any political party. I believe it is a fairly rare accomplishment in this Parliament to achieve that level of agreement at a committee, so I am certainly very proud of that report.

• (1935)

When I became an independent MP, I had no guaranteed spots at committee. On the other hand, I had the freedom to try to intervene on any committee. Most recently, I have participated in meetings of the agriculture and trade committees to advocate for federal assistance to canola farmers, and I am pleased that the government has expanded the advance payments program to provide some assistance to those producers.

I also participated in hearings of the justice and ethics committees on SNC-Lavalin. I was able to ask questions of the now independent member for Vancouver Granville, Gerry Butts and Michael Wernick.

Government Orders

I do not believe that I would have been able to play that role on those committees as a member of the NDP caucus, so on reflection, I am pleased to have been able to spend part of this term as an independent MP. It is something I would recommend to other members of the House, especially those who might be on the fence and considering joining our growing corner of Parliament.

I am going to stop short of thanking the federal NDP leader for removing me from caucus and making me an independent, but I do want to thank all the local volunteers and donors who helped elect me in a very closely fought campaign.

I also want to say that the support of family, friends, staff and other people across Canada through difficult times has meant so much to me. I particularly want to thank all the former elected officials, national commentators and grassroots activists who spoke up for due process, common sense and local democracy.

Most of all I want to thank the people of Regina for entrusting me with the great privilege of representing them in Parliament, which has been the greatest honour of my life.

The Speaker: Allow me to thank the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan for his farewell remarks. It has been great getting to know him.

If I recall correctly, the member for Regina—Lewvan and the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan knew each other from university debating. I think it is fair to say that both seemed right at home here in the chamber.

I am sure we would all agree that we want to offer all our best wishes, but on my own behalf, I wish you all the best in the future.

● (1940)

[*Translation*]

There being no more members rising to speak, pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 28, the House will resume its proceedings under government orders.

* * *

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2019, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of C-97, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2019 and other measures, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise and address the House on the important issues we have to address. What is more important than the national budget? It is one of those measures that we can read a lot into, because it is the way the government establishes its priorities. From day one, this government has been very clear to the House, and through the House to all Canadians, and I would even reverse that by saying that through Canadians, we have been very clear to this House, what the intentions of this government are.

As I have referenced in the past, we have a Prime Minister who constantly challenges members of the Liberal caucus to stay connected with their constituents, the people we represent, and to

bring their thoughts and ideas to the floor of the House, the standing committees and the caucus. I really believe that a lot of positive things have happened as a direct result.

Before I get to the core issues, I would like to use the example of pharmacare. On numerous occasions, I have had the opportunity to stand in my place and table petitions dealing with pharmacare. We know how passionate Canadians are about our health care system. It does not matter what region of the country we live in, health care is an important issue. As such, I have always taken it seriously, not only here in the House of Commons but also in the days when I was an MLA.

Under this Prime Minister, for the very first time in decades, we have seen an open mind toward a national pharmacare plan. I would argue that for the first time in decades, we have seen not only members of the government but also some opposition members talking more about a pharmacare plan. Virtually months after the last election, we saw the standing committee put meetings on its agenda to deal with pharmacare, which ultimately led to a report.

We have seen commitments within our budget measures to further the debate and dialogue on pharmacare. We have seen members of Parliament go into their constituencies and work with others.

I am very proud of the fact that my daughter Cindy has been very strong on this file and has been advocating for a national pharmacare plan on the floor of the Manitoba legislature. She recognizes, as I do, that this is an important issue for the residents of Winnipeg's north end and beyond.

If we listen to my caucus colleagues, they will talk about the importance of a national pharmacare plan. I think that embodies some of the things the Prime Minister has talked about, which is that as members of Parliament, it is important that we stay in touch with what our constituencies want and expect.

Let me suggest to members that it is one of the important issues on which I hope to see some tangible results in the coming days, weeks, months and, with the approval of my constituents, years. It is an issue I want the residents of Winnipeg North to understand. I will continue to advocate for it until we have some form of national pharmacare plan we can all be proud of, a plan that will complement the national Canada health care system we have.

Having said that, I want to talk about day one. I sat in the opposition benches a number of years ago when our current Prime Minister was elected leader of the Liberal Party of Canada.

● (1945)

I thought it was significant that the day he made the announcement that he was interested in putting his name into the leadership race, he highlighted the importance of Canada's middle class. Nothing has changed. The then leadership candidate, who then became the leader of the Liberal Party and is now Canada's Prime Minister, has consistently indicated that Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be part of it are the first priority of this government and the Liberal Party.

Government Orders

He made that pledge in the last federal election. I believe that if we look at the budgetary measures we have taken since day one of getting into government, we will find example after example of what we have done as the government to further the interests of Canada's middle class.

If we look back at the beginning, and Bill C-2, we will see the tax cut for Canada's middle class. At the same time, we recognized the sense of tax fairness, and we saw a government that put an extra tax on Canada's one per cent, the wealthiest Canadians. The revenue generated from that, in good part, went to pay for the tax break for Canada's middle class.

I am very proud of the fact that we have seen a government that also wants to do what it can to deal with issues such as poverty. That is why we saw the enhancement of the tax-free Canada child benefit program, literally lifting tens of thousands of children, going into hundreds of thousands, out of poverty. Then we saw the guaranteed income supplement, which also lifted tens of thousands of Canadians out of poverty.

I want to combine the three of them and use it as a tangible example of this point. We took money and put it into the pockets of Canadians in every region of our country. We supported the middle class and those aspiring to be part of it, those who needed that helping hand, and we put money to work. I say that because if we invest in our middle class, we are really investing in Canada. The hundreds of millions, going into billions of dollars annually that we invested in Canadians ultimately assisted us in providing tangible results. It increased disposable income and, I would argue, helped create the one million jobs this government, working in co-operation with other stakeholders, has been able to generate in every region of this country.

In so many ways, we are the envy of the world because of the economic policies we have put in place. We have put money in the pockets of Canadians by investing in infrastructure. Even with this most recent budget, we are giving tens of millions of dollars. In the city of Winnipeg, just over \$35 million is going into municipal infrastructure, creating jobs, building our country and investing in Canadians. That is what this government has been all about over the last three and a half years.

• (1950)

We have seen tangible results. This is why I am very happy and quite content. The summer is quickly approaching. We only have another 12 or 13 days left in this sitting. I look forward to a summer where we can reach out and tell Canadians what has been taking place in the last three and a half years.

Come October, when people do the comparisons, they will recognize and appreciate all the work we have been able to accomplish, working with Canadians day in and day out, working hard and delivering.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member brought up the government's Bill C-2, which was in fact the cut to the middle income bracket, not to the middle class.

I have had this exchange with the member several times now, probably more than several times over the past few months and year. The government offered a tax cut of over \$800 to every member of

Parliament in this Chamber. However, people who were earning \$45,000 or less got nothing. They got carbon taxes and higher payroll taxes. They actually got less at the end of the month. People who were earning \$60,000 a year, which is more than the median income, more than the average income a person would earn in Canada, got about a \$260 tax cut.

The member keeps repeating that this was for the middle class, but in fact every member of Parliament received a much higher tax break. That is wrong. That is not the way this is supposed to work. We are not supposed to fill our pockets; we are supposed to help Canadians.

Will the member finally admit that the middle income tax cut was not for the middle class, that it did not achieve any of those goals? In fact, the numbers provided by the CRA show that the extra tax put on the so-called 1% did not generate the revenue the government thought it would, that we lost over \$4 billion.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite focuses on one area with respect to the middle-class tax cut.

He talks about particular individuals who made x number of dollars. What about the hundreds of thousands of teachers, firefighters, factory workers and others who received that middle class tax cut? The bulk of that hundreds of millions of dollars went to those individuals. By investing in our middle class, we were able to increase disposable income. That meant they were able to visit the local restaurant, go to retail outlets and invest in our economy. By investing in the economy, by spending, it generated additional jobs.

The member and the Conservatives are off base. I think what it might be is a little remorse. At the end of the day, the Conservatives voted against the tax break for Canada's middle class.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the member spent a long time preparing his speech and could not finish it. Therefore, I will not ask a question so can finish it. However, I will make a comment.

Some members heard me the other day in question period. I had a long list of things that the Minister of Finance had done for us in previous years. I want to add some of the things he has done in this budget, particularly for the north, on top of all of those things.

There were an additional \$75 million for CanNor; an additional \$50 million for the Yukon territorial government, which has to provide health care and education; \$400 million out of the trade corridor fund just for the north, which is a higher percentage than the rest of Canada, sorry to the other members for that; and \$26 million for the science building at Yukon College to help make it the first university in Canada north of 60. We are the only country in the world that did not have a university north of 60, but we now will. Finally, something no one in the House would have mentioned, but there was increased money for polar continental shelf project to do research in the arctic.

Government Orders

Finally, in the north, we benefited from a whole bunch of things as did everyone in Canada: the mineral exploration tax credit, extended for five years; increases for student loans; \$150 million for cancer; \$60 million for tourism; and increases in indigenous languages and new horizons for seniors.

•(1955)

The Deputy Speaker: We are running out of time.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the first thing that comes to mind is how effective members within our caucus can be.

I know the member for Yukon. A member cannot be in the national Liberal caucus and not hear about Yukon. Yukon is an absolutely critical aspect in every way when it comes to caucus discussions. My friend and colleague from Yukon is very quick to remind all us of the importance of not neglecting Yukon. I suspect that is one of the reasons why the Prime Minister and many of us actively think about it.

One of the nice things about being part of a great team is that we get a sense of co-operation and better understanding of all the different areas of our country. All our members are strong advocates for their communities. No doubt that is one of the reasons the Minister of Finance finds things very challenging. We are constantly lobbying him in the best interests of all of Canada.

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this place to speak to Bill C-97, the budget implementation act.

I am profoundly concerned.

The federal budget is a government's opportunity to present its plan for the country and its economy. It is its opportunity to demonstrate to Canadians that true political leadership is the art of the possible.

It is concerning that rather than accomplish the possible things that could help Canadians prosper, the Liberal party refuses to recognize that more and more Canadians are just getting by and not getting ahead.

Canadians need budget measures that at least acknowledge their struggles and help provide them some relief from the escalating costs of day-to-day life, not ones that simply continue the Liberals' long history of tax-and-spend policies that instead hurt families, businesses and the sustainability of government programs on which people rely.

Again, in this budget, there is no plan. Instead, Canadians are getting tax increases that only make their situation worse.

There is no question that over the past four years Canadians have suffered under a Liberal government that misses opportunities, mortgages our children's futures, lacks a plan and neglects the needs of workers and families.

Let us talk about the concerns of the constituents I represent in Flamborough—Glanbrook and what they have been feeling as far as Liberal neglect is concerned.

In the greater city of Hamilton, thousands of Stelco workers and pensioners have been forced to deal with great uncertainty and have really struggled after the company moved into creditor protection on two different occasions, 2004 and 2014. These are Canadians who have or are at risk of losing their dream of a dignified retirement after decades of hard work.

What I have heard from every pensioner who has reached out to me on this issue is that he or she has serious concerns that the bankruptcy process puts investors ahead of pensioners.

Bankruptcies at Sears and Nortel over the years have resulted in similar dire circumstances for their pensioners. Thousands of Sears employees were out of work when the store closed in December 2017, yet there was no real pension protection for employees who had been there for 10, 20, 30 years or more.

A pension is deferred wages. That it is even possible to lose deferred wages is totally unacceptable.

The Liberals promised action years ago. More empty promises in this budget do not a plan make.

Our previous Conservative government took an important first step when we brought in changes that required companies to fulfill their pension obligations when they sought creditor protection. I am happy that change was made because it was a crucial first step toward protecting pensioners. However, there are many more steps to take. That was just the first and more needs to be done.

It is possible to make changes to our laws and regulations to improve protections for pensioners. The question becomes, what changes should be made and how do we make those changes? This is not a question to which one party has all the answers.

It is not my intention to over simplify the challenge before us. I remind my colleagues that political leadership is the art of the possible. Millions of Canadians rely on their pensions. This issue is too important to avoid action because the problem is too complex. Nor should members be divided down partisan lines. We have to make this change possible.

That is why, in 2017, I called upon the government to charge one of our parliamentary committees to review the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, the Companies' Creditor Arrangement Act and the Investment Canada Act. That was 18 months ago.

I strongly believe a parliamentary committee is the ideal place to begin. A parliamentary study allows members of all parties to examine important statutes and regulations and provide their input on the matter. In hearing from stakeholders, public servants, legal and industry experts, a committee study allows members to determine where exactly the issues are and what exactly is possible. All of the testimony would be a matter of public record, meaning that those arguing for and against changes would be subject to scrutiny, and rightfully so.

Committee members then have the opportunity to make recommendations to the government as to what problems need to be addressed and how they could be addressed.

Government Orders

Having previously chaired the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology and understanding the issues that come before it, that would make a lot of sense.

Unfortunately, when my Conservative colleagues brought forward a motion to begin such a study at committee, the Liberals voted it down. Instead of taking advantage of the power of a parliamentary committee, the Liberals blocked that study and made it clear that looking at new ways to protect pensioners was not a priority for the government. In the 18 months since, we have essentially heard nothing from the Liberals regarding pension protections. A lot could have been done by now if the Liberals had the will.

● (2000)

Ironically, in the latest budget, the Liberals committed to giving pensioners greater peace of mind by “enhancing retirement security”. Is this vague commitment what pensioners have been waiting for all these years? The Liberals are not prepared to take the very possible and meaningful steps to follow through on those words. While moves toward greater transparency in the process are all well and good, the budget falls far short of actually providing concrete protections for pensioners when their company files for creditor protection.

It is not just the official opposition that sees this legislation as woefully lacking. The Canadian Association of Retired Persons and the Canadian Federation of Pensioners agree that Bill C-97 falls well short.

When I met with the United Steelworkers a few weeks ago, they made it abundantly clear to me that this was their number one priority, because there are still workers and pensioners who are struggling, stressed out and concerned for their futures.

This issue should transcend partisan boundaries. My Conservative colleague, the hon. member for Durham, when he introduced Bill C-405 to begin making changes to better protect pensioners, said that “securing the retirement and pension security of Canadians is another time that we should work together on all sides of this House to bring certainty to hundreds of thousands of Canadians in their retirement.”

The hon. NDP member for Hamilton Mountain, who has offered his own private member's bill on pensions as well, referred to the issue as a “legislative crisis”.

Even the Liberal Minister of Seniors, who is also the member for a neighbour riding of mine, Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, told the CBC that more study was needed on pensions. That begs the question: If the position of the Liberal government is that more study is needed, why did the Liberals vote down a Conservative motion to study pension protections at committee? I think Canadians deserve an answer to that question, and the government better have a reason that is better than petty partisanship. The financial security and safety of our retirees is far too important for that.

I reiterate my belief that a complete review of the legislation governing pensions and insolvency is needed, one that considers the perspectives of all stakeholders: workers, business leaders, industry experts, civil servants, bondholders, banks, and suppliers who, by the way, get victimized very regularly as well when a company goes out of business. Small suppliers who have a handful of employees

are forced into bankruptcy and their employees lose their jobs because they are so far down the list as well. They should be part of the stakeholders who come before our committee, and so many others, who can give their testimony in regard to how bankruptcy should be handled and the priority in which the claims should be made. This is not and never will be an issue that only one party can solve on its own.

The Liberals did not want dialogue, and it is reflected in this bill because their proposals are not only inadequate but fail to even broach the crux of the issue. This is not an issue that can be meaningfully addressed in a massive omnibus budget bill. I implore the Liberal executive to allow committees to do what they do best. The issue requires an approach that allows members of all parties to take the time to have an in-depth debate on this specific issue without the looming threat of time allocation to get the budget through.

Pensioners work hard for decades to earn a dignified retirement. I am certain that my colleagues right here in the House, who are vested with a pension, would scream quite loudly if all of a sudden it was limited or taken away. The least we can do as elected representatives of Canadian workers and pensioners is to take the issue seriously and provide meaningful changes to protect them.

While we may not be able to make all stakeholders completely happy, it is possible to do much more and better for workers. Let us get this on the front burner now before another 18 months go by.

● (2005)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for taking up this topic, which is very important. It has always been a pet project of mine, and I totally agree with him that it needs to be studied and worked on.

The minister for science and industry has outlined in question period a number of steps that the government is working on and taking related to this. However, the member has obviously given more thought to this than most people. Obviously, a study would be great and we would get all those opinions.

Could he give one or two ideas of his own, which he has already thought of because he has thought so much about this, that might help us in a program to help protect the pensions of existing pensioners?

Mr. David Sweet: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for the question. It was given in the spirit of collegiality, and I appreciate that because this issue is so complex.

There are a number of things we could do, which is why we need to get everybody at the table. Bondholders will have a real problem with the security of the funds they have invested in the company and will want to make sure they can get their investment out. Banks are going to come to the table and will be concerned about the fact that their liability is going to be increased if they are not right at the top of the list. They will make claims, as they have to probably many members here, that they will have to charge more for credit and that maybe even credit will not be as accessible because their liability will increase for any new measures that might take place.

