



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 147 • NUMBER 182 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Monday, March 9, 2015

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, March 9, 2015

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN AIR TRANSPORT SECURITY AUTHORITY

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should present, as soon as possible, a mechanism that would allow non-designated airports, that is, airports that are not on the 2004 list of airports designated under the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority Act (CATSA), to provide, at their expense, CATSA-recognized security screening in a manner that would not compromise the health and safety of passengers, and would uphold existing CATSA standards.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to debate the motion that I have the honour of sponsoring, Motion No. 553. I feel proud and privileged to be able to express myself on behalf of the people of Sherbrooke on such an important issue.

For the benefit of my colleagues and Canadians who are watching, I would like to begin by reading the text of the motion I have moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should present, as soon as possible, a mechanism that would allow non-designated airports, that is, airports that are not on the 2004 list of airports designated under the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority Act (CATSA), to provide, at their expense, CATSA-recognized security screening in a manner that would not compromise the health and safety of passengers, and would uphold existing CATSA standards.

I would now like to put all of that into context and explain how significant this motion is for many airports across Canada, including of course the Sherbrooke airport. After reading the bill, I have to admit that it is quite technical, but I will do my best to explain it in layman's terms before I try to convince members.

What is CATSA? I am sure many of my colleagues who fly back and forth between their ridings and Ottawa every week are already familiar with CATSA agents. If they are not, they meet them every week. Here is how CATSA defines itself:

The Canadian Air Transport Security Authority is a Crown corporation responsible for securing specific elements of the air transportation system—from passenger and baggage screening to screening airport workers.

Established on April 1, 2002, CATSA is fully funded by parliamentary appropriations and is accountable to Parliament through the Minister of Transport.

CATSA is governed by a Board of Directors with its operations directed by a Senior Management Team....

CATSA was the centerpiece of the Government of Canada's response to the events of September 11, 2001 and part of a comprehensive \$2.2 billion package of aviation security initiatives in the December 2001 budget.

Established on April 1, 2002, CATSA's responsibilities fall into four major areas:

Pre-board screening of passengers and their belongings;

Hold baggage screening through explosives detection systems at airports;

Non-passenger screening of those entering restricted airport areas;

Restricted area identity card implementation and management....

CATSA's mission is to protect the public by securing critical elements of the air transportation system as assigned by the Government of Canada.

It is important to highlight “as assigned by”.

Why is such screening by CATSA so important? People are probably wondering what the problem is exactly. Why are we moving this motion today? The answer is simple. When CATSA was created in 2002, the then government established a list of 87 airports that would be served by the administration. In 2004, two airports were added to that list, bringing the number of designated airports to 89. Is the Sherbrooke airport on that list? Obviously, the answer is no. That is where the problem lies, and that is precisely why I am raising this issue today.

Some will likely ask me what difference being on this list makes to an airport's ability to offer commercial flights. It changes everything for Sherbrooke.

Sherbrooke was close to concluding an agreement with a national airline, which was prepared to start operating flights between Sherbrooke and major economic centres. The essential, non-negotiable condition for the airline in question was that the Sherbrooke airport be designated under the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority Act. It was during these talks that Sherbrooke applied to Transport Canada for its designation.

In June 2013, Transport Canada, through its minister, rejected this application for designation. The agreement with the airline fell through. This abortive agreement proves something very important: airlines are interested in the Sherbrooke airport, and there is certainly an attractive market because they were ready to add flights in 2012-13.

The simplest solution would be to add Sherbrooke to this list as the 90th airport. The government must have thought, why do things the easy way when we can do them the hard way.

Private Members' Business

Why did the government refuse to give the Sherbrooke airport that designation, especially when adding it is rather simple? It can be given by regulation made by the Governor in Council and does not require legislation. I would remind members that two airports were added by regulation in 2004.