Government Orders

The reason I said the first step should be that we have very clear and concise testimony is that the general public needs to know where everybody stands. It is why in my speech I said that for those who would argue for and against, the public would clearly see what the issues were. They would see whether people were strong-arming brinkmanship to try to keep things status quo or if there was a reasonable effort to come to some kind of compromise to make sure those deferred wages that people sometimes wait a decade or two or three for are actually honoured.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have great respect for my colleague. I received a message from Linda Nickerson of Parksville. Her husband has been sick with diabetes and medicine prices have been going up. Linda planned well for her retirement. She invested appropriately and so did her husband. Medicine costs have gone through the roof.

They have sold their house and downsized to a trailer, and they are still having a tough time making ends meet living on just CPP and OAS. They are calling for the government to invest in a national pharmacare plan so that they can survive. They are not sure what they will be able to do next, because the costs are going through the roof when it comes to the medicine.

The Liberal government keeps making promises that it will deliver a national pharmacare plan. In fact, it was in its red book in 1993, and now it is talking about making progress. The deputy House leader today talked about the government making progress, but we still have not seen a national pharmacare plan delivered.

Does my colleague and the Conservatives support a national pharmacare plan so that people like Linda Nickerson, her husband and her family are able to buy the medicine they need?

• (2010)

Mr. David Sweet: Mr. Speaker, my own sister had C. difficile and was at death's door at one time. She needed an experimental drug that cost \$5,500 per dose. She was fortunate that the drug company gave her special access to it, but it could have gone the other way, so I absolutely agree with my colleague.

I want to take the opportunity just to say one more thing. Since I have been elected, this House has not taken advantage of the power of committees. One of the things we could do on a pharmacare program would be to call all the provincial health ministers before a parliamentary committee and get the input from the provinces that actually deliver health care. Some of the provinces have a drug plan. It would help us make sure we come up with a way that no one would fall through the cracks, one which was fiscally responsible and made sure every dollar was spent well and went to those people who needed the help. It would be an excellent way for a committee to work and bring about a plan that would be beneficial, would not encroach on provincial jurisdictions and at the same time, would make sure all Canadians have access to the drugs they need to stay healthy.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment, as a first-term parliamentarian, to thank each of the hon. members who shared their remarks with us this evening, at the end of their distinguished parliamentary careers. There were many life lessons in those comments. There were many words of wisdom, a few funny stories

and indeed things that I hope to be able to reflect on and learn from with multiple mandates in this chamber. However, as members know, that is up to our residents so I look forward to a vigorous campaign this summer and into the fall.

It is the great honour of my life to serve in this chamber and to represent the residents of Edmonton Centre. Therefore, tonight I would like to share my reflections on Bill C-97 and, more particularly, how this 2019 budget says very clearly that our government, budget 2019 and I are here for Edmonton.

I want to start with those people who paved the way for us. I want to start with the seniors and to acknowledge the tremendous sacrifice that seniors have made to build up our communities, to build up our country and, in my case, to build up the city of Edmonton. I honour and respect the wealth of knowledge that they carry with them and the experience and the skills that they continue to contribute and that we want to see them contributing today.

In budget 2019, we recognize the contribution that seniors have made to Canada and we are returning the favour by investing in them. Budget 2019 would help to support their active participation in society, including through work, and would smooth the transition to retirement for seniors when they choose to leave the workforce. I have seen the very good work that the horizons program for seniors has done to reduce social isolation.

I can see the work that we have done to make sure that seniors are able to retain more of the income they now spend. Seniors asked me at the doors why we were clawing back some of the money that they make when they go to work at the Walmart or their kids' school. They asked why we were taking some of that money and we listened. The Minister of Employment, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and the Minister of Seniors were very clear. Now seniors will not pay tax on the first \$5,000, it is not going to be clawed back from their GIS and 50% of the next \$10,000 will also be exempt. That is \$7,500 on the \$15,000 that seniors make that will now be in their pockets.

[Translation]

Unfortunately, some seniors are penalized. When they try to keep working, they see significant cuts to their benefits. That is why we listened to seniors and changed the program.

[English]

As I mentioned, that is why we are making changes to the GIS allowance benefit. It would begin in the July 2020 to July 2021 benefit year.

[Translation]

Our government respects seniors. Seniors are respected in the budget. We listened to them and we took action.

*Government Orders**[English]*

On innovation and jobs, our government and I are building, together with western Canadians, a strong and competitive west by focusing on business development, innovation and community development. We have pledged to do that by increasing support to Western Economic Diversification Canada with a \$100-million increase over three years to increase its programming across western Canada. That means more jobs and more investment in companies. It means more companies will be able to scale up in Edmonton, in Red Deer, in Calgary and across the west.

We have also provided \$100 million to the Clean Resource Innovation Network that will help make Alberta's oil and gas even greener and even cleaner.

As members know, when tragedy strikes every second counts, and that makes helicopters an indispensable tool for getting people the care they need quickly and efficiently, which is especially true across such a vast region as western Canada. Since 1985, STARS air ambulance, known as Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service, has provided rapid and specialized emergency helicopter ambulance service to patients who are critically ill or injured in communities across Manitoba, British Columbia and Alberta.

STARS has contributed to saving hundreds of lives and it has helped all of us in some of the worst tragedies: helping after the Pine Lake tornado in July 1999; saving people during the floods of Calgary in 2013; providing transportation away from the fires that swept through Fort McMurray in 2016; and, when the nation's heart sank at the Humboldt crash, helping get those survivors to safety.

● (2015)

Our government recognizes the vital role that STARS plays in delivering access to emergency care for the communities it serves. Our budget will put five new emergency medical helicopters in the air, with a \$65-million allocation in budget 2019, making sure that STARS can renew half of its aging fleet and continue its life-saving work.

[Translation]

One of the key aspects of this budget, and even this government, is the hard work we do on behalf of all Canadians, including LGBTQ2 Canadians.

[English]

All Canadians deserve our respect, and that includes LGBTQ2 Canadians. That is why I am so delighted to state that in budget 2019 we have included, for the first time in the history of this country, an allocation of \$20 million over two years for capacity-building and community-level work for LGBTQ2 service organizations in Canada. This means that community-based organizations that have been shut out and not able to apply to the federal government for anything, ever, will now have that opportunity, starting later this summer and into the new year.

I want to pause and thank the Minister of Finance and member of Parliament for Toronto Centre and his team for this historic investment in budget 2019. It did not have to be there, but it is there. I want to thank the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and MP for Peterborough—Kawartha and her team, because that is

the department that will flow the money. I want to thank the LGBTQ2 Secretariat that resides in the Privy Council Office. Without its steadfast work, without its coordination, this would not be possible. I want to thank my own team. To each of them, I want to say that they have made history and they will change and save lives.

Why is the pan-Canadian suicide prevention service, money that we put aside for the national suicide prevention line, so important? It is \$25 million over five years.

Earlier today, I was at something called Children First. It was a luncheon and colleagues from the other side of the aisle were also there. We each got paired up with a young person, and I was paired up with 11-year-old Ethan from PETES, an elementary school. We started chatting, in front of a hundred of his colleagues. I asked him what he likes to do. He said he was a video games guy; he likes to play, draw and dance. Then I asked him, "When you talk with your friends, what are some of the big things you want adults to fix?" He looked me straight in the eye and said, "Can you stop bullying? Can you stop people from hurting other people?" I asked if he knew someone who was bullied, and he said he was. It scared him. It ruined his life, and he was quiet for way too long. He became really depressed and had suicidal thoughts. This is an 11-year-old kid who was opening up to me in front of a hundred people at a luncheon today. He asked if we can do something to keep more kids safe.

He wanted to make sure that people would listen. He was not sure that if he told an adult, somebody would listen. The people we will employ on this pan-Canadian suicide prevention hotline will listen to people like Ethan, and that is why budget 2019 is going to make a difference in the lives of so many Canadians.

Turning to another pressing issue in Edmonton Centre, it is important that we do better for, with and by indigenous people, particularly urban indigenous communities. About 60% of indigenous people in Canada live in an urban setting, and Edmonton is home to Canada's second-largest indigenous population. That makes indigenous supports in urban settings a priority for me and for our government. We are investing in safe and culturally relevant community spaces, with \$60 million over five years to support capital infrastructure in friendship centres.

With budget 2019, our government is on track to end boil water advisories in Canada by 2021. That affects first nations people whether they are in urban settings or across the country. I attended the Kehewin First Nation sod turning in February. By January 2020, that will be the last boil water advisory for any first nation in Alberta.

Government Orders

With the minute I have left, I want to talk about why an urban riding like mine needs infrastructure. We have the youngest city in the country, with an average age of 34, which is putting me on the other side of the young age now. When a city is that young and dynamic, we need infrastructure, like transit. We have invested almost \$1 billion in the transit system that would go through my riding all the way to West Edmonton Mall and to Lewis Estates, so that parents can get home to their kids faster, so that young professionals can get to their activities after work, so that our dynamic economy can continue to grow.

In an urban riding like mine, we need to see commerce increase, and we need people to be able to get home to their families. Our government has listened. Our historic investments in infrastructure will continue, with \$16 billion a year over the next nine years. That is improving lives. It is making things better. That is why, with budget 2019, our government and I are here for Edmonton.

● (2020)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the comments my hon. colleague made was about the Canada child benefit. Bill C-97, which came through the finance committee, a committee I am privileged to serve on, included the poverty reduction strategy. For the first time in law, we will have set targets for a reduction in poverty.

We know that the best poverty reduction plan is to create jobs. Since we took office, Canadians have created over a million jobs, the majority of which are full-time. We have also implemented a number of other measures, such as the Canada child benefit, the Canada workers benefit and the 10% increase in the GIS.

Could the member for Edmonton Centre tell us how important these measures are to his constituents?

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to represent the riding of Edmonton Centre. When I go door to door and I see a small pair of shoes or a bike outside, I ask people how the Canada child benefit is benefiting them. They tell me they do not have to choose anymore between food and rent. They say their kids are in music or a sports club.

I asked for the numbers. In April 2019 alone, 7,250 payments were made to 12,300 kids, with an average payment of \$630. About \$4.6 million is going to families in Edmonton Centre every month. That is transformative to their lives, to how they run their households, to the economy of Edmonton Centre and, in fact, to the economy of the city of Edmonton.

A magical thing happens across a country, including small communities, when we take the country from 13% poverty to 9%. The economy does better, communities are healthier, families are happier and everybody benefits. That is what this government has done.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Edmonton Centre brings such passion to this. It was so good to hear the story he shared of Ethan regarding the impact of bullying and what we need to do to support mental health among all our citizens, but particularly the young people in our communities.

I would like to ask the member about homelessness and the effect of homelessness in his community. He mentioned some numbers

from Edmonton Centre. In Guelph, 13,150 payments have gone to 23,290 children, and \$7.2 million per month is coming into our community to help people in poverty.

Could he comment on the impact that could have on homelessness in his community or my community?

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development is doing exceptional work on the issue of housing. Right now, we are having an active conversation with him and the Minister of Natural Resources about how we can solve this issue for the city of Edmonton with a portfolio-based approach and focus on the 900 hardest-to-house people and their permanent supportive housing. When we have support from ministers who want to do right by the people in our communities, we can make a difference.

Edmonton leads this country in ending homelessness. About 8,000 people have been housed over the last seven years, with 5,000 more to go, 900 of whom are hard to house. When we get these 900 permanent supportive units done, we can get to the other 4,000 people. We will be the first city of our size in this country where the government will have helped to end homelessness.

● (2025)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, we are all listening very attentively to the member for Edmonton Centre.

I am curious to know whether he believes that our investments in the middle class and in helping more Canadians join the middle class explain the following facts: first, a million new jobs since 2015; second, the lowest unemployment rate since 1976; third, one of the fastest growth rates among all developed economies; fourth, a debt relative to the economy that is falling and will soon be at the lowest level in four decades; fifth, a typical middle-class family in 2019 having \$2,000 more than in 2015; and finally, the lowest level of child poverty ever seen in our country.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, I might be wise and just recap what the minister said to answer his question, because it was so well phrased.

Just this week, the IMF finally debunked trickle-down economics forever. Trickle-down economics does not work, full stop. What works is investing in people. What works is putting money in the hands of middle-class people so they can decide what is best for their families at the local level. When we combine that with making sure that families are better off by \$2,000 because of tax changes and making sure there are well-paying jobs from coast to coast to coast, our economy will perform at the top of the G7.

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As the minister and I both know, we are not fully through the recovery process in Alberta. However, promising signals are there. Of the 100,000 jobs created in the last month, 20% were in Alberta, where 12% of the population lives. That means jobs are coming back to Alberta, and our government will help bring even more of them to the people there.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to go over some things in this budget that would benefit Yukon, in particular, and then some general things that would help the Yukon, as well as all Canadians.

First, as I said earlier tonight, Canada is the only Arctic country in the world, of the eight Arctic nations, that does not have a university north of 60. This budget is historic for Canada because of the \$26 million going to Yukon College to build a science building, one of the key items that are needed. Next year, Yukon College will become Yukon university and Canada will be in line with the rest of the nations. The first course, which is not offered anywhere else and is also historic, will be a bachelor of indigenous governance. Because there are over 600 first nations in Canada, and Inuit, there will be a huge take-up on that particular course alone.

The territorial government has to deliver on education, health care, all of the things that provinces have to deliver, and there are great increases: \$47.2 million for territorial financing, \$2.3 million for health transfer and \$0.6 million for social transfer, for a total of \$50 million. Just to put that in perspective, Yukon is 1/1000th of the population, so if that were the same across the country, that would be \$50 billion. It shows strong support for the territorial government. From what I remember, the other two territories will receive even more than that.

Before I go any further, I meant to start with something unrelated to the north. I am also the chair of the Northern and Prairie Caucus, and I want to mention another very innovative thing in the budget, the money for a water institution or program in the Prairies, which is hugely forward-thinking because it affects so much. The PFRA, one of the most popular institutions in Canada, was closed a number of years ago. The Liberal member from Saskatchewan brought this idea forward, and the Minister of Finance is financing a study to look at water, which is so important in the Prairies, including flooding, drought, the glaciers being reduced, water supply, irrigation, all of those things. This is a very forward-thinking item in the budget, and I thank the member from Saskatchewan.

I also have an ask for a women's centre in Watson Lake. I know those members are in Ottawa today.

In the north, the equivalent of western diversification or the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency is called CanNor. Once again, it is receiving a great increase. We lobbied hard for this. It will receive \$75 million over five years for a diversification program. There was an increase for tourism in the north of \$5.1 million over two years. Tourism is Yukon's biggest private sector employer. The two biggest industries are tourism and mining. I treat tourism like a lost sector in Ottawa. It is much bigger than many other sectors, but over the decades, it has not nearly gotten the attention or support that it should have. We have a tremendous tourism minister now, with a new tourism strategy and great funding. I will mention more later in my speech.

I will talk about the northern trade corridors. I talked about how big \$50 million was, but the north has been assigned \$400 million in the trade corridors program, which is a massive amount. It is far more than in other parts of Canada. I apologize to other MPs here, but, as everyone in the House knows, that infrastructure is needed in the north for a small population that is spread out over more than third of Canada.

There is another huge win in the budget for the north. As I said, the biggest sector for Yukon's GDP is mining, and the mineral exploration tax credit was increased for the first time ever for five years, which everyone in rural Canada will appreciate. It has always been yearly, which made it hard for exploration companies to plan. This is so instrumental in their programs because the vast majority of them need this tax credit to do their work, as there is no good reason to invest otherwise.

• (2030)

Another huge item that affects us more in the north than others, but also affects a number of areas in Canada, is loan repayments for the negotiations of first nations self-government and land claim agreements for modern treaties. The way it used to work in the Yukon was they took 30 years to negotiate. The first nations that were negotiating did not have the money to hire lawyers and negotiators so we loaned them the money. By the time they got their land claims, they already owed a good percentage back because we had loaned them the money for the negotiators. Therefore, this budget has made a historic move of committing to reimburse the first nations that have already paid the money or pay that money for the first nations that have not yet done so. Hopefully, that will encourage more first nations in Canada to become the success stories of the modern treaties. There are a number of them across Canada, but the biggest number is in the Yukon, in my riding.

There is one other thing with respect to the north, which I do not think anyone in this House would know. In fact, very few people in my riding would know this, only scientists, but it shows the finance minister's attention to value. There is no political gain in this. Very few people know about it, but it is very important. It is called the polar continental shelf program. When people research in the north, like other university researchers, they can get the money to do the research. However, to get to the north, it costs a huge amount of money. I remember going a small distance, approximately the distance most members would travel to get here to Ottawa, which would perhaps take a couple of hours, and it cost \$5,000. Therefore, these researchers need the money to get to their location and cover what other scientists do. That is what the polar continental shelf program does. I give big kudos to the minister for that because very few people know about it.

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The general items that would help Yukoners the way they help everyone else are as follows.

The first is more money for homes and businesses to be more energy efficient. A lot of people have suggested that. It would be done through the FCM program.

Another is the increase for seniors. We have seniors projects right across Yukon and in the rural communities in Whitehorse, and we have press conferences that are so moving. The seniors benefit so much and have so much fun. It keeps them healthy and reduces the costs to government.