We still do not know why Transport Canada refused the application. Although we have repeatedly asked the minister for an explanation, she has only given one response that might give us a clue, in which she said that CATSA is not an economic development body. Ten other airports besides Sherbrooke have applied for designation since 2004. They were all refused. Is it for financial reasons? It is up to the government to tell us.

Sherbrooke had anticipated this potential pretext for Transport Canada's refusal. In its application for designation, Sherbrooke had offered to cover the associated costs. In its June 2013 letter of refusal and subsequent answers in the House, Transport Canada opened the door to a mechanism that would allow non-designated airports to provide Canadian Air Transport Security Authority security screening on a cost-recovery basis.

Given the government's categorical refusal to add Sherbrooke to the list of designated airports on the one hand and its openness to providing a mechanism whereby non-designated airports could obtain the administration's services on the other, I have questioned the government on several occasions about how the development of the mechanism that it itself proposed is coming along.

We have heard absolutely nothing since June 2013. Nothing has been proposed. No legislative changes have been introduced. That is shameful, and that is why I am moving this motion, which calls on the government to present the mechanism in question to the House as soon as possible.

All of the airports that are not currently on the list of 89 airports would benefit. In my opinion, that is the beauty of the proposal before us today. It does not simply seek to resolve the problems of one airport, the Sherbrooke airport, but to provide a development opportunity for hundreds of non-designated airports across Canada.

There are 518 airports across Canada. If we do not count the 89 airports that are already designated by Transport Canada under the law, over 400 airports could be interested in a mechanism like the one called for in my motion.

Sherbrooke has waited long enough. The Eastern Townships have waited long enough. The airports that could benefit from this mechanism have waited long enough. It is high time the government took action.

We are all well aware that airports across the country are important economic drivers. A fully functional airport with better commercial ties with other large North American centres will generate major economic spinoffs, which have already been examined at length.

The study led by Luc Savard, a full professor with the faculty of business administration at the Université de Sherbrooke and the director of the Groupe de recherche en économie et développement international, did an excellent job of explaining this.

...a review of existing literature.... Some findings emerged from this review...they all confirmed that airports have a huge impact on their region. First, there appears to be a positive correlation between the number of boardings and GDP, as well as

between GDP growth and the growth in the number of domestic flights. Second, when there is an airport on the outskirts of a city, it has a facilitating effect on regional businesses by giving them access to new markets. Third, an airport changes the economic and demographic structure of the region and is one of the factors that companies such as research and development firms consider when deciding whether to locate there.

...Ivy et al. (2005) show that the connectivity of airport services has an impact on jobs at headquarters and promotes the development of research institutions as well as the financial sector. In addition to the complementarity of public and private investments, an airport has a facilitating effect, which increases access to people and their ideas, to capital and to markets...

...Green (2007) finds a strong connection between air traffic in a region and the growth of its population and job market.

...The Sherbrooke University Pole, which helps generate research and development activities in addition to private sector investments, could greatly benefit from this facilitating effect, increasing the economic impact on the region.

The problems related to transportation that the Sherbrooke area is currently facing are part of a larger, similar problem facing Canada, the United States and Australia, namely, low population density and vast distances between communities across the country. In 2011 for instance, about 54% of the population lived in the Montreal and Quebec City census metropolitan areas. That being said, population growth in the Sherbrooke census metropolitan area is higher than the Quebec average. This population growth is taking place without the air transportation infrastructure that the region needs, which means that people from Sherbrooke have to travel to Montreal, if not further, to take a flight anywhere. Population growth is positively correlated to air traffic. For instance, between 1980 and 2000, the population in the U.S. grew by 24%, while air traffic grew by 136% over the same period.

● (1110)

—The bottom line here is that the economic benefits of a fully functional airport have been well established. They have been studied at length and are indisputable. We also have to remember that not having a functional airport can even result in economic losses, because Canadian air travellers will go to U.S. airports near the border. This is a real problem in southern Quebec.

There have been a number of studies on this issue, which affects not only Quebec, but also communities along the Canada-U.S. border all the way to British Columbia. The Library of Parliament summed it up as follows:

Based on the results of these studies, we know that approximately 5 million Canadian passengers travel by plane from American airports every year. According to the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications study, Air Canada representatives estimate that, by 2015, up to 3.4 million Canadians could be travelling out of airports in Buffalo, Niagara Falls (U.S.), Plattsburg and Bellingham exclusively, with an associated direct negative impact to the Canadian economy of \$2.3 billion. The extent of the impact of this exodus may be summarized as follows: (1) a reduction in the amount of air traffic...in Canada; (2) the undermining of the role of larger Canadian airports as international hubs; and (3) an increase in fees paid by each passenger because airport fixed costs will have to be spread over fewer people. According to the [Conference Board of Canada] report, these factors will likely result in a loss of revenue ([for example,] taxes) for all levels of government.

I wonder if my colleagues know that Sherbrooke is the only centre in Canada with more than 200,000 inhabitants that is not served by a regional airport. That has to change. This is critical to the economic prosperity of Sherbrooke and the whole region.

I would like to close with some thoughts on the words of John Kasarda in his 2011 book *Aerotropolis: The Way We'll Live Next*. He suggests that aerotropolises, which are cities that grow up around an airport, are the cities of tomorrow. The major urban centres of days gone by were built around railway stations, but those of the future will develop within a 33-kilometre radius of airports.

I would be happy to answer my colleagues' questions.

Private Members' Business

•(1115)

[English]

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a point to clarify in the discussion, that the designation of airports relates to the security risk posed at airports to the network. That is why, in the case of a select number of airports, the government has made it mandatory to have the security screening there and therefore the air transport security charge to fund that.

In this particular case, not only for Sherbrooke, but for several airports where it is an economic driver, and where airline companies as a condition of service have imposed the requirement to have security screening, there is a need to find a funding mechanism to support the uniform CATSA screening and extend it to other airports.

I want to commend the member for bringing this motion forward, and for initiating a discussion, an important discussion with the government. The government, as he has noted, is open to finding a mechanism like that.

I will signal at this point that the government will be supporting the motion with a slight modification, amendment, which I will raise in my comments later. I want to thank the member for his co-operation in that process, in finding language that achieves the aim he is looking for but also satisfies the clarity that the government needs in moving this issue forward. I want to thank him for that, which is more of a comment than a question.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his co-operation on this issue, which is taking quite a bit of time. I want to remind hon. members that the Conservatives opened the door to this mechanism in June 2013. I am pleased to see that we are heading toward a solution to this lingering impasse. In Sherbrooke, there has been talk of an airport and the resulting economic development for a long time.

It is also important to keep airport security in mind. I understand the situation at the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, which, according to the government, is not an economic development agency. I agree. We must always keep airport security in mind, however. This mechanism could ensure security at every airport. It would make it possible to provide security service inside the Sherbrooke airport and security service for all of Canada.

•(1120)

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the motion he moved this morning. In my riding, we have the Ottawa International Airport, which provides at least 5,000 jobs. Every day, 5,000 people come and go at the airport.

[English]

As we say in English, it is an economic generator of major significance.

[Translation]

I would like my colleague to talk about the fact that he personally approached the minister. I wrote to the minister almost two years ago to ask him about the status of this issue. In Canada, 10 airports are

waiting for an answer. It has been two years and they have yet to hear anything.

Can my colleague help us understand why the government still has not made a decision that is important to these airports when it comes to security and their future role as economic generators in their regions?

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. It is difficult for me to say why the government did not present a solution earlier. The goal of my motion is to put pressure on the government so it will feel compelled to take action.

It is my hope that the House of Commons will support my motion—I implore my colleagues to support this motion—to somehow put additional pressure on the government so that it will take action and allow airports such as the Sherbrooke airport and many others in Canada, as I said in my speech, to grow and establish commercial ties with other major North American centres. It would certainly be a significant economic and tourism vector for the Sherbrooke area and the Eastern Townships.