I said I was going to get back to tourism. For years, there has not been nearly enough money for tourism in Canada in the lost sectors. There is an increase of \$60 million this year in this budget for tourism marketing, added to the increases in previous years. That is great for me because, other than P.E.I., which is a little ahead of us, the biggest private sector proportion of our economy in the north is tourism. Therefore, that helps us more than everywhere else, but of course everywhere else in the country would benefit.

Another item a lot of people might not know about is that we can make Canada bigger. Most people think we are set at where we are at. However, we can expand the area of the continental shelf we are responsible for, but we have to do a lot of geological explorations and discovery, as well as scientific work, to determine that, which costs money. Canada, Denmark and Russia are all doing this in the same area, so we will have competition. If we did not have the science, we would not be able to compete or increase the area we have responsibility over.

In closing, because I am running out of time, there is a big increase in indigenous languages. In 2017, I think it was somewhere around \$5 million and it has been increasing every year. By 2023 or 2024, it will be up to \$116 million. Therefore, the increase from \$5 million to \$116 million really shows our commitment to how important that is to the life, strength and foundation of the culture of first nations people.

I am sorry I could not get to the environment and the 50 programs we have there, but I will leave that for the next speech.

● (2035)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for the speech he gave, which was kind of a summary of what is going on in his riding, as we are all expected to do on behalf of our constituents, asking what the budget has for our constituencies.

I noticed that he failed to mention some of the darker clouds in the budget, especially on the deficit and debt numbers as they are right now. I wonder if the member could comment on his comfort level with the government accumulating well over \$100 billion of new debt in the next few years. We are at \$705 billion right now, as the national debt stands. If we add in Crown corporation debt, we are at about \$1 trillion.

One of the most interesting things is that when the government proceeds to borrow large amounts of money on the public market, the central bank, the Bank of Canada, reaches the point where it has now started to buy mortgage bonds, widely traded mortgage bonds

on the market to fill up the balance sheet. It is unique. It is the first time in the history of Canada.

I would like to hear if the member has any concerns over the out-of-control spending, the out-of-control debt or the \$1 trillion of debt, combining the Crown corporations and the Government of Canada.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to get that question.

First of all, I would like to say that I really appreciate the member. I have been on committee with him. He has a very positive input and I like that. I also love it when the Conservatives ask about debt, because for a majority of the years they were in power, they increased that national debt. I do not know why Conservatives keep asking about things in Parliament that they did such a terrible job at. If they are against debt, hopefully they will start convincing themselves.

The other thing the member did not mention was that because of all these investments, and the finance minister always calls them investments, there is \$20 billion more to pay down that debt from revenues, because the economy is booming.

I am being cut off, so I cannot talk about more good news and things we have done. I have a long list.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague from Yukon. He touched on something that is very important to the people in my riding and people right across this country, and that is indigenous languages. The member talked about the money that the Liberals are rolling out, and the scale of the rollout, gradually building to \$116 million.

The Province of B.C. stepped in and invested \$50 million to save languages, because of the delays from the federal government to invest in languages. In fact, we are losing many native language speakers, month by month, especially the Nuu-chah-nulth people who have made it very clear that they cannot deliver the language, and extend that knowledge in that language, which helps identify who they are as a people, that is how important it is, without funding. They are looking for funding.

I was just meeting with Tla-o-qui-aht chief and council. Councillor Anna Masso says that they need money to be able to save the languages of their culture.

Will the government commit to accelerating getting that money out the door, so that we do not lose those languages from those native language speakers right now?

● (2040)

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, obviously I cannot speak to specifics, but I really thank the member for that. He expressed very well the need for this and the support for this.

Government Orders

I want to say two things, and the member will really appreciate this. We had a group of aboriginal youth, and the idea was that if they do well in school and everything, then they could spend time to build their culture with our investments, doing that later. Of course that is what a lot of people said to the youth.

However, a tremendous young aboriginal lady said, “No, it is the foundation, the language, the culture. When you have confidence in yourself built from the support for our own language, our own culture, that is what catapults you into success in your life.”

I appreciate the member's support for that.

The other thing is congratulations to everyone in this House. In this Parliament, we passed the motion from our committee to have simultaneous translation of aboriginal language in this House and in committees, which is historic. It shows young aboriginal people, who see their language in the centre of democracy for Canada, that they can go anywhere with their language and they should be proud of it.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people in Vancouver East expect their government to make life affordable, sustainable and fair for all Canadians. They expect their government to be on their side.

In Vancouver East, I have heard from my constituents time and time again that we need real measures to make life affordable for Canadians, that we need immediate and urgent actions to protect our climate and environment. On behalf of the constituents of Vancouver East, I have been strongly advocating for measures such as affordable housing, public universal pharmacare, environmental protections, climate action and tax fairness. Instead, we now have a country faced with many crises.

We have a climate crisis, where if we do not take immediate action our planet will not be inhabitable for our future generations. We have a housing crisis, where people are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and getting priced out of their own communities. We have a criminal crisis, where billions of dollars in profits from criminal acts were laundered last year in Canada. We have an opioid crisis, where Canadians are dying every day.

We have a humanitarian crisis, where so many indigenous women and girls have gone missing and are murdered. The impact of colonialism is so deep and so rooted in systemic racism and failures that the national inquiry on the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls has declared that is a genocide.

It was deeply disappointing to see how budget 2019 failed to meaningfully address our many crises, never mind the many other challenges faced by Canadians.

For many constituents of Vancouver East, the number one issue facing our generation is our climate and environmental emergency. To meet our goals under the Paris Agreement, Canada has to lower its emissions to 325 million tonnes by 2030. According to the government's own performance report, we will only get down to 500 million tonnes, which means we are not even close.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report stated last year that we have 12 years to avert climate disaster through a drastic overhaul of all our current economic systems. We now have only 11

years left to achieve this. As the clock ticks, people have been demonstrating persistently for immediate action for climate protection and the preservation of natural resources from our leaders, especially our youth, who will be most affected by the consequences of our inaction. The government has a responsibility to create the systems and frameworks to protect our environment and our future generations.

Many scientists have stated that the technology already exists that can maintain quality of life without further impacting our climate and environment. We simply need the political will and courage to change. And yet here we are, buying leaky pipelines and adopting the previous Conservative government's weak carbon emissions target, as if we do not have a climate crisis at our door.

On another critical issue, we are still waiting on government action to address our housing affordability crisis.

Housing has long been declared a basic right by the United Nations, and Canada has signed and ratified a number of international human rights treaties that identify the right to adequate housing as a fundamental human right.

In our national housing strategy, most of the funding in that new strategy had been announced years earlier and most of that funding, a full 90% of what was announced in budget 2017, has been off-loaded for spending after the next election. Even at that, the vast majority of that funding will not flow until 2024. It is a cynical communications strategy that plays politics with people's real struggles.

The government, in an attempt to inflate the result of its limited housing programs, has even resorted to double-counting the results for “rhetorical advantage”. Instead of playing numbers games, what we need is for the government to make real investments now. To that end, the NDP is calling for a commitment of 500,000 units of affordable housing across Canada.

In addition, despite decades of promising a national pharmacare program, after being lobbied by big pharma 680 times, the government has once again let big pharma win the day.

I recently met an individual who told me that she is taking her daily medication every other day in an effort to save money. This is wrong. No more excuses. Canadians need and deserve comprehensive public universal pharmacare coverage now.

● (2045)

On a related matter, we also need accountability for the opioid crisis. While the U.S. has successfully taken on big pharma for misbranding OxyContin with the intent of defrauding and misleading, here in Canada, the government is refusing to take action. Instead, budget 2019 continues with the blanket tax break for the richest corporations.

Government Orders

Tax havens are still in place and will continue to take over \$16 billion every year from much needed programs for all Canadians, and of course, big oil continues to receive subsidies. In fact, the “2019 Spring Reports of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development” was highly critical of the government's accounting of tax and non-tax subsidies for the fossil fuel industry.

As we now know, 47 billion dollars' worth of profits from criminal acts was laundered last year in Canada. It is extremely disturbing that money laundering has so extensively permeated the country. Equally disturbing is the fact that the report by Dr. Peter German, in B.C., revealed that no federal resources are being used to tackle money laundering. Literally, in the federal money laundering unit, no one is working on the issue of money laundering. This explains why there are so few prosecutions and convictions in money laundering cases.

During last year's statutory review by the finance committee of the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act, numerous expert witnesses agreed that to combat tax evasion and money laundering, the federal government needed to work with the provinces to establish a central public registry that would provide the identity of the beneficial owners of corporations and trusts. The Honourable David Eby, Attorney General of B.C., argued that this kind of registry is needed, in part by citing a study from Transparency International Canada. The study showed that it is impossible to determine the true owners of more than half the real estate properties for sale.

Denis Howlett, of Canadians for Tax Fairness, emphasized that the registry must be “in an open, searchable format”. Barrister and solicitor Mora Johnson added that a transparent public register would enable those searching the database to track the most common methods taxpayers use to avoid paying their fair share of taxes and to find individuals involved in money laundering. However, when all was said and done, the Liberals and Conservatives chose to join forces and ignore the recommendation of the majority of witnesses that a public register be established.

I also strongly believe that we need to increase oversight of home sales to ensure that sellers are not falsely reporting their secondary investment properties as primary residences, as this rule-skirting allows people to avoid paying capital tax gains.

I raised this issue when I was still the MLA for Vancouver-Mt. Pleasant. One way to address this is to ensure that proof of residency through income tax filing is provided at the completion of the sale transaction. With increased oversight and crackdowns on this behaviour, the increased tax revenue could be set aside in an earmarked fund dedicated to increasing the affordable housing stock in Canada.

Canada needs to put significant resources and effort into law enforcement, prosecution and adjudication to effectively tackle this problem. We can do this. We need to do this.

I have gone on also about the immigration issues that call for the government to not jam through the refugee determination process in this budget omnibus budget bill. The Liberals refuse to listen and are going ahead with it. Experts have already called on the government to stop this now. It would put people at risk, and most particularly, it would put women and girls at risk. For a feminist government, this is

not acceptable. It still has a chance to do that. I hope that the government will listen to the experts.

• (2050)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in her speech, the member talked about housing and how some of it was a future-focused investment. Within my riding, we have four projects I am currently working on. One is a seniors housing project as a co-investment. It is part of the \$40-billion, 10-year plan. In my community, we are looking at a \$36-million project, 85% of which could be funded through the co-investment fund. We are working through city council and with our counties on this exciting project. Also, there are another eight homeless units going above a shelter downtown. We just finished financing a study on that and are moving through city council with that as well.

Could the hon. member mention how important it is to work with our local municipal councils and our federal government to get these important projects going in our communities?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, in the province of British Columbia, the NDP B.C. government is doing its best to actually invest in affordable housing, unlike its predecessor, the Liberal government. In 16 years in government, it did not produce the necessary housing to address the housing crisis we face in British Columbia.

Of course, the federal Liberal government pulled out of the national affordable housing program back in 1993. This country lost more than half a million units of affordable housing as a result of that. This program the current government has introduced will barely catch up.

On the eight units of shelter the member mentioned, I have to tell members that I do not even have to walk one block in my community to find eight people who are homeless right now, today. It is insufficient for what is happening.

The government members can pat themselves on the back, but the truth is, if they walk down the streets in my community, they will see the crisis every day, and they will feel the urgency that we need to take action now. Local governments and the City of Vancouver want to act. Mayor Kennedy Stewart has already put that on the record and has welcomed the federal government to come to the table, put real money on the table and get it done.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleague sits on the immigration committee, and she made comments in her speech about some of the immigration sections that were kind of snuck into this large omnibus budget bill. I would like to ask her about one aspect of those changes.

One thing I hear from people I talk to about immigration, whether I am in Brampton, in my own riding or in other parts of the country, is concern about shoddy immigration consultants. I know that my colleagues from Brampton North and Brampton West just love it when I visit their ridings.

Government Orders

When people receive advice from shoddy immigration consultants, there is a concern about the impact that has on their lives if they act on that advice and it has negative consequences for them.

There is some discussion in the budget about changing the process of regulation, but what we heard at committee was that those changes really are a rebranding of an existing body and that there are some big gaps there that I think the opposition members share concerns about.

I wonder if the member can talk a little more about the failure of the government to actually address this issue of shoddy advice from some immigration consultants.

• (2055)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right. Our committee on immigration actually studied this issue at length. It is the only study that produced a report where all parties unanimously supported the recommendations.

There was a recommendation to say that there needs to be government regulation of consultants in the immigration sector and that the time for self-regulation has come to an end, precisely because of the many problems that exist. People are ripped off, and they have no recourse. They are afraid to go forward with a complaint, because they are afraid it will impact their immigration application process, yet the government refused to accept the recommendation from the committee. It was a unanimous recommendation.

The government has now jammed into the budget bill this new regulatory process. It basically used the same people who had been doing this work, gave it a new name as a college, expanded its powers and said, "Here you go."

I fear that this is not going to be sufficient to address the issue. I fear that the people who are going to be hurt are the very people who need the government to take action to protect them.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have a few minutes to join in this debate tonight and to talk about the issues that matter to my community and to all Canadians.

I must say to my colleague from Vancouver East that the reason Canada now will have a national housing strategy and that the government is investing millions of dollars, in co-operation with other communities and other partners, is the very issue of housing my colleague mentioned. It is a serious issue across Canada. We are not just talking about the homeless. We are talking about seniors who cannot sell their houses because they have nowhere to go, and they are struggling as it is. There are a lot of people who are struggling and looking for housing. I hope that the way we are doing it, under our new national housing strategy, is going to help decrease the number of homeless people. More important, it is to help people find alternative forms of housing compared to what they currently have.

As we all know, Canadians made a choice in the last election. We all worked hard. We provided a platform that provided hope, hard work and opportunity. Canadians gave us the trust and the opportunity. I believe we have worked extremely hard over the last

three and a half, almost four, years to make a difference. We have created over a million jobs. Canadians are working.

I can remember how many times I would be canvassing and door-knocking in the last many years and listening to people who were out of work. There were no employment opportunities for them. We have the lowest unemployment rate since the 1970s. That is a great thing. Sure we take credit for it. Maybe others could take credit for it too. All I know is that I am happy to know that Canadians are working. They are feeling successful. They have money they are able to invest in housing. They are able to invest in their children's education, and that is an important thing for all of us. That is why we are parliamentarians and why we come here. We want to invest in our country, and we want to see the government producing policies that matter to people.

The first-time homebuyer incentive will certainly help a lot of young people in their mid-thirties who are having significant difficulty just getting into the housing market. Once they can get into the housing market and stay employed, they will have lots of opportunity to build equity in that house and then can later on move into a larger house as their family grows.

Another way we are looking at helping people is with the Canada training benefit, to help working Canadians find the time to change careers. I have lots of people in the riding of Humber River—Black Creek who are in jobs they are not particularly happy in. The Canada training benefit we have introduced in this budget would give people the opportunity to change jobs and get into something they truly believe in and really want to do.

As we continue to invest in people, we are investing in full-time private jobs. That is what people have, and that is what we want to see.

When we talk about Humber River—Black Creek, we can talk about the over 300,000 children who are no longer in poverty and the thousands of seniors who now have other opportunities before them. If they choose to work, they can earn more money without it being taxed back. That is an important part of it.

Trying to find a house, trying to get a home and trying to get a job are all critically important as we move forward in this new world we live in. A more flexible and increased homebuyers plan will mean that Canadians can withdraw an additional \$10,000 from their RRSPs. Before this budget, it was \$25,000. Now people can withdraw \$35,000 to use as a down payment.

By cracking down on the people who break the rules, we are trying to make housing affordable for everyone else. The increased funding for a rental construction financing initiative would help build thousands of new rental units all across the country.

We talk about seniors and the fact that we are maintaining the age of retirement at age 65. We are also encouraging our seniors to remain active by investing in a variety of programs, such as new horizons.

One of the great things we did in this term of Parliament was establish a Minister of Seniors. She is doing a wonderful job making sure that the issues of seniors are front and centre for all of us in the House, not just on this side of the House. Seniors will benefit all across our cities.

I appreciate having a moment or two to speak to this very important budget. I look forward to having another opportunity in the days to come.

• (2100)

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to correct the record from earlier to include the name Lily Mesh in my speech in thanking my staff. I obviously had a moment of forgetfulness.

The Speaker: It may not be what we consider a valid point of order, but it is an important point to make.

It being 9 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

[*Translation*]

The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 2 to 17. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division on this motion will also apply to Motions Nos. 2 to 17.

[*English*]

The question is on Motion No. 18. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 19 to 33. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

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The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 18 stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 19 to 33.

The question is on Motion No. 34. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 35 to 43. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 34 stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 35 to 43.

• (2105)

[*Translation*]

The question is on Motion No. 44. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 45 to 51, 53 and 54. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division on this motion will also apply to Motions Nos. 45 to 51, 53 and 54.

[*English*]

The question is on Motion No. 52. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Government Orders

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 52 stands deferred.

[*Translation*]

The next question is on Motion No. 55. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

• (2110)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 55 stands deferred.

[*English*]

The question is on Motion No. 56. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 57. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 56 stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motion No. 57.

• (2115)

[*Translation*]

Normally at this time, the House would proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at report stage of the bill. However, pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 28, the recorded divisions stand deferred until Wednesday, June 5, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

* * *

CRIMINAL RECORDS ACT

Hon. Mélanie Joly (for the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness) moved that Bill C-93, An Act to provide no-cost, expedited record suspensions for simple possession of cannabis, be read the third time and passed.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to start off the debate at third reading of Bill C-93. This measure will make the pardon process simpler and quicker for Canadians convicted only of simple possession of cannabis. This is the next logical step in our efforts to establish a safer and more efficient system for cannabis.

[*English*]

During the last election, we committed to legalizing and regulating cannabis. We did that last fall. At that time, we committed to establishing a way for people to get their records pardoned with no waiting period or application fee. Now we are on the cusp of passing legislation to do just that.

I am very appreciative of the members of Parliament who have participated in the debate on the bill in the chamber. I would especially like to thank all the members of the public safety committee for their usual thorough analysis. My thanks go out as well to the witnesses and to those who provided written briefs.

Ordinarily, to apply for a pardon, people have to serve their full sentence, wait five or up to 10 years, collect and submit police and court records, and pay a \$631 application fee. People also have to convince a member of the Parole Board that they meet certain subjective criteria, namely, that they have been of good conduct, that the pardon would give them a measurable benefit and that granting them a pardon would not bring the administration of justice into disrepute.

It is an expensive and time-consuming process, but people go through it because of how valuable a pardon really is. The public safety committee has studied pardons at length, not only in the context of this bill, but as part of a broader study initiated by Motion No. 161 from the member for Saint John—Rothesay.

During that study, a witness from the Elizabeth Fry Society said that a pardon is like “being able to turn that page over” and allows people “to pursue paths that were closed to them.” A witness from the John Howard Society testified that pardons “allow the person to be restored to the community, as a contributing member without the continuing penalization of the past wrong.”

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Getting a pardon means that when a person undergoes a criminal records check, it comes up empty. That makes it easier to get a job, get an education, rent an apartment, travel, volunteer in a community and simply live life without the burden and the stigma of a criminal record.

Clearly, now that possession of cannabis is legal, people who have been convicted of nothing but that should be able to shed their criminal records. Given the reality that the prohibition of cannabis had disproportionate impacts on marginalized communities, it is important for the process to be as simple, straightforward and accessible as possible.

That is why, with Bill C-93, we are taking the unprecedented step of completely eliminating the \$631 application fee and completely eliminating the waiting period. We are also completely eliminating the possibility that the Parole Board could deny such an application on the basis of subjective criteria like good conduct.

Also, thanks to an amendment at committee from the member for Toronto—Danforth, people will be able to apply even if they have outstanding fines associated with their cannabis possession conviction.

● (2120)

Due to an amendment we voted on at report stage yesterday, people whose only sentence was a fine will not be required to submit court documents as part of their application. That is because the main purpose of court documents for those applicants would be to show that the fine was paid, and that just will not matter anymore. Taken together, these measures remove many of the expenses and obstacles that could otherwise prevent people from getting pardons and moving on with their lives.

I was glad to see that the bill received overwhelming support from hon. members in the House yesterday. We have a process that will be created by Bill C-93 that is simple and straightforward without unnecessary obstacles placed in the path of applicants.

One of the issues that has come up over the course of the study of Bill C-93 is the question of why it proposes an application-based system. Some have asked why not just do it like some California municipalities and erase all the records with the press of a button? We do have an electronic police database of criminal records here in Canada, however, that database does not contain enough information to allow for a proactive amnesty.

For one thing, it generally does not contain information related to summary conviction offences, which is how cannabis possession is most often charged. And for another, it generally does not say whether a person possessed cannabis or an entirely different substance.

Information is entered into the database by individual police officers right across the country. Most of the time for a drug possession charge, the officer just enters “possession of a controlled substance”. It could be cannabis but it also could be cocaine.

To get the details and to find out about summary convictions as well as indictable offences, police and court documents have to be checked. Unlike in California, those documents are kept by many different jurisdictions. They are housed in provincial and municipal

repositories across the country, each with its own individual record-keeping system.

Many Canadian jurisdictions have not digitized their records. They exist in boxes and filing cabinets in the basements of local courthouses and police stations. Without applications that enable the Parole Board to zero in on the relevant documents, it would take a huge amount of staff and many years to go through it all. Quite simply, a flick of a switch option that we have seen in California would be wonderful and we would like nothing better than to do just that. In Canada however, that is simply not physically possible in any reasonable time frame. Nevertheless, we are certainly aware of the importance of making the application system under Bill C-93 as simple and accessible as we possibly can.

The public safety committee has made recommendations to continue seeking ways of further reducing the cost to applicants. We have responded with a report stage amendment removing the need for court records for some applicants, and we will keep working to this end.

The committee also encouraged the Parole Board to explore options for moving towards a more digitized system capable of receiving applications electronically, something particularly important for Canadians in rural areas.

● (2125)

For the reasons I mentioned earlier, enabling a truly electronic system would involve technological enhancements not only at the Parole Board but in provinces, territories and municipalities as well. That is a considerable undertaking, but I think we all know that one day it must be done. Our grandchildren should not be breathing the dust off the paper records that we use today. Therefore, I agree with the committee's recommendation to make that advancement happen sooner rather than later.

In the meantime, the Parole Board is taking a number of steps to simplify the application process in other ways. It is simplifying its website and application form. It is creating a dedicated, toll-free phone number and an email address to help people with their applications. It is developing a community outreach strategy with a particular focus on the communities most affected by the criminalization of cannabis to make sure that people know about this new expedited process and how to access it, because accessibility is the most important element of this. The goal is for as many Canadians as possible to take advantage of this opportunity to clear their criminal records and to move on with their lives. It is to their benefit and to the benefit of all of us that they be able to do so.

I would like to conclude by reminding the House just how far the cannabis file has come during this Parliament, from the blue ribbon panel chaired by Anne McLellan, to the massive cross-country consultations in communities from coast to coast to coast, to the passage of Bill C-45 and Bill C-46, both of which received extensive study in both chambers of Parliament, and the coming into force of Bill C-45 this past October.

Government Orders

We legalized and regulated cannabis, as promised, with the goal of keeping it out of the hands of children and keeping profits out of the hands of criminals, and early signs are encouraging. In the first three months of 2019, according to Statistics Canada, the criminal share of the overall cannabis market dropped to just 38%, which is down from 51% over the same period a year before. Reporting on those numbers recently in *L'actualité* magazine, journalist Alec Castonguay said, "Organized crime no longer has a stranglehold on the cannabis market. It is in decline".

The prohibition of cannabis was counterproductive. It was a public policy failure. The new regime we put in place last October is already showing encouraging signs, and Bill C-93 is the logical next step. I encourage all hon. members to join with the government to pass this bill so that the Senate can begin its consideration, and so that Canadians can begin benefiting from this new simplified, expedited pardon process as soon as possible.

• (2130)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-93 recommends a no-cost pardon and waiver for cannabis convictions, but there are still going to be potentially those who have fines still owing. I want to know if the government has consulted with the provinces where those fines would be owed and roughly what that cost would be.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Mr. Speaker, that is indeed one of the challenges, because we wanted to eliminate administrative fines related to these same convictions. However, not all of the fines are owed to the federal government. All the federal government can do is wipe its fines, but it has to discuss this with provinces and municipalities and encourage them to do the same. That kind of discussion is ongoing, but it will take a while to come to an understanding of how provinces and municipalities can actually contribute to this process.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Vancouver East, I have been receiving correspondence from my constituents who raise this issue. They are particularly concerned that Bill C-93 does not go far enough and that what is needed is for the criminal records to be expunged. They have said very clearly that record suspensions do not erase a convicted offence but merely set it aside. Therefore, without an expungement, individuals convicted of possession remain vulnerable to having their convictions reinstated. My constituents are saying we should be permanently eliminating rather than merely suspending the harms that stem from a previous cannabis conviction. To that end, I know the NDP tried to move such amendments at committee, which the government rejected.

I think there is one more chance to do the right thing here. Will the parliamentary secretary consider what I think thousands of Canadians are calling for, which is for the government to do it right and move forward with expungement?

• (2135)

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Mr. Speaker, this really was a very key part of the debate. We came up against a couple of challenges that would make that avenue particularly difficult, one of them being the technological challenges, in that all of our records are not held at the federal level in a federal database. Many of them are held at

provincial and municipal levels and are not digitized. Therefore, we have no way of knowing where all those convictions are.

For us to go and do that, we would have to go and search for each and every one of those records. Some of those people might have already passed on. Some of these records are so old they could be from 50 years ago and that would take a lot of time and staff effort. We thought that if we made it inexpensive, easily available and we worked with the non-government organizations on the ground that work with these communities that were particularly hit with these kinds of convictions we could do as good a job by using an application method.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of concerns about the pardons and the way they are structured in the bill. One thing I tried to do at committee, which was based on advice from a number of witnesses, is this. There is a condition that a pardon cannot proceed until the sentence has been fulfilled or the fine has been paid. The people who are the most marginalized would be those very people who cannot afford to pay the fine so the pardon becomes out of reach. I do not know if we can pursue this at this stage. I tried to at committee.

However, I would like the hon. parliamentary secretary's thoughts on whether we can deal with this so that the people who are in the greatest need of having the pardon applied are able to get a job to pay the fine to have this limitation removed.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Mr. Speaker, again the challenge comes down to whether those fines are owed to the federal government or not. If they are owed to the federal government, then it is easy for us to say those fines do not need to be paid. If they are fines owed to another level of government or another jurisdiction, then it is not as easy for us to forgive those fines. However, if the fines are only owed to the federal government, those fines will be forgiven and that person can proceed with the pardon.

However, when a criminal records check is done on people who have been pardoned, those fines at the provincial or municipal levels may not even appear. Therefore, the federal government is forgiving those federal fines that need to be paid, but there is a challenge at the provincial and municipal levels.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate our hon. colleague's candour and honesty in answering questions.

One of the questions I have goes back to the fines that are owed, specifically in terms of municipalities. The number one cost to municipalities is policing. With the passing of Bill C-45, there have been additional costs that have been downloaded to the municipalities. They are still trying to work out how they recover those added costs between the provincial governments. There is still a lot of what-ifs up in the air. One of the ways municipalities would be able to actually mitigate some of the costs would be the fines that would be owed to them through these convictions.

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If they are left owing, there is still another what-if. Is the federal government prepared to step in and assist these municipalities in terms of the offloading, paying or assisting with the payment of those fines?

● (2140)

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Mr. Speaker, I believe how it would work, at a provincial or municipal level, is that payment of those fines, if they are not granted amnesty on those fines, would be through civil recourse.

I know that the federal government wants to help the provinces and the municipalities succeed in this, because we do want this pardon process to be a success. We believe it is really important for our society as a whole, not just for the individuals who are carrying this burden. There have been discussions and I imagine there will be more in the future.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for people watching, I just want to make a point about pardons and expungement in Canada.

If a person has a record in the United States, it does not really matter what Canada does, expunge or pardon, they still have a record. The Americans do not often erase that. Expungement, in some cases, could actually hurt a Canadian. When Americans call Canada to say that this person had a record and ask whether it is still a problem, and Canada says that we cannot find any records of it, because it was expunged, the Americans may say that person has committed a crime and there is no evidence that it is not a problem.

If the crime is pardoned, Canada can then say that it was pardoned and it is not a problem for us anymore. That may help the person who has had a problem with the United States records, which they can keep forever. They might be better off.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Mr. Speaker, I would have to agree with my hon. colleague.

When people are entering another country, they might not be asked if they have a criminal conviction. They could be asked if they had ever been in possession of cannabis. That would actually make that difficult as well. If people have a pardon, they actually would have paperwork to prove that they have been pardoned. There is no guarantee that this would make a difference to the border officer, but they would have that paperwork.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-93, an act to provide no-cost, expedited record suspensions for simple possession of cannabis.

Before talking about Bill C-93, I have to say a few words about Bill C-45, because Bill C-93 builds on it. One of the Prime Minister's rare accomplishments from the past four years is a completely botched bill. From the start, Bill C-45, the Cannabis Act, was not well received, especially because of the way the bill was originally put together. Bill C-45 was poorly received because marijuana legalization was by far the most pressing national issue for the Prime Minister. Instead of addressing organized crime, violence against women, or the economy, the government chose to focus on Bill C-45 to legalize marijuana. It was very urgent.

In her speech, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness mentioned information obtained from journalist Alec Castonguay of *L'actualité*. According to Mr. Castonguay, organized crime has experienced a drop in sales. I wonder if my colleague could provide more information that could be verified with police forces like the RCMP and the Canadian Police Association, which are on the ground and must receive much more technical information that is also available to the government. Unfortunately, we cannot consult that information. Mr. Castonguay is an excellent journalist, but I think the government could provide us with more specific information.

What mattered most to the Prime Minister was giving Canadians from coast to coast to coast access to cannabis. The House may recall that that was his first campaign promise. Now that Bill C-45 has become law, the Prime Minister is realizing that he forgot a step. That is why, at the end of this session of Parliament, we now have to study Bill C-93.

In 2015, the Prime Minister promised an open and transparent government. He promised to save Canada from the bad Stephen Harper. He made many, many promises. Many Canadians put their trust in him and voted for him. Some of them believed so strongly in his message of hope that they decided to run in the last election "because it is 2015". Today, in 2019, after becoming disillusioned and witnessing the Prime Minister's many mistakes, many Canadians and even some Liberal members have basically thrown in the towel.

Canadians are tired of seeing the Prime Minister dance around when it comes time to work. They are frustrated with seeing the Prime Minister talk when he should be taking action. They are worried that the Prime Minister is welcoming terrorists, contract killers and other criminals without lifting a finger to help victims of human trafficking and our veterans who gave everything for Canada. They are sick of seeing the Liberals go after law-abiding citizens and ignoring organized crime and ISIS traitors. They are sick of it.

They saw the Prime Minister go after women in his cabinet because they resisted. What was their crime? They simply wanted to obey the law.

Canadians and the Liberal MPs who have decided not to come back are sick of seeing the Prime Minister refuse to take responsibility for his blunders, and this October, Canadians will take action. A number of Liberal members have already taken action, in fact. Several have quit the caucus, and others have already announced that they are leaving politics. The *Toronto Star* is already touting a potential replacement for the position of leader of the Liberal Party. They are sick of all this too, but that is another story.

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Bill C-93 would change the pardon process and eliminate fees for Canadians previously convicted of marijuana possession. With cannabis legal as of October 2018, this bill would help Canadians who were convicted of something that is now legal by allowing them to apply for a record suspension without being subject to the usual waiting period or fees. Offenders usually have to wait five to 10 years after serving their sentence, depending on the type of conviction, and the application fee is \$631.

● (2145)

This legislative measure seems to be another proposal that was hastily brought forward for political purposes. It is obvious that the Liberals did not take the time to do a thorough analysis. As it stands, this bill proposes a new type of record suspension that cannot be easily revoked and that can be granted automatically without any knowledge of an individual's past history. As with Bill C-45, we are committed to fixing this bill in October, when we form the next government. We want to ensure that we maintain the integrity of our record suspension system.

We support the idea of an expedited pardon process, but we want to ensure that it is a fair process. That is why we proposed amendments. We very quickly realized that the bill could be improved. However, the Liberals have a majority in committee and in the House, so they no longer feel the need to listen to Canadians. For example, we proposed that applications for a record suspension be submitted through an online portal. My colleague spoke about this earlier, and I would like to thank her, because this is new to me. The Liberals have finally listened to the Conservative MPs, but the fact remains that the amendment was rejected. Not only would this measure have saved taxpayers money, but it would also have made it easier for Canadians to apply.

We proposed a measure to allow applicants whose records were destroyed to swear an affidavit explaining their situation and certifying that they are eligible. This would have made the process even more fair. The Liberals agreed to this amendment in committee but changed their minds at report stage and decided to reject it. Once again, I remain doubtful.

Why would they refuse a measure proposed by the Conservatives that would help the public? We do not agree much on the process overall, but we tried to improve it. Our Liberal colleagues agreed with this change in committee. Why, then, did the government reject the idea at report stage? We still do not understand why this amendment was rejected.

We also proposed to restore the Parole Board's discretion to conduct inquiries to determine the applicant's conduct since the date of the conviction. Obviously, someone who has committed other crimes since the original conviction should not be eligible for a pardon like someone else who did not commit another crime. The Liberals also rejected this proposal.

Another one of our amendments would have restored the Parole Board's discretion to conduct an inquiry into all of the factors it could consider to determine whether granting a record suspension would bring the administration of justice into disrepute. The Liberals obviously defeated this amendment.

Our proposals were therefore serious and balanced, but the Liberals, with their majority on the committee and in the House, did what they wanted. They agreed to only one of our amendments, the one requiring the board to include a review of the law's success rate and the associated costs in its annual report. Of course that was only to appease us. I thank them, but it is still a little insulting to have those amendments rejected, considering how we worked in committee.

Ideological fights often erupt in the House. The NDP thinks one way, the Liberals think a certain way, the Conservatives think a certain way and the Green Party thinks a certain way. However, during the committee study, we managed to set ideology aside and come up with technical amendments that had nothing to do with ideology. If we try to co-operate and that does not work, the members opposite should not be surprised when there is some friction on certain issues.