I will also repeat that this mechanism would be available to all the other airports that are not currently designated under the act. This is not just a local solution, but one that will apply across Canada. I hope it will receive the support of all my colleagues in the House.

[English]

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here in the House today with a minor amendment to support the motion before us, which I will move before the expiry of my time.

I will be supporting the motion because it aligns with the guiding principle of the government's economic action plan to protect Canadians and support jobs and economic growth across the country. The motion is also consistent with our government's risk-based approach whereby security funding is targeted to areas of highest risk.

I am glad to be given the opportunity to talk about the work that has been accomplished on this file over the last year and what we intend to do in the future. However, at the outset, I would like to reiterate that creating jobs and securing economic growth is and will remain our government's top priority.

The aviation industry is a fundamental pillar of our success as a nation. It is a key contributor to our standard of living, economy, connectivity to the world and prosperity. Further, a vibrant aviation sector also supports the prosperity of other industries, such as commerce and tourism.

Private Members' Business

There are roughly 100 million passengers who travel through or within Canada annually, with nearly 2,500 international flights each and every day. The vastness of Canada's geography and the dispersed nature of our population have directly contributed to the development of one of the largest and most sophisticated civil aviation systems in the world. Transport Canada's national civil aviation security program is among the best in its class, and our government continues to be committed to the promotion of safe and secure air travel.

Canada has over 200 airports that operate commercial flights. Fewer than half of them are regulated to require mandatory passenger and baggage screening. This represents about 99% of all air passengers in Canada.

The mandatory presence of the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, CATSA, at all airports would not make sense either from a security or a financial perspective. However, CATSA is and should remain the sole screening authority in Canada. The original version of the motion before us could be construed as opening the door to the establishment of new screening authorities in Canada. For this reason, we will be asking that the proposed motion be amended so as to make it clear that CATSA is and remains the only authorized screening authority in Canada.

This is an important element, because our government believes there is real value in consolidating aviation security under a single authority. Having a national centralized organization perform screening enables greater consistency across the country and more effective responsiveness to security issues. It also ensures that Canada meets international standards and retains the trust of its partners.

The list of airports for regulated mandatory screening was developed in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, the terrorist attacks, and it captures those airports where screening was already taking place before the creation of CATSA. The screening services received at these airports are financed by air travellers through the air travellers security charge.

Over the last several years, a number of airports not regulated for mandatory passenger screening have expressed an interest in obtaining screening services to improve their economic and development opportunities. Many of them indicated that the absence of these screening services constituted the only barrier to the establishment of new commercial routes at their airports.

While security is always the key consideration when allocating government resources to the prevention and mitigation of threats to the transportation system, our aviation security system must also support rather than hinder economic opportunities. We must strive to strike the right balance between supporting the competitiveness of the air sector while minimizing the impact of this support for Canadian taxpayers. This is why our government is proposing a risk-based approach for any changes to the current list of airports receiving security screening funded by the government.

So far, none of the airports interested in receiving screening services currently meet the risk threshold that would warrant mandatory screening. Nevertheless, I believe it is important that we provide these smaller airports with the necessary tools to foster the

economic growth that would come from the establishment of new commercial routes.

● (1125)

In June 2014, the Minister of Transport sent a letter to all the airports that had expressed an interest in procuring screening services to inform them that departmental officials were in the process of exploring and assessing various mechanisms that would allow them to obtain services on a cost-recovery basis. Transport Canada officials will soon be contacting the interested airports in order to gather additional information about their operations. This will help determine the level of service and equipment that the implementation of passenger screening services would require.

Transport Canada will also be working with CATSA and airports to assess the costs of implementing screening services at smaller airports depending on the number of flights they expect to attract, as well as other factors such as the frequency and destination of flights. Our government will work closely with airports to ensure that the potential benefits of implementing these screening services outweigh their costs.