There are many examples to show that the Liberals do not take crime seriously. The amendments we proposed would have improved the bill's procedural fairness and given the Parole Board of Canada better tools to enforce this new law more effectively.

● (2150)

As currently worded, this bill allows for a pardon before the fines are even paid. That seems to be very bad accounting to me. In other words, the fines will remain on the individuals' records, but the provinces will have no way of collecting them. We see that Bill C-93 is poorly crafted, just like Bill C-45. These are aspects of a bill that was rushed in order to fulfill a promise at the last minute. In her speech, the parliamentary secretary said that all this would be fixed later. In trying to rush things, the government is taking shortcuts.

In October, when a new Conservative government is elected, we will have to redo all this work to ensure that all the actors involved, the agencies, organizations, and the provinces, have the answers to their questions. There are many, many questions that remain unanswered.

With respect to the record suspension process, the Department of Public Safety estimates that this measure will cost roughly \$2.5 million. Jean Chrétien said that the gun registry would cost \$2 million and it ended up costing \$2 billion. We know that likely will not happen, but we know what those evaluations are worth.

Moreover, while approximately 250,000 people have previously been charged with simple possession of marijuana in Canada, officials estimate that only 10,000 people will apply, possibly less. That is puzzling. To come up with the figure of \$2.5 million, it was estimated that this would cost the government \$250 per person. That is less than the current amount of \$631 per application because there will be no need to do a background check, as is normally the case.

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That being said, the 10,000-people estimate does not seem very high to me. At first, the information we had indicated that 500,000 people had been charged with simple possession of marijuana. In the end, officials told us that it was in fact only 250,000. It is also surprising that they expect only 10,000 people to apply. Based on various assessment criteria, the government does not expect more people than that to apply for a pardon.

The other option, expungement, would involve minimal cost, but it would not apply to individuals charged with more serious offences who negotiated lesser charges or who were in possession of a quantity above the current legal limit. That could be problematic. Judges, Crown prosecutors and the police negotiate deals with individuals who are guilty of other crimes to speed up the process, but if we do not take people's criminal records into account in the pardon process, they could be let off the hook for a different crime.

In that regard, Tom Stamatakis, president of the Canadian Police Association, said the following:

In those circumstances, it is possible that both the Crown and the court may have accepted the plea agreement based on the assumption that the conviction would be a permanent record of the offence and would not have accepted the lesser charge if they knew this would be cleared without any possibility of review at a future date.

That is why, after hearing the testimony of the Canadian Police Association, we proposed an amendment to the bill to delete clause 6.

In his haste to deliver on his self-imposed legislative agenda, the Prime Minister failed to consider the many concerns of municipalities, law enforcement, employers, scientists and doctors regarding the legalization of cannabis. Similarly, the Liberals adopted this bill related to cannabis legalization in the last few weeks of this Parliament without consulting the main stakeholders, including law enforcement.

Now that cannabis is legal, Conservatives understand that criminal records for simple possession of cannabis should not place an unfair burden on Canadians, but we will be monitoring the implementation of this bill, and we promise to assess how well it is working and how fair it is when we take office in October.

•(2155)

As with Bill C-45, the Conservatives will also amend Bill C-93 in order to ensure that it effectively provides appropriate access to no-fee record suspension. We believe that Canadians should have timely access to no-fee record suspension and we will ensure that the law upholds the integrity of the Parole Board of Canada so that Canadians can have their records suspended.

Come October, when we form the government, we will have a lot of cleaning up to do. Our priority will be the real needs of Canadians, including their safety and their prosperity. Everything we do will be for Canadians. When we go to India, it will not be to dance and wear costumes. When we go to Washington, it will be to work and to clean up the mess made of the new free trade agreement. When we invest taxpayers' money, I guarantee it will not be to reward murderers, terrorists or dictatorships that are detaining our citizens on bogus charges. We will also clean up the mess at our borders. We will prioritize new Canadians who obey Canadian laws, and we will crack down on those who cheat and jump the queue. As a government, we will show compassion to those in need, as well as

taxpayers. We will take action to improve the environment, but not by dipping into taxpayers' pockets.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to listen to a great deal of the debate that has been taking place on this issue and the whole legalization issue about cannabis. It is a major change in public policy with the way in which it has evolved to where we are today.

It is quite interesting that back in 2015 it was only the Liberal Party talking about the legalization of cannabis. The NDP wanted to decriminalize it and I think the Conservatives were somewhat for decriminalization, but not really advertising it. In fact, they were sending out a lot of misinformation about the legalization of cannabis. Now we are talking about that issue having been resolved as it is legalized.

My understanding is that the Conservative Party now supports legalization of cannabis. If that is not the case, maybe the member can provide a little bit more information on that aspect from his party. Second, if he could clearly indicate where he stands as an individual on the idea of the pardon, given the comments he just made.

•(2200)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, that was a long question, but my answer will be brief.

Regarding the legalization of marijuana, we had a debate and we voted against the bill. We had our reasons for doing so. One of the main reasons was that the bill was botched. It had nothing to do with any philosophical idea about whether cannabis should be legalized or not. The government's approach was sloppy. I would still argue that today. Certain aspects are still causing problems in our society. Police are having problems, and medical professionals are having lots of problems. That is another debate. Today we are debating pardons.

Do I support granting pardons to people who have done something that used to be a criminal offence? That is what we are debating. Some people are claiming today that we should erase the past, since those acts are no longer considered a criminal offence. Some people agree with that, while others, including myself, have certain reservations in that regard. People cannot be criminals one day but not the next. The fact remains that even in the case of simple possession of marijuana, some young people have tried marijuana and gotten caught. People can separate these things. They are not dumb. We are not talking about another crime on an entirely different level.

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Our position is as follows. We were willing to decriminalize marijuana, but we felt that legalizing marijuana was more about creating an industry that would primarily benefit the Liberals' friends. All the government's goals, such as keeping profits out of the hands of criminals, are nowhere near being met. Nothing about the health of young people has been improved in any way.

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech this evening and I thank him for shedding some new light on this debate.

The NDP thinks that this is too little too late. I know my colleague does not agree that this is too little, but we would have preferred an expungement instead of a simple record suspension. It is too late, because the government was in a rush to legalize marijuana and open shops across the country, but it forgot many things, such as prevention, public safety and the fact that the provinces and municipalities were left to deal with difficult situations with no resources. It is also too late because there are just three weeks left in this Parliament. It will be very difficult to properly bring clear legislation to fruition.

Does my colleague agree that it is too late and that the government botched this legislation, for the reasons I mentioned or for any other reasons he can think of?

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. Indeed, in all matters, there are ways of doing things.

The past four years have been intense, for example, with Bill C-45, the most botched bill that the House has ever had to deal with. It nevertheless has a big impact on Canadian society.

The same is true with Bill C-93. Time is running out. As I mentioned in my speech, we proposed simple, intelligent amendments, but the government rejected them. It is also still not listening to police officers.

Lastly, the government has had no idea what it was doing all along.

• (2205)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, began his speech by talking about all the work done by the committee.

Some of his comments are the same ones we often hear when undertaking studies in committee. The Conservative members proposed amendments during the process. Our approach is very technical. We do not play political games when we move amendments. We really try to improve the legislation and how it will apply in real life.

The member started to speak a little about how this bill was treated in committee. I would like to hear more about the Conservative amendments that were rejected.

I also think that this bill should have been introduced along with Bill C-45 and Bill C-46. In fact, the three issues should have been dealt with in an omnibus bill.

As a member of Parliament, I voted in favour of the expungement of criminal records. At the time, I believed that it would be the best

approach. Bill C-45 and Bill C-46 were passed and received royal assent, and the Liberals have had plenty of time to try to find a technical solution to the problems faced by people with a criminal record who are applying for a pardon, while addressing criminal records at the provincial and municipal levels and the associated costs.

I would like my colleague to talk about the work done in committee. Which Conservative amendments were rejected by the government, even though they would have reduced the impact on people on the ground and made this bill better?

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question.

One amendment the government agreed to covered situations where an individual who wants to apply does not have information about the arrest, such as the name of the city and the province. The documents relating to the criminal record exist only on paper, so the information might be in a drawer at some police station or courthouse. Sometimes the individual in question is somewhere else in Canada and does not have access to the documents or may not even remember where the arrest took place.

To simplify things, our amendment suggested that applicants could submit a sworn statement attesting to the details of the arrest and the individual's inability to obtain the documents. We were prepared to accept a sworn statement in order to process applications without proper documentation because accessing documents is very complicated. The Liberal committee members agreed to the amendment, but the government rejected it, and we have no idea why.

Now people have to fill out forms. Those 10,000 people with criminal records I was talking about earlier are marginalized and do not really have much in the way of resources. That makes it hard for them to know where to go to get the forms. Accessing the forms online is easier, so we suggested that systems should be digitized to improve the situation. The government rejected that idea too. If the government had agreed to that amendment, it would have made things easier.

Our requests were practical.

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House of Commons to speak to Bill C-93, an act to provide no-cost, expedited record suspensions for simple possession of cannabis.

As I mentioned earlier, I do not think this bill goes far enough. It is too little, too late. Let me explain. It is too little because this bill was not introduced until after cannabis was legalized. The government dragged its feet on record suspensions. It waited too long. The legalization of cannabis came into effect, but people still have criminal records for simple possession of cannabis. We are not talking about trafficking marijuana here, just simple possession. These people have a criminal record for simple possession, when it is currently legal to use marijuana.

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By the way, just because something is legal does not mean it is a good idea. I want to say that even though it is legal to use marijuana, it is not really a good idea to do so. I also want to say that the legislation legalizing cannabis should really have included a major public health campaign to make people aware of the effects and risks of using marijuana. Marijuana is like any other substance. It is legal to drink alcohol, for example, but it can be addictive. I know what I am talking about. I know people who are addicted to alcohol. Marijuana can also be addictive. That is obviously the case with tobacco as well, which is also a legal substance. Cigarettes are a terrible product that can be addictive. These are legal products. The government can legalize these products, but it also needs to inform the public of the risks associated with using them.

We are talking about people who have a criminal record for simple possession. This has nothing to do with trafficking. It is really about people being caught for simple possession. These people therefore have a criminal record for something that is now legal and has been legal for a few months. Drug use should never be criminalized. Instead, it should be regarded as a public health matter. I am thinking of the opioid crisis raging across Canada, for example. We should be taking a public health approach.

This bill is too late because legalization came into effect several months ago, yet we are only just debating this legislation today. This legislation allows for criminal records to be suspended. This means that criminal records are set aside, but they are not expunged.

As a result, people who are granted a record suspension will still have the sword of Damocles hanging over their heads. They will always have to wonder what might happen when they try to rent an apartment, find a job or apply to volunteer. They will be asked if they have a criminal record, and they will have to answer that their record was suspended. Their criminal record will not be completely expunged. The same will be true when they want to travel. What will happen when they want to travel? If the government really wanted to do things right, it would have passed the excellent bill introduced by my colleague from Victoria.

● (2210)

His bill was introduced a long time ago. In October 2018, my colleague from Victoria introduced a good bill. We were ready. We had done our homework. Instead of using that fine bill, the Liberals showed that had no regard whatsoever for Canadians who have a criminal record for simple possession of cannabis, something that is no longer a crime, and who face barriers to things like employment and housing.

It is far too late to wake up now. There are less than three weeks left before the end of this Parliament. Now the government is waking up and introducing this bill. We are at third reading stage. We are moving quickly, but unfortunately we are cutting corners. We are not being thorough, and it is truly worrisome.

There is a not-for-profit organization in my riding or in the central Quebec region that does very important work. As others have mentioned, the problem with the Liberal philosophy is the lack of emphasis on resources.

I would like to talk about an extremely important resource. The organization is called Action Toxicomanie. This community-based

organization was founded in 1991. It provides services in the central Quebec and Drummond region.

The organization serves a significant number of young people through its addiction prevention programs, which are also offered in schools. Action Toxicomanie is a community-based not-for-profit organization that promotes healthy living and addiction prevention and is geared to young people from 10 to 30. As I was saying, the organization takes a holistic approach that focuses on promoting physical and mental health as well as social skills development. Interventions can be individual or group-based and seek to develop individual knowledge and abilities.

Action Toxicomanie's website details the organization's mission, which is to prevent addiction, provide accurate information about substances and related addictions, support the development of social skills, inform and support parents and adults, intervene with teens and adults with emerging substance abuse issues, and support teens with clear substance abuse issues and refer them to specialized services.

I would like to congratulate the entire Action Toxicomanie team on the excellent work they are doing with our young people. As I have always said, resources like this are extremely important. When the government legalized cannabis, it put the cart before the horse. In their rush to legalize cannabis, the Liberals forgot to safeguard public health in this country, implement a comprehensive public education and prevention campaign, provide provinces and municipalities with the right resources to prepare for this major social change, and make sure organizations working to educate youth and prevent addiction were ready to deal with the change and properly equipped to go into schools and communities to inform people. That is why I find it virtually impossible to support the bill.

I just want to digress for a moment if I may. We are talking about physical and mental health. I just talked about a very good organization, Action Toxicomanie.

● (2215)

I would like to talk about the book *N'oublie jamais* by Gregory Charles, which my mother gave me. She may have been giving me a message to never forget to think about her, never forget to call her or never forget to go see her. Mothers send subtle messages like that. This book talks about Alzheimer's.

Gregory Charles comes from Saint-Germain-de-Grantham, in my riding. He grew up there. He recently visited École Jean-Raimbault in Drummondville to talk to the children about his passion, his faith in music and his strong values. He did this for the children. He came to visit the children who are studying music and spent over an hour playing music with them. I simply wanted to acknowledge the time he spent with these children.

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His book highlights the importance of hard work and strong values and talks about how crucial it is to take care of those around us. I think that is what my mother was trying to tell me when she gave me this book. I thank her for that.

I thank Gregory Charles for what he did for the community of Drummond, and I congratulate the team at École Jean-Raimbault, especially Denis Lambert, who spearheaded this initiative.

I would like to give some other examples.

When it comes to the legalization of marijuana, the government is only taking half measures. Before I talk about them, I want to give an example of another issue on which the government is only taking half measures, and that is the housing crisis.

Drummond is experiencing a housing crisis. The vacancy rate is 1.7%. The vacancy rate for three-bedroom homes is 0.4%. What is more, prices are going way up. Over 15,000 renter households in Drummondville are being forced to spend more than half of their annual income on housing. When households have to spend half of their annual income on housing, they do not have much money left over to meet their other needs.

David Bélanger, the chair of Drummond's municipal housing board, said:

When people have to spend nearly one-third of their income on housing, there are obviously other needs that are not being met. We are developing projects to create more affordable housing. The housing crisis has two dimensions, namely accessibility and affordability.

● (2220)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We are talking about pardons for simple possession of cannabis. The member is talking about the issue of housing and a housing strategy. I would ask that he be a little more relevant to the legislation before us.

The Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary is aware that the rules about relevance, one might say, are not closely observed. I trust the hon. member will over the course of his remarks address the topic and bill at hand.

The hon. member for Drummond.

[Translation]

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, I will explain the context to my hon. colleague, who was obviously not listening very carefully to my speech because I clearly said that I was going to digress a bit to explain how the pardon bill was a half measure. I was giving another example of the Liberal government's half measures. I will obviously be coming back to the subject of pardons momentarily.

I was trying to say that the government is also taking half measures with housing. It is another example. If I can finish my point, it needs to be said that one in five Canadians spends more than 50% of their income on housing. Even though the Liberal government has a national housing strategy, 90% of the funding will not come until after the next election. The government was not announcing a national housing strategy. It was making an election promise. In February 2019, the Liberal government voted against an NDP motion to act quickly and create 500,000 units of quality,

affordable housing within 10 years. The government could have taken our suggestion, and this measure would have provided some much-needed accessible and affordable housing in Drummond. Too many Canadians are spending more than one-third of their annual income on housing. Too many Canadians are spending half of their annual income on housing. They are struggling to find housing and grappling with a housing crisis. Housing is hard to come by, but affordable housing is even more difficult to find.

I want to come back to the topic at hand, the government's lack of ambition with respect to Bill C-93, an act to provide no-cost, expedited record suspensions for simple possession of cannabis. Why is there such a lack of planning and lack of ambition?

As I mentioned, in October 2018 we were ready to introduce a bill that would have completely expunged criminal records, not just suspended them. That would have reassured people who have a criminal record for simple possession of cannabis but not for drug trafficking. These were people who had a health problem and consumed a substance that, at that time, was illegal but today is legal. We had a plan.

In closing, I will talk about another example, and that is climate change. The Liberal government is implementing half measures. It will meet Stephen Harper's weak targets for 2030 a full 200 years too late. The government says that it will take action to fight climate change. It is putting a price on carbon but has left out the largest emitters.

Last Friday, we tabled the plan called the courage to act. Not only will it create jobs, but it will address climate change. This is an ambitious and courageous plan. That is what the constituents of Grand Drummond and Canadians across the country want from their government. They want ambition and courage.

Therefore, I will close my speech with a quote that sums up everything I have said about the bill:

I should first note that Bill C-93 is better than nothing. But better than nothing is a mighty low bar for our Parliament. You can do better. You must do better. Instead, I would urge a scheme of expungement along the lines already provided for in the Expungement of Historically Unjust Convictions Act.

That is what Solomon Friedman, a criminal defence attorney, said in committee to explain why this is important.

● (2225)

In closing, let me repeat his words: "But better than nothing is a mighty low bar for our Parliament."

Unfortunately, the same standard seems to apply to social housing and the environment, and that is why we need to do more and be ambitious and courageous.

[English]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, we were discussing Bill C-93, the act to provide no-cost, expedited record suspension for simple possession of cannabis, just to frame my comments.

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The practical effects on pardons and expungements are virtually identical. It is important for our constituents to know that pardoned records are sealed and segregated and they can only be reopened under extraordinary circumstances, such as committing a new criminal offence. The effect of the pardon is protected by Canada's Human Rights Act, so it is not something that can be used in the terms that he mentioned of getting rental agreements signed. A record is available when it needs to be available.

Expungement did not exist until Bill C-66 last year and really it was only intended to be allowed for criminal records of offences that can constitute historic injustices.

The separation here for our constituents to understand is that a pardon maintains a record when we need it. Could the member maybe comment on the difference between pardons and expungements?

• (2230)

Mr. François Choquette: Should we maintain our records only when we need them, Mr. Speaker?

[*Translation*]

Why would we need them? We do not need that criminal record. That is why it should be expunged. My colleague just suggested that records should be kept if they are needed, but there is no need because this substance is legal now. Criminalizing people for simple possession of cannabis was extreme in the first place.

That is why we introduced a bill. We wanted to decriminalize cannabis. It is appalling that people got a criminal record for simple possession of cannabis. That kind of record has ruined people's lives. That is why we need to move forward with this.

You may choose not to believe me. I admit I am no expert on the subject, but Solomon Friedman was absolutely right when he said that, while this bill is better than nothing, better than nothing is a mighty low bar for our Parliament.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member tried to tie in the idea of half-baked. I could tie in the idea of hypocrisy.

It is interesting to hear NDP members talk about expungement versus a pardon. In the last federal election, the NDP said they were in favour of decriminalization, so the whole issue of expungement or a pardon would not even be a part of what we have been debating today, for the NDP platform.

I am glad that the NDP members have changed their opinion. I am glad they have decided to support what Canadians have been telling the government to do and what the government has done, and that is to legalize cannabis.

Why did the NDP come to the conclusion that the government's approach to the legalization of cannabis was a much better way than what the NDP were proposing in the last federal election?

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette: Madam Speaker, I would like to reply to my colleague, who has a lot of experience in the House.

If we had decriminalized marijuana use, we would have introduced legislation to expunge criminal records, that is certain. That is what we have been saying from the beginning. We oppose the criminalization of drug use. Of course we would have expunged criminal records, but we would have done so in a structured and carefully planned manner. We would not have waited until we legalized cannabis, as the Liberals did, only to scratch our heads afterward because we had forgotten those with criminal records. We would not have then rushed a bill through the House of Commons and send it to committee, so we could finally say that we were moving forward, despite the sloppy work, less than three weeks before the end of the session. We would have done things properly.

Moreover, in October 2018, the NDP member for Victoria introduced his bill, which was already ready. Unfortunately, the government decided not to support that legislation.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Drummond, who is a strong advocate for the people of Drummond. We had never heard so much about the people of Drummondville before he came to the House. This experienced member is doing an excellent job.

I would like to ask him a question. There is a choice to be made between imposing a complicated and expensive process for granting people individual pardons and expunging people's criminal records.

If Canadians choose the NDP on October 21, when we come back to the House, would the NDP be willing to expunge all these criminal records, or will it continue to force people to go through a very complicated and expensive process to get a pardon?

• (2235)

Mr. François Choquette: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby for his excellent work, his kind words and his visits to Drummond. He came to Drummond several times to lead sessions on tax credits for people with disabilities. I thank him very much, as do the people of Drummond. Thanks to him, they ended up receiving a few thousand dollars. They were entitled to that money, but this was not well advertised by the previous governments.

The member's question is very important. Of course, if the NDP takes office in October 2019, it will remedy the current situation. The NDP will not only implement a process to permanently expunge criminal records, but it will also work on addiction issues and treat drug use as a public health issue. The NDP will be sure to organize public education and awareness campaigns and invest both the human and financial resources necessary to deal with this issue. It must be said that addictions are a serious social problem that has to be taken seriously.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have been listening to this debate and I am quite astonished. I went back and looked at the NDP platform to see what it wanted to spend in this year if it had been elected into government back in 2015. This party quite clearly must not have understood the seriousness of the housing crisis in this country because, when we look at its platform for homelessness, it was going to spend an extra \$10 million a year. That is it. I can walk through Vancouver and find \$10 million of new investment spent in that city by this government alone. We did not spend \$10 million more; we spent \$100 million more. The numbers that really get me are the three zeros for the last three years of its housing program. There are zero dollars for new affordable housing. That is how the party addressed the crisis in its platform. Thank God it did not get elected.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I know it is getting late, but I want to remind members on both sides of the House that they should not be having conversations back and forth when a parliamentary secretary, of all people, is asking a question.

The hon. member for Drummond.

[Translation]

Mr. François Choquette: Madam Speaker, it is rather interesting to see the Liberals rise in the House to demand that I not talk about social housing, even though there is a very serious housing crisis in Drummond, and then ask a question on that topic. I am happy to answer that question because, in this Parliament, we moved a motion to quickly call for the creation of 500,000 housing units. The entire country, including Drummond, is facing a housing crisis. We need to take action.

[English]

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Niagara West.

I rise today to speak to Bill C-93, an act to provide no-cost, expedited record suspensions to individuals for simple possession of marijuana. As I said last week, the bill is deeply flawed and will not help the people the Liberals have set out to help. This was clear from the limited testimony at committee, the information provided by departments and agencies and answers to our questions about the process and system.

This record suspension, much like the Liberals, is really not as advertised.

Bill C-93, based on what we heard at committee, was rushed, lacked consultations outside of the government and would fail to help those the Liberals said it would, in particular, racialized communities and those who live below the poverty line.

The Liberals suggested the bill would provide a no-cost simple process for those with convictions for simple possession of marijuana to provide a record suspension and it would remove the stigma of a criminal conviction for this offence.

After committee hearings, this bill clearly should have been called “lower cost”, not “no cost”.

No one should have been caught off guard by this legislation, least of all government departments and agencies that have been working on this for years. When the Prime Minister announced his plans for marijuana legalization in 2015, clearly some kind of amnesty or consideration would have had to take place to balance the old and the new realities. The issue was raised in the House and by media as legalization was occurring and after the legislation had passed. The government repeatedly said it would bring in amnesty after legalization.

On October 18, 2018, the Minister of Public Safety said that he would make things fairer, removing the stigma. That is why it was so confusing. No one had a clear idea of how many people would be eligible or benefit, how it would be implemented or how much it would cost. When we asked officials how many people would be eligible, officials and the minister provided a best guess. Why? It is because the work to know who would be eligible would have been a challenging and time-consuming process.

Convictions are not listed as simple possession of marijuana. In order to know who would be eligible, officials would need to know who had a record for possession of an illegal substance, which falls under a specific category, schedule II, and then which of those was the simple possession of marijuana, meaning under 30 grams. That may or may not have been listed.

According to testimony at committee, Canadian conviction records generally do not say “cannabis possession”. That is not the language used in the records. They say something like “possession of a schedule II substance”. Then one has to check police and court documents to find out what the particular substance was.

The blanket, generic approach is not all that obvious, given the way charges are entered and records are kept in the Canadian records system. Doing this for every drug possession charge that potentially involves cannabis would be a considerable undertaking, even if all the documents were in one central computer database. Additionally, many older records are paper copies kept in boxes in courthouses and police departments across this country.

We also do not know how many individuals the government expects to apply for record suspension. Public safety officials said:

[I]t's very difficult to know who has possession for cannabis offences, so we can't just go into a database and say this is how many offences there are. We've extrapolated from statistics collected by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, and their figure is upwards of 250,000 convictions for the simple possession of cannabis. That is a starting point. The number of people expected to apply is much lower.... Let's remember you can only get that pardon if your only offence is for possession of cannabis. While you may have that offence, if you have others on your record, you would not be eligible. It's not an exact science but we've extrapolated from the figure of 250,000 and estimate 10,000.

Government Orders

Outside experts have told us a significantly higher number, approximately 500,000 who have a record for minor possession. Those who will actually benefit, however, remains unknown.

● (2240)

How much will taxpayers pay to provide a record suspension to someone who has committed a minor offence? The minister and officials have guessed about \$2.5 million, a nice round figure for an unknown number of people with an unclear amount of work involved. We asked the minister to provide the committee with details of how the costs were reached. The minister committed to provide it before we had to vote on the matter. As we still do not have the breakdown of that cost as it was calculated, we could just add it to another long list of broken promises from the public safety minister.

As of yet, there is no clear mechanism to deal with higher costs. Will it be passed on to other applicants or will taxpayers pick up the difference?

One thing we heard from almost all our legal witnesses was the challenges of obtaining a record suspension, especially for individuals who could benefit the most. The application process can be quite challenging for those with limited legal or administrative skills. It requires getting a record of conviction from the court of jurisdiction, meaning people may need to travel to the courts to get the records removed; proof that fines and all sentencing conditions have been met; and a records check from a police agency, along with an identity confirmation by way of fingerprints. All of this will cost potentially several hundred dollars. Therefore, the no-cost application suggested in the bill's title is clearly misleading.

It became quite clear that the people the minister and his colleagues say they are trying to help could continue to face potentially insurmountable hurdles.

What we heard at committee supported that statement.

The Native Women's Association of Canada said, "the effects of the bill will go unrealized for many indigenous women with criminal records for simple possession of cannabis. Simply put, the bill remains inaccessible for indigenous women who are poor."

The Canadian Association of Black Lawyers said, "The suspension of the record will almost seem like a token gesture...for many who are coming from extremely poor areas and families who don't have the means to push them forward, this is a huge stumbling block."

This is yet another promise that is not as advertised.

To deal with this issue, legal experts advised the committee that convictions should be expunged. Expungements eliminate the records while record suspensions mean they can be reversed. An expungement would certainly be more closely aligned to the what the Liberal government promised in its statements. It would be simpler than this process, cost applicants less and ensure that whatever barriers they experienced would be eliminated. However, the Liberals voted against the NDP's private member's bill to do just that. Ironically, the Liberal members introduced amendments to

make these record suspensions as close to expunged records as possible.

This is like the Liberals' claims about how legalizing marijuana would remove the black market, decrease use by children and reduce consumption, all of which is not actually happening. We also know Bill C-93 would not accomplish anything the minister claimed.

I believe in redemption, but I know that redemption is not earned through the generosity of the minister; it is earned by the person who seeks it. I am not sure that the redemption in these cases will result in any benefit for many Canadians.

I was pleased that the committee agreed to make some minor improvements to deeply flawed legislation. Originally, a Conservative amendment addressed what could happen if the court records were lost, destroyed or otherwise not found. The Liberals chose to amend this issue and provided the ability for the Parole Board to review when information was missing. However, that is not much help to those who can not get information to apply in the first place.

The Liberals continue to put in processes that serve the government, but not the people intended to benefit from the legislation.

Ultimately, we were not able to eliminate clause 6, which would limit the considerations by the Parole Board when examining these applications. We should not be giving records suspensions to people who do not deserve them. The only way to accomplish that is to ensure a thorough review. That was the only request of the Canadian Police Association, to ensure that anyone who received these record suspensions met the criteria. That aligns with good administration and instills the trust of Canadians that the system works effectively. The Liberals sadly disagreed with that.

This is not a good bill. It only makes things slightly better for a very small number of Canadians who will benefit.

● (2245)

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in his statement, the member said that our new policy on the legalization of marijuana had done nothing. I want to remind the member that according to Statistics Canada, one out of every 10 young people between the ages of 15 and 17 will smoke cigarettes. The reason for that is that we injected a lot of money into educating our youth on the effects of smoking, the harms of it and the reasons it was bad for their health. It has been drilled into young people at schools.

Government Orders

This is exactly what we want to do with the legalization of cannabis. We want to ensure that the money we receive from that is invested in education programs to make safer consumption for youth. Often cannabis has been mixed with other products. We want to ensure we educate youth so we bring the consumption rate down to the numbers I just mentioned. Those are Statistics Canada numbers from 2011. We want to ensure we reduce the consumption and this is the way to do it.

Does the hon. member agree that if we use the example of smoking cigarettes and apply that to cannabis we can reduce the rate?

• (2250)

Mr. Glen Motz: Madam Speaker, I agree that education is a critical component of any sort of public policy. I unfortunately would have to disagree that in this case the desired outcomes from what the government has proposed or expected from the legalization of marijuana have not played out in reality, as was proposed in policy or in principle.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, what is my colleague's perception and what feedback has he heard from stakeholders, including police associations and other groups, about the ability of police to do their jobs and for law enforcement agencies to protect against drug-impaired driving? As we have seen in jurisdictions with the legalization of cannabis, robust methods were required to equip the police to do proper roadside screening. My understanding is that the equipment that has been approved is insufficient and produces many false positives.

Could my colleague speak to that, based on the study of this legislation and also based on his professional experience?

Mr. Glen Motz: Madam Speaker, in conversation with law enforcement officials over the last year or thereabouts, since the legislation was put in place, significant challenges continue to exist with the application of the law as well as the inability for officers to have the equipment necessary to perform the required roadside screening tests. It is an issue of public safety and those challenges continue to exist at this point in time.

We knew when this legislation was proposed that there would be significant court challenges for a lot of the aspects of the legislation. The results hopefully will play out soon and we will get some resolution to it. Right now, there are challenges with law enforcement and the ability to enforce this across the country.

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to start by saying that Conservatives will be supporting the bill.

Bill C-93 would make changes to the pardon process and waive the fee for Canadians with a past conviction of simple cannabis possession. It would allow people convicted of possession of less than 30 grams of cannabis to apply for free to have their record suspended. It typically costs \$631 for someone to apply for a record suspension. In light of the legalization of cannabis in October of last year, the bill seeks to assist Canadians who were criminally charged for something that has now been rendered legal.

Having said that, it is important to discuss some concerns we have had with the bill along the way.

The government has received significant criticism as to how it has handled matters relating to cannabis in the aftermath of legalizing it. For example, last year, the government confirmed there is no conclusive way to determine if someone is driving high. This left our law enforcement officials in limbo, with several police forces across the country refusing to use government-approved testers.

In addition, the safety concerns of employers, workers and indigenous communities have not been addressed. To add to that, the Prime Minister has failed to explain how his plan would keep marijuana out of the hands of children and profits out of the hands of criminals. Also, the lack of public education has left many Canadians unsure of the new rules and how this would impact border crossings between Canada and the United States.

The uneven rules by the government for every province, territory, and municipality have created uncertainty and confusion from coast to coast. The bill is an attempt to address the record suspension issue that was left outstanding since the legalization of cannabis, but there are still many other aspects of the legalization of cannabis that need the government's attention. However, I am glad to see it is finally starting somewhere.

With respect to these issues, the end result the government has come up with is a new category of record suspensions that cannot be easily revoked and can be granted automatically without much insight into an individual's history. To be more specific, if an individual were to reoffend, the record suspension received for the charge of simple possession is difficult to reverse.

On this side of the House, we support the idea of expedited pardons, but we want to ensure that the process is fair and accountable.

We are also happy the government accepted two Conservative amendments, which help to improve the bill's procedural fairness and require the Parole Board to include a review of this program in its annual report. This review process would allow the legislation to be improved upon if necessary.

I would like to note a specific concern expressed by law enforcement agencies about the bill that I find to have a lot of merit. Although they generally support the bill and what it aims to achieve, law enforcement agencies have expressed concerns that an individual could have been charged with a more serious infraction but pleaded it down to simple possession. This makes the individual still eligible for record suspension, making the process very problematic.

The President of the Canadian Police Association has expressed his opinion on this, saying:

In those circumstances, it is possible that both the Crown and the court may have accepted the plea agreement based on the assumption that the conviction would be a permanent record of the offence and would not have accepted the lesser charge if they knew this would be cleared without any possibility of review at a future date.

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Committee members are aware of this. At their appearance, officials said they could not discern between plea deals to lesser charges and people convicted of the genuine offence. This is one of several issues the government has encountered in its rush to meet the Prime Minister's own self-imposed political deadline. It is also strange that the Liberals have left this consequential legislation to the final weeks of our Parliament and have failed to consult key stakeholders.

The concerns are still very real and need to be dealt with. I would like to highlight some of them here.

At the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, Conservative members asked officials about how unpaid fines would be dealt with at the provincial level when a record suspension can be granted under this law at the federal level, while those fines are still outstanding. They could not answer. This needs to be dealt with since the provinces could lose money if they cannot enforce the payment of fines once these records have been deleted. It is an important detail of this legislation that needs the government's attention.