While we are pleased with the progress that has been made on this initiative, there are various legal and financial challenges that still need to be addressed. The government is currently reviewing the legislative and regulatory changes that would best support this initiative. Beyond this, we also need to ensure that any solution takes a long-term approach with respect to the operations of the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority in order to enable it to continue to respond to industry needs.

In closing, I would like to point out that industry has increasingly been linking passenger screening services to economic development. Many airports have expressed a willingness to invest resources into such services. Transport Canada will be working closely with our industry partners to make all the necessary tools available to provide a safe, secure, and efficient transportation system for all Canadians. In order to align the intent of this motion with the approach that the government is pursuing and based on discussions with the mover of the motion, I would like to propose the following amendment.

[*Translation*]

That the motion be amended by (a) deleting "2004"; and (b) replacing the words "CATSA-recognized" with the word "CATSA".

● (1130)

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to inform hon. members that, pursuant to Standing Order 93(3), no amendment may be proposed to a private member's motion or to a motion for second reading of a private member's bill unless the sponsor of the item indicates his or her consent.

Therefore, I ask the hon. member for Sherbrooke if he consents to this amendment being moved.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): I consent, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Ottawa South.

Private Members' Business

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by commending my colleague from Sherbrooke for bringing this motion. It is a very important motion. It speaks to the legitimate aspirations of many of Canada's smaller centres that want to join the ranks of centres that have proper backstopping, when it comes to their airport systems, to enable more trade, more travel, more tourism, more investment, more growth, and more jobs.

It is unfortunate that this motion had to be brought by the member, because this is something the government has been seized with for many years. It is important to remind members of the House, and Canadians who are watching or reading, that this is the fifth minister of transport in perhaps eight years the government has cycled through the department. That might explain why there has not been serious action on this file for many years.

There are at least 10 airports waiting for an answer, including Puvirnituq, Trois-Rivières, Schefferville, Bromont, and Sherbrooke, in Quebec; St. Catharines, Ontario; Cold Lake, Alberta; Dawson City, Yukon; Edson, Alberta; and Fort Nelson, B.C. All of these airports have repeatedly approached the government for a decision. On the strength of their overtures, the Liberal Party of Canada, through me, then the transport critic, wrote to the minister in June 2013 asking the minister to make a decision with respect to using CATSA security screening services and finding a mechanism whereby these 10 airports, which have been waiting and waiting, could do so at their own expense.

I wrote to the minister in June 2013, on behalf of the Sherbrooke airport, pleading for the minister of transport to make a decision. I received a reply from the minister, but the reply was received on August 28, 2014, over a year later, to respond to that basic letter. I go back to my original comment that it is unfortunate that the member had to bring this motion today to compel the government to do its job.

Everyone in the House recognizes that airports have to be safe and secure. They recognize that airports are becoming very popular economic generators for smaller and larger urban centres. They understand that they are job creators, that they bring in retail investment, and that they facilitate trade, tourism, travel, and the shipping of goods. What we do not understand is why it is taking so long for the government to do its job.

This is not a big file. It is an extremely important file for all the airports involved. It is extremely important to them, but is not a big file for the government, with its thousands of employees at Transport Canada. This decision, and a mechanism to arrive at a decision, should have been made years ago in anticipation of the kind of growth we are seeing in Canada. Why are we seeing this growth? It is because we are seeing rapid urbanization.

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

For example, Sherbrooke is becoming a regional city in Quebec. More and more people are going there and Sherbrooke is doing more and more trade. It is no different than the situation of the Halifax-Dartmouth region or the greater Vancouver regional district.

[*English*]

We are seeing urbanization. The government knows this. We all know this. We all live it. For the life of us here in the Liberal Party, we cannot understand why this decision was not taken years ago.

Be that as it may, it is encouraging to hear the government say, through its parliamentary secretary, that it will support an amended motion. Frankly, it is about time.

All MPs in the House I am sure transit through Ottawa's beautiful international airport from time to time, and I am fortunate to represent the airport. It is a massive economic generator for the city of Ottawa. It employs at least 5,000 people day in and day out. It is very important to the success of the national capital region and the Ottawa-Gatineau census metropolitan area. Without it, we would have great difficulty competing, and our citizens would not be able to move as freely as they do.