I am also concerned as to why the government changed this law so that a record suspension could not be revoked on the grounds of bad conduct. Does it want record suspensions or expungement? It is very unclear.

The bill lacks the public safety considerations that come with a proper record suspension and the accessibility of an expungement. It is almost as if the Liberals got lost somewhere along the way in the creation of this legislation and did not think of several important details.

● (2255)

There is also a cost to this legislation that needs to be considered, which officials have estimated would be around \$2.5 million. The calculation is based on the idea that over 250,000 people are eligible for record suspensions but only 10,000 would make use of it. What if all 250,000 apply; does the government have a plan for that? The cost would then be around \$62 million and not the anticipated \$2.5 million, which is a big gap that needs to be accounted for. It is an amount that the government does not seem to have a plan for.

In addition, the government has overlooked another important cost, which is the full cost estimate of the process for the Parole Board to run a query of its database to determine who is eligible for record suspensions while providing it with the necessary information. This is a process, like any other bureaucratic one, that will require significant resources depending on how many people submit a query.

Another area of concern was brought up by witnesses who testified that this law would impact different communities differently. Generally, those less well-off and those with lower education levels are more likely to have convictions for simple possession of cannabis. Legal experts have said that the people who do not have record suspensions today are unlikely to be able to sort through the challenging paperwork needed just to apply.

In addition to the paperwork, to make matters worse, the government calls this a no-cost bill when that is not the case. There would be a \$2.5-million price tag for taxpayers and likely between

\$50 and \$200 in fees and complex paperwork for applicants. This process seems designed to ensure as few people as possible apply. It does not look like the government is interested in making it more accessible either. It took out a proposed Conservative amendment that would have made it easier for individuals to access these pardons. As with other types of government applications, this could be complex and time-consuming to fill out.

In these cases, we have also seen the emergence of predatory application experts online, who charge up to \$1,600 for their services. There are also no meaningful protections in this bill that would prevent this sort of predatory behaviour in order to protect those who are trying to get a record suspension.

The Liberals have said to Canadians that smoking marijuana should be accepted and accessible, and they have implemented legislation to that effect. That is why it seems odd that they are not interested in making the record suspension process just as accessible.

The last concern I would like to bring up on the topic of cannabis is one that is very relevant to my riding of Niagara West, and that is the smell produced by cannabis cultivation facilities. This is especially an issue in the town of Pelham, where families avoid opening their windows in the summer due to the extremely strong odours coming from two cannabis-producing facilities located more than five kilometres away from their houses.

David Ireland, a resident of Pelham, recently said that on hot, humid days it is worse because the production facilities have to vent more often. Because of this, he cannot open any windows without his whole house smelling like cannabis. The situation has become so bad that the Town of Lincoln in my riding has temporarily halted new cannabis-production facilities and put existing operations on notice.

At a special council meeting earlier this year, councillors approved a staff recommendation to pass an interim control bylaw that will effectively stop any new cannabis facilities until the town can update its zoning bylaws. The bylaws come at the behest of local residents, who have complained about cannabis greenhouses popping up where they should not and causing light and odour concerns in residential communities.

Kristen Dias, a resident from the town of Jordan, was quoted in one of our local papers saying, "Daily, my kids ask about the dead skunks." Ms. Dias has since moved her children to a different school, saying that the cannabis odour from the production facilities is part of the reason for the move.

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My constituents have made dozens of complains about the odour coming from these factories to no avail. Health Canada has not been helpful because it says it is the town's jurisdiction, while the town says it is Health Canada's problem. We have been caught in this constant loop for over a year now with no resolution in sight.

Our community of Niagara West needs to be clear as to who is responsible for regulating the odour because something needs to be done. Cannabis odour issues produced by production facilities are yet another oversight of the government with respect to rushed marijuana legislation.

To get back to the bill in question, we will monitor the implementation of it and commit to reviewing it for its effectiveness and fairness. Now that cannabis is legal, Conservatives understand Canadians should not be unfairly burdened by criminal records for something that is no longer illegal. On this side of the House, we agree that Canadians should have expedited access to record suspensions at no cost. That is why we will be supporting this bill.

● (2300)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, as my colleague knows, the NDP put forward a bill on expunging criminal records for marijuana possession, which the Liberals trashed and voted against. Now, instead, we have a very complicated and costly process someone would have to undertake to hopefully get a pardon. As my colleague from Drummond said a little earlier tonight, it is better than nothing, but barely better than nothing, as many witnesses testified.

I wanted to ask the member why he thinks the government has been so poor in approaching this issue. Rather than looking for something that would allow people who have criminal records to actually look to the future with some certainty, it would impose a very complicated and costly process they would have to go through.

● (2305)

Mr. Dean Allison: Madam Speaker, we are going to be rising in the next couple of weeks. We knew this was coming down the pipe, and quite frankly, consultations probably should have started a lot earlier. As I said, in some cases, there has not been a whole lot of consultation at all. I think that is the challenge.

We are grateful that the government accepted a couple of our amendments. It would have been nice if it had accepted a few more. In the rush to get this through before the end of this term, I feel that maybe more consultation could have happened.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate that the member brought up a new aspect in the debate. He made reference to communities that are impacted by people growing cannabis.

Whether it is rural or urban communities, what we witnessed in the past was the substantial growth of grow-ops, which have been very damaging to communities in many different ways. I believe that with legalization, we will see the number of grow-ops diminish as the criminal element is taken out of the sale of cannabis. I think there is a silver lining.

Just to get an affirmation from across the way, I understand that the Conservative Party is actually supporting the legislation. The

NDP is not supporting it, because it wants expungement. Am I then to believe that the Conservative Party supports pardoning over expungement?

Mr. Dean Allison: Madam Speaker, I want to talk about the community aspect he raised. One of the issues we have seen with legalization, first with medical marijuana and then with individual licences cobbled together, and I realize that they are not necessarily illegal grow-ops, is that what ends up happening is that the standard is not set as high as it is for commercially regulated medical marijuana.

The challenge I have in my community is that there are literally dozens of legitimate greenhouses that produce a huge odour. We had a story in one of the local papers. An individual actually had that smell in his car and claimed that he was pulled over when crossing the border, because they thought he had something going on in his car or on his premises. He tried to explain. There were emails to my office and a number of other councillors.

I hope that we are able to see the illicit stuff gone. I am still concerned about whether that will happen, because of the price comparisons and what is going on. However, we are in early stages. I would suggest that as we move forward on this, we need to do something about the odour with regard to additional facilities, outdoor growing and things like that. We have to take care of that to make sure that our residents are not bothered by these smells.

NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the third reading stage of Bill C-93, an act to provide no-cost, expedited record suspensions for simple possession of cannabis.

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

[*Translation*]

THIRD READING

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-93, An Act to provide no-cost, expedited record suspensions for simple possession of cannabis, be read the third time and passed.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate on Bill C-93 on record suspensions for simple possession of cannabis. I will be sharing my time with one of my colleagues.

From the outset I would like to say a few words about Bill C-45 because it is impossible to forget. It was no great feat of the government opposite, but it was one of the Prime Minister's rare accomplishments. That should be noted.

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Nonetheless, no one will forget that Bill C-45 was bungled from the start and now that it has been in effect since last October, it certainly has not been a resounding success. Many of the projected outcomes of legalizing marijuana did not come to fruition, including reducing the sale of cannabis on the black market to curb organized crime. In fact, the opposite happened. Cannabis sales on the black market have increased.

I cannot ignore the fact that the government opposite also rejected our amendment to create a public registry of investors in the cannabis industry. However, since many of them have direct ties to the Liberal Party and since the money comes from tax havens, we are not holding our breath for the government to set up a public registry. The Liberals said that they would do politics differently and transparently. Fortunately their time is coming to an end.

When the Prime Minister came to power, he decided that his 2015 election promise to pass Bill C-45 at any cost was a national priority, even though other priorities could have easily come before Bill C-45. Like many Canadians, I still have a hard time believing that there was absolutely nothing more important in Canada than legalizing marijuana. Too many people put their trust in the Prime Minister in 2015, believing that he was creating hope in many respects for Canadians. Now, in 2019, it is plain to see that he made a lot of promises and did not follow through on much.

Was legalization truly more important than the economy, safety and security, justice and the future of our children? I believe the history books will confirm that that was indeed the case in this 42nd Parliament.

Getting back to Bill C-93, I want to point out that it can lead to confusion with respect to the use of the term “suspension” in the notion of the record suspension for simple cannabis possession. I want to highlight the importance of thoroughly understanding everything about this notion because many people are surprised to learn about the consequences this could eventually have when they wish to cross the border into the United States.

As we know, U.S. customs have always been very strict when checking the records of Canadians seeking to cross the border and enter their country. They have become even stricter with the legalization of cannabis. When they see that a Canadian has a suspended record for simple possession of marijuana, I am convinced, as are others, that this will have negative rather than positive repercussions. The expungement of criminal records for the simple possession of cannabis would have avoided all of this.

This leads me to wonder about the effectiveness and the goal of this measure. If they wanted to do something about this, record expungement would potentially have been much more effective.

• (2310)

Furthermore, we are debating this matter because after the government legalized marijuana, many Canadians were left with a criminal record for simple possession and inevitably wanted this record expunged. They know very well that a suspension is not as good as an expungement.

Many Canadians have this offence on their criminal records, which prevents them from travelling to the United States. This could be why a powerful lobby asked the Liberal government to suspend

the records. Funnily enough, this demand was very much a ploy to win votes, as there are not many days left before the end of this Parliament.

Bill C-45 took effect in October 2018, and the Prime Minister chose to ignore the concerns about the legalization of cannabis expressed by municipalities, police forces, employers, doctors and a number of concerned parents. The Liberals rushed to introduce Bill C-93 at the last minute, at the end of this Parliament, just before the upcoming election. This makes me think that they are desperately trying to pad their record, which is currently light on positives.

The Liberals already promised to legalize cannabis so now they want to please another consumer group, those who were charged with simple possession of cannabis, by quickly getting rid of their criminal record. Still today, an offender with a criminal record for simple possession of cannabis has no choice but to wait between five and 10 years to apply for a pardon. The application costs \$631. It is important to reiterate that the cost associated with applying for a pardon was determined based on the cost to the Canadian government and taxpayers, which is fair and equitable. We always felt that it was not up to law-abiding taxpayers to pay for those who break the law.

Bill C-93 is a fait accompli. That being said, even though sound management of public funds is a Conservative priority, we agreed to make pardon applications for simple possession of marijuana free of charge. We know that some verifications were made, that roughly 10,000 people would be eligible to apply for a pardon and that the cost associated with these applications, which would be covered by taxpayers, would be roughly \$2.5 million.

It is important to remind those tuning in at this late hour that the purpose of Bill C-93 is to pardon individuals accused of simple possession of cannabis. These are not people with long and colourful rap sheets. As many people have pointed out, the charges usually stem from youthful indiscretions, and in most cases, that is something we can understand.

As such, we believe that Canadians should have timely access to no-fee record suspension. However, as with any bill, it is vital that we ensure it is enforced intelligently, fairly and realistically so that it becomes a good law once passed.

Conservatives understand perfectly well that criminal records for simple possession of cannabis should not create an unjust burden for Canadians now that cannabis use is legal.

Business of Supply

• (2315)

Nevertheless, as a responsible party that respects law enforcement, the justice system and public safety, we will always take it upon ourselves to closely monitor the implementation of Bill C-93.

• (2320)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): I very much appreciated the member's speech, Madam Speaker. She indicated wanting to share her time, but she did not specify with whom. Hopefully, we will find out before too long, and when we do, what a surprise it will be.

The Liberals want to foist a highly convoluted process on people whose only offence was having consumed something that has since become legal. We have always called for expungement of these criminal records. The Liberals refused. They rejected our request, which comes from the very people who were arrested. The fact remains that this once illegal substance is illegal no more.

I would like to ask my colleague what she thinks of the Liberal approach, which is complicated and places a burden on each and every person by forcing them to initiate their own individual process even though there exists a much simpler solution that would apply to all.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

As we have seen for going on four years now, the Liberals always seem to be looking for new ways to make life harder for Canadians. As the hon. member was saying, there are much simpler ways to go about drafting this type of legislation, but the Liberals have gone with a much more complicated process in order to pander to their friends. That is my analysis.

Unfortunately, it was the same thing with Bill C-45. By refusing to take the concerns of municipalities into consideration, the government made things a lot harder for them. They basically kicked the problem to the provinces. The Liberal mind will always seek to make things as complicated as possible for Canadians, who are sure to struggle as a result.

One can only hope the Liberal reign will soon come to an end so we can finally move on with our lives.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I definitely want to thank my colleague who sits on the Standing Committee on Official Languages with us and who does a very good job. There is no doubt about that. Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix is certainly a beautiful riding. I sincerely thank my colleague.

I am somewhat perplexed by this evening's debate. I thank you for your opinion and comments on this issue.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind the member that he must address his comments to the Chair and not to the individual. The hon. member may now continue.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, thank you for correcting me and for allowing me to continue.

The problem is that the NDP is saying that we must do everything and pardon everything, and the Conservatives are saying that we do

not really need to do anything. They are against cannabis legalization and they do not agree with it. I would like the member who spoke to explain what she believes to be the solution.

In her view, what is the best way to move forward on this issue? That is my question.

Provide us with the solution we are looking for.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will not be providing the solution, but I will ask the member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix to give a brief reply.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Madam Speaker, I would say two things to my colleague opposite. First, it would have been helpful had they listened to the stakeholders first and foremost. Second, the simplest solution is to elect a Conservative government.

* * *

• (2325)

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY

The House resumed from June 3 consideration of the motion.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 11:25 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

• (2400)

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

(Division No. 1334)

YEAS

Members

Albas	Allison
Barrett	Bezan
Boucher	Calkins
Chong	Cooper
Davidson	Deltell
Diotte	Doherty
Gallant	Généreux
Godin	Gourde
Harder	Kmiec
Lloyd	Lobb
Maguire	Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)	Motz
Nater	Nicholson
Nuttall	Paul-Hus
Rayes	Reid
Shipley	Stanton
Stubbs	Tilson
Wagantall	Warkentin
Zimmer — 37	

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Baylis
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Boissonnault	Bossio

*Adjournment Proceedings***ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

● (2405)

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government appears set to ram through damaging changes to Canada's refugee determination system through the omnibus budget bill. Despite his self-proclaimed title of feminist, the Prime Minister has shown time and again that when push comes to shove, he will toss the ideals he claims to hold so dearly to the side for political gain.

Despite running on a promise to include gender-based analysis plus for all policies, we learned in February that fewer than half of government agencies and departments have a gender-based analysis plus plan. We certainly know that there was no gender-based analysis plus done on these changes hidden in the budget. If there had been, these provisions would not have been buried in Bill C-97. That is why 46 women's organizations from across Canada wrote an open letter to the Prime Minister to call out the fake feminism and identify the danger the changes will put already vulnerable women and girls fleeing gender-based violence in.

This is not the only time the Prime Minister and the Liberal government have, without hesitation, moved away from their self-professed titles and claims when politically convenient.

Bill S-3, an act to amend the Indian Act in response to the Superior Court of Quebec decision in *Descheneaux v. Canada*, received royal assent on December 12, 2017. Despite being in law nearly 18 months, the government has failed to bring into force all its provisions. This has allowed sex-based discrimination in the Indian Act to continue, and it is entirely unacceptable.

On May 15, the leader of the NDP and member for Burnaby South rose in the House to seek unanimous consent for a motion calling on the government to bring into force the remaining provisions in Bill S-3 to remedy this situation prior to June 21, 2019. It is absolutely astounding to me that it appeared that the government members in this place did not support that motion. Perhaps the politics of the day once again meant that those feminist ideals needed to be cast aside.

Yesterday Canada had a historic moment. The final report on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls was made public and provided to the Prime Minister. This historic report lays out a path for transformative justice for indigenous women and girls to, as the title states, "Reclaim Power and Place". Within the report are 231 calls for justice.

Call for justice 1.2 reads:

Boudrias
Breton
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chen
Cormier
Cuzner
Damoff
Dhaliwal
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Fergus
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser (West Nova)
Freeland
Gerretsen
Goodale
Hajdu
Hébert
Hogg
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Joly
Jordan
Julian
Khera
Lametti
Lapointe
Lefebvre
Levitt
Lockhart
Longfield
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)
Morneau
Morrissey
Nault
Oliver
Ouellette
Pauzé
Peterson
Poissant
Ratansi
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Samson
Sansoucy
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sorbara
Ste-Marie
Tan
Vandenbeld
Virani
Wrzesnewskyj
Young— 165

Bratina
Carr
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Choquette
Cullen
Dabrusin
DeCoursey
Dhillon
Dubourg
Duguid
Dusseau
Easter
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Garneau
Goldsmith-Jones
Graham
Hardie
Hehr
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Johns
Jones
Jowhari
Khalid
Kwan
Lamoureux
Lebouthillier
Leslie
Lightbound
Long
Ludwig
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Murray
O'Connell
O'Regan
Paradis
Peschisolido
Picard
Qualtrough
Rioux
Rodriguez
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Sangha
Sarai
Schieffe
Serré
Sheehan
Sikand
Sohi
Spengemann
Tabbara
Tassi
Vaughan
Whalen
Yip

PAIRED

Members

Fortin
Gill

Fry
LeBlanc— 4

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Adjournment Proceedings

We call upon all governments, with the full participation of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people, to immediately implement and fully comply with all relevant rights instruments, including but not limited to... [a]ll the recommendations of the 2015 UN CEDAW Inquiry Report and cooperation with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on all follow-up procedures.

That UN report recommends quite clearly the following: “To amend the Indian Act to eliminate discrimination against women”.

Bill S-3 has received royal assent, and the UN has called on Canada to do this work. The NDP has pressed the government to do this work, and now the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls report is calling on the government to do this work. Is it not time for the government to do what is right and eliminate sex-based discrimination against indigenous women once and for all?

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth) and to the Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the hon. member for Vancouver East and outline investments that our government has recently announced to enhance the integrity of Canada's border and asylum systems.

Recently, the Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction met with Amnesty International, as well as with representatives of various women's organizations to provide an overview of our proposed changes.

First and foremost, I assure the member opposite that we are committed to a fair and compassionate refugee system that provides protection to those who need it most, and despite her accusations, a GBA+ analysis was in fact conducted.

Through budget 2019, we are proposing to provide the necessary investments to our border enforcement strategy to process an increased number of asylum claims and to provide timely protection to refugees. Our goal is to encourage those truly in need to seek asylum at the first possible opportunity in order to receive it quickly and efficiently. Let me be clear: No person will be turned away if they are deemed to be at risk, and nobody will be removed without an opportunity to be heard.

As Jean-Nicolas Beuze, a representative from United Nations human rights commission, has stated, we are upholding our international and domestic legal obligations as well as a welcoming approach, as claimants will still have access to a robust oral hearing, subject to appeal, whereby they will receive Canada's protection if found to be at risk of danger or prosecution.

My hon. colleague often discusses the need to support the most vulnerable. However, the NDP's actions sometimes do not match their words. The NDP voted against providing additional settlement supports to visible minority newcomer women to reduce barriers to employment. The NDP also voted against resettling a higher number of women and girl refugees after our government moved to increase the number of permanent resident admission spaces for government-assisted refugees. The NDP also voted against five days of paid leave for victims of domestic violence.

We have listened to the concerns that were raised, and strengthened our proposed legislation by voting to ensure that the right to an oral hearing, as requested by many, is guaranteed and will be enshrined into law.

Whereas the member opposite expressed concerns with our bill, it is worth noting that the NDP was the only party not to offer any amendments or proposals to strengthen the bill, despite having been given the opportunity to do so.

Global migration is responsible for the largest number of displaced people since the Second World War, and Canada has obviously also been impacted. Unlike the New Democrats, who seem to want to drastically reduce our borders, our government seeks to maintain the integrity of immigration and asylum systems, which are based on rules and orderly migration.

We will always provide due process and uphold international law for those seeking asylum, because that is what Canadians expect from us.

● (2410)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, the NDP sought to actually strike out every one of those provisions within Bill C-97 that undermine the refugee determination process. Witnesses at the committee were clear in saying that it was beyond fixing. That is what we did and the government failed to listen.

Back to Bill S-3, why has the Prime Minister, who claims that he is a feminist, not taken action to eliminate sex-based discrimination against indigenous people? It has been 18 months. All the government needs to do is to bring in an OIC to enact that, yet it has not done anything with respect to that. Where is the feminist Prime Minister who says that indigenous peoples and reconciliation is the number one priority? Where is the real action?

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Madam Speaker, I just want to reiterate, getting back to the point about asylum seekers, as Jean-Nicolas Beuze, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' representative in Canada clearly stated, the measure is “in line with international law”, because asylum seekers are still entitled to an oral process that considers whether they will face persecution in their home country.

Through budget 2019, we are proposing to make targeted investments for our border enforcement strategy to process an increased number of asylum claims, provide timely protection to refugees and remove those found to not be in need of protection in a timely manner.

Our proposed approach will allow Canada to process 50,000 asylum claims per year. I just want to reiterate that this is the balance that Canadians wanted us to achieve and that is what we are finally achieving.

[Translation]

POVERTY

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, too many Canadians are suffering because of our government's lack of initiative to eradicate poverty. The measures in the Liberals' proposed bill are insufficient and do not go far enough. A thousand organizations and citizens from across the country are saying this, including some from my riding.

Adjournment Proceedings

Ms. Denise wrote to me to say that she cannot find affordable housing that is accessible for her son, who uses a wheelchair. This mother is worried that she cannot properly care for her son, since housing costs are too high. Ms. Denise's concerns are shared by many others in my riding, who are asking for affordable housing units to be built. Affordable housing should be a right, not a luxury. It is a right that many Canadians do not have access to.

I could also mention Ms. Francine, who said that she cannot believe the government's inaction on social housing, especially to help retired Canadians. Pensions are still too low for our seniors to enjoy a decent standard of living.

I heard from Ms. Lyette, Ms. St-Pierre, Mr. Blanchard, Mr. Fournier, Ms. Nicole, Mr. Réjean and many others who want the pension benefit to go up because people who have worked their whole lives should not have such a hard time making ends meet. Estelle and Yvan's only priority is the old age pension, which they wish were higher. The OAS benefit is too low to help our fellow citizens achieve financial security, particularly if they have no other source of income.

The Liberal bill in no way reflects the reality of poverty in Canada. We still have a long way to go, not least when it comes to health care. Many of my constituents talk to me about that.

Mr. Houle, for example, has trouble managing his health because the cost of prescription drugs is more than he can afford on his pension.

Ms. St-Pierre has told me how hard it is to get hospital care because of the lack of equipment and personnel. Yes, I realize health care is a provincial responsibility, but the government needs to increase federal health transfers. Such an increase would considerably improve our health care system and help ensure better care for our patients. Much like housing, health care must not become a luxury. We need to focus on the progress that remains to be made.

The difficulties encountered by my constituents are the same ones encountered by thousands of other people across the country. The federal government needs to show leadership on fighting poverty or certainly regard it as a public relations exercise. After a four-year wait, the Canadian poverty reduction strategy still seriously lacks ambition and basically duplicates existing measures.

Did Canadians really need to wait for years for that, especially with the election just months away? It is smoke and mirrors. When will the Liberals finally stop ignoring Canadians, my constituents and everyone living in poverty, and finally introduce legislation that will really wipe out poverty?

• (2415)

[*English*]

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for her question, because it gives us an opportunity to provide some clarification.

My colleague is calling on our government to bring forward “concrete new measures to make a real difference in the fight against poverty”. The truth is that since the first day of our mandate in 2015,

we have brought forward many concrete measures to lift as many Canadians as possible out of poverty.

One example is the Canada child benefit, which has helped lift more than half a million people out of poverty, including 300,000 children. To put this in context, in Toronto, the city I represent, poverty among single mothers has been reduced by 52%. That is an astonishing statistic. I do not think it has ever been recorded in parliamentary history. It is a remarkable achievement. However, we are not patting ourselves on the back, because 48% of single mothers are still living in poverty. We have more work to do.

The Canada child benefit, in and of itself, would be a wonderful achievement alone. However, the reality is that we have also done a bunch of other things that are equally important for other segments of the population that face poverty as a lifetime challenge.

For example, the Canada workers benefit is a new measure we put into this year's budget. Starting this tax year, it will provide low-income workers with even more support. Thanks to the Canada workers benefit, a single person with no children could receive more than \$1,300, while a single parent or a worker in a couple could receive up to \$2,300. This is a concrete measure to support people's incomes, which is one of the quickest ways to eliminate poverty. It means these people will have more money to cover costs related to buying healthy food or clothes.

We have also worked on CPP, reforming it for a lifetime and making changes that other parties said were not possible. This was done, again, in our first year. We also increased the guaranteed income supplement and restored the retirement age from 67 to 65, which will prevent hundreds of thousands of people from falling into poverty.

Our other substantial contribution to reducing poverty is the national housing strategy. Throughout debate today, the party opposite suggested that federal housing dollars were not being spent. I can assure members that since we took office, the \$7 billion we invested in housing have been delivered to Canadians right across the country. More than one million distinct investments in repairs, construction and subsidies have been made to Canadian families since we took office. Those dollars were set to disappear and we have restored them.

We tripled transfers to the provinces, and now they are starting to build new housing. Also, we doubled money for homelessness. Money for the reaching home program and HPS has been doubled, from \$100 million to over \$200 million, to provide front-line services.

The reason we have lifted close to 800,000 people out of poverty is that we made investments in this in our first budget, second budget and our third budget. We continue to look for ways to alleviate the situation facing too many Canadians.

Adjournment Proceedings

Pharmacare is coming next, which is another important step toward eliminating poverty.

This government has committed to reducing poverty in every corner of the country in every form it takes. We will not stop making those investments until we have eliminated poverty. We have already reached our 2020 goals. We look forward to eliminating poverty even more, perhaps with the co-operation of the NDP.

● (2420)

[Translation]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Madam Speaker, I am pleased that the parliamentary secretary took the time this evening to point out that there are still 1.4 million children living in poverty in Canada.

Tonight, I am more specifically concerned about poverty among seniors because they write to me every week. The hour is late, 12:20 a.m., but it is also the eleventh hour for seniors living in poverty, because they are at the end of their lives. We need to meet their needs now.

My colleague from North Island—Powell River introduced a bill that would make it possible to do that immediately. The bill would not even have to be passed. The government could take action to prevent the temporary suspension of the guaranteed income supplement for seniors and should do so immediately.

Seniors should not have their guaranteed income suspended. We are talking about the poorest seniors in our society.

[English]

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Madam Speaker, as I said, not only have we appointed a minister of seniors to ensure we focus our efforts to alleviate poverty among senior, but we have also taken other concrete steps, such as the reduction of the retirement age from 67 to 65. We have also targeted senior housing as part of the national housing strategy, with 12,000 units of housing dedicated for seniors to ensure they have an affordable place to live in their later years. In addition, we put in place improvements to GIS and have fixed CPP moving forward. We have also taken steps to allow seniors to earn more, without having their CPP clawed back.

The notion that we are resting on our laurels is just not true. We recognize that since we have set targets for reducing poverty, despite achieving some earlier, means we have more work to do. We can now focus on some of the more stubborn forms of poverty, such as those among indigenous Canadians, racialized Canadians and rural Canadians. It is clear that the generalized programs do not necessarily work in those cases and specific ones now must be applied.

[Translation]

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour for me to once again rise in the House, even at this late hour, to debate some very important issues facing the people of Drummond.

I am here tonight for the adjournment debate because I wanted to come back to a question that I asked the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development about the difficulties that Canadians are facing on a daily basis and the way the Liberal

government treats ordinary Canadians relative to rich corporate executives. When rich corporate executives ask for help, the Liberals come to their rescue. They bend over backwards to meet the demands of the wealthy, the much-talked-about 1% of our society. It is really unfair. The Liberals seem to have two sets of rules: one set for the wealthiest members of our society and another for everyone else, who has to wait.

I can give some very specific examples. On May 30, the CBC reported that some wealthy clients of KPMG, an accounting firm that serves the wealthiest one per cent, were accused of using a fraudulent scheme to avoid paying taxes and reached an out-of-court settlement with the Canada Revenue Agency. They paid no penalties, and do not have to repay hardly any taxes. It is an out-of-court settlement. They are protecting rich fraudsters.

When people in my riding make a mistake on their tax return, they immediately receive a letter sometimes accusing them of fraud and demanding immediate repayment of the full amount, with interest. The rich get off with an out-of-court settlement.

The Liberals said they would fight tax havens. However, during their term in office, they signed agreements with notorious tax havens such as Grenada and Antigua and Barbuda. These are two notorious tax havens in the Caribbean. When it comes to tax havens, the Liberals do not have the solution because they are part of the problem.

I mentioned other examples that will help Canadians and the people of the greater Drummond area. The homelessness partnering strategy, or HPS, and the Canada-Quebec agreement come to mind. According to the Table des partenaires en itinérance de Drummondville, the federal government's current approach flies in the face of the priorities, needs and practices on the ground. That is why the organization and other community groups want the homelessness partnering strategy to take a comprehensive community-based approach to fighting homelessness and wants to maintain that approach.

Will the Liberal government finally crack down on tax havens and take a comprehensive community-based approach to fighting homelessness in order to meet the needs of ordinary Canadians?

● (2425)

[English]

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member opposite asked about the approach we are going to take to fight homelessness. I can tell him two very clear things.

The first is that the \$55-billion national housing strategy is in full flight right now. It is not coming after the next election but it is being spent on the ground, in real communities as we speak.

Adjournment Proceedings

There have been one million investments made by this government, to the tune of \$7 billion, that have paired, housed and subsidized Canadians right across the country. There were more than a million families involved in that process. That is the best way to end homelessness.

Let us compare the two parties on the homelessness file. The NDP, in the last election, produced a manifesto that was I guess focused on what it perceived to be the critical issue of homelessness and housing in this country. In years two, three and four, the party opposite promised to spend zero dollars, zero dollars and zero dollars on new housing in this country. Let us let that sink in for a minute. Then what happened was the—

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

I am sorry; the timer was wrong. It will be readjusted and I will let the member continue.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Madam Speaker, as I was saying, the party opposite in its platform promised zero, zero and zero dollars. Zero dollars to build housing in this country for something it now terms a crisis. It was a crisis three years ago, four years ago and five years ago; it is why I ran.

One thing that frustrates me about the NDP policy is the investments it was not going to make in homelessness. The NDP was going to increase spending on homelessness by the federal government by a measly \$10 million. That is it, \$10 million a year was your platform, and now you lecture us on how much we are not spending.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind the member that even in the late shows, he is to address the questions and comments to the Chair.

The hon. member can continue.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Madam Speaker, the NDP's plan for homelessness was to spend only an additional \$10 million. We have put \$2.2 billion on the table for that program, and on an annual basis, our spending is 10 times what the NDP promised. We still get lectured on why we have not done enough to fight homelessness, even though it promised to do one-tenth of what we put on the table.

In terms of the reaching home program, it was reprofiled specifically to highlight the extraordinary achievements that have been made in the province of Quebec, which has a holistic approach to homelessness and focus on prevention and permanent solutions, and does not make homeless people live on the streets or in shelters for six months before they will be supported.

We leaned heavily on the advice that was given to us by members of the advisory panel that came from that promise, which showed us a better way to fight homelessness. Some of those results are built right into the reaching home strategy. For example, we no longer require 65% of the reaching home program to be spent specifically on rent. That is going to be replaced by the Canada housing benefit, an \$8.4-billion program partnered with the provinces for rent supplements.

On the reaching home file, those dollars can now be used for services to wrap around people to get keep them housed. As well,

those dollars can be used to keep people housed with supports they may need in order to not fall into the most destitute situations we find on city streets right across the country.

We have listened to the homelessness advocates out of Quebec. We have responded directly to the demands they made of this government. Not only did we listen to them, we funded them. I go back to that campaign platform. On what planet, let alone what country, city or street does a \$10-million investment solve homelessness? In the city of Ottawa alone, the increase to fight indigenous homelessness is \$8 million.

The NDP has now chosen to follow Doug Ford with slogans about housing, with no program design, no mention of indigenous people and no dollar signs attached to it. They can print all the bumper stickers they want. The reality is that housing advocates need two things: funding and flexibility. With this government, \$55 billion has been delivered, new rules have been written that respond to the criticisms that the member just listed and we are very proud of our record on housing. I would be embarrassed to have run on the NDP platform.

• (2430)

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette: Madam Speaker, I would like to remind my hon. colleague that, in February 2019, the Liberal Party voted against the NDP motion calling on the government to act quickly and create 500,000 decent affordable housing units over the next 10 years.

With regard to the homelessness partnering strategy, I want to congratulate the Drummond RCM's partners in homelessness as well as community groups in the greater Drummond area who are responsible for implementing the strategy, groups such as the Carrefour d'entraide Drummond inc., Comptoir alimentaire Drummond, l'Ensoleilvent, Maison Habit-Action, Refuge La Piaule, Réseau d'aide le Tremplin, and the Fondation de la Tablee populaire.

My colleague seems to be saying that the government is going to do what these organizations are asking for. In our region, we absolutely need to maintain a holistic community approach to conquering homelessness.

[*English*]

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Madam Speaker, we have delivered a holistic, community-based approach to fighting homelessness through the reaching home strategy. It builds on some of the very good work being done in communities in Quebec, which are providing real leadership in the way to wrap around services to keep people housed.

The national housing strategy aims to lift 500,000 Canadians out of core housing need, with a program that builds, repairs, subsidizes and grows over time. As housing is built, subsidies have to be built over time. If one does not back-end load the housing program, one ends up building housing with no supports for people, and that does not work.

Adjournment Proceedings

In terms of the NDP proposal, to build 500,000 homes, if one had the labour and construction capacity to do that, and without any subsidies, the program cost would be \$175 billion to get to 80% of market. That is the NDP program. It is a slogan, it is not a program. The reality is that the national housing strategy is delivering to get to the 500,000 target. We are repairing, investing and we are making sure Canadians get their housing needs met. We are proud of that policy.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until later today at 2 p.m. pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 28 and pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12:34 a.m.)

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