If I recollect correctly, it was the Liberal government that created CATSA. It was the Liberal government that facilitated, in the Open Skies agreement, the movement of Canadians to the United States and back with much greater ease, thereby facilitating the movement of goods and services and professional expertise and generating economic activity and jobs. Therefore, we are pleased that this motion is being brought to the floor of the House. We are also pleased to support it.

We are scratching our heads trying to figure out why it has taken so long for the government to bring forward this kind of mechanism to facilitate this. It seems to have no problem whatsoever procuring, for example, advertising and running it during NHL hockey games or CFL games or you name it. It has spent \$765 million and counting on advertising since its arrival. Not a single MP on the benches of the government can justify this or look their constituents in the eye and say that this was a good investment when we have so many needs, like this need for screening services in our airports, leaving aside other needs in society like insulin pumps for our kids. How about additional nurses? How about home care for our seniors? How about our veterans offices? It is an interesting juxtaposition that the government has found all this time and money for obscene partisan advertising, but it cannot find the time to solve this basic problem to make sure that Sherbrooke and nine other airports in Canada can get the security screening they need to compete. That is all people want. They want a fair shot at competing in their own cluster areas. That is a reasonable thing to be trying to do. We are supportive. It is about time.

The government is going to have to explain to these different citizens and ridings why it took this motion. The minister is going to have to explain why it took her 15 months to respond to a basic piece of correspondence. The answer given says basically that they are still studying it.

Private Members' Business

I implore the government to not just support the motion but to do what the Liberal Party of Canada has been asking of it for several years: fix the problem. Stop bobbing and weaving, hiding and ducking, and fix the problem for the 10 airports in our country that deserve a solution so that they can get the screening services they need to do what they do best, what Canadians do best, which is compete, create jobs, and grow their local economies.

• (1140)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wish you long life and prosperity during your well-deserved retirement. You will be missed here in the House.

Motion No. 553, which was moved by my riding neighbour, the hon. member for Sherbrooke, and which we are debating this morning, pertains to the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority. In summary, the motion calls on this government to present, as soon as possible, a mechanism that would allow non-designated airports, that is, airports that are not on the 2004 list of airports designated under the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority Act, to provide, at their expense, security screening services that are recognized by the act and thus by CATSA.

Above all, motion No. 553 seeks to identify a solution for the numerous airports—they were listed earlier—currently seeking CATSA-recognized security screening. The mechanism that would be identified and implemented by the current or future government would be useful for many Canadian airports not designated in the schedule to the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority Act.

As my colleagues know, airports across the country are important economic drivers for the communities in which they are located. We must support them so that they can grow, move forward and create quality jobs for the middle class.

Air safety, like food safety and rail safety, are very high priorities for me, as they are for my leader, my party and my caucus. However, over time, this government has been slacking in these areas, although these issues should be very important priorities for the government as well. The mechanism proposed in this motion is a practical solution that would in no way compromise air safety, since it takes into account the standards developed by the existing regulations.

The security screenings in question are the responsibility of CATSA, a crown corporation that was created in 2002, as a logical step in air safety in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The law creating this crown corporation stipulates that CATSA must ensure that security screenings are carried out in accordance with strict standards, which we of course respect.

CATSA is responsible for screening costs, which are recovered by means of a tariff added to the price of every plane ticket. CATSA has contracts with security companies—Garda, Securitas and G4S—to perform screening operations in many Canadian airports. The attribution of this screening standard and of new airports is practically arbitrary. Just two new airports have been added since 2004. There have been no real updates. Two airports out of twelve made a request and were added to the list of designated airports. That does not leave much room for expansion or, most importantly, an update, because many regions in the country have experienced

economic struggles in the last 15 years. Therefore, it makes sense to update this list, or at least to find a mechanism, a way to ensure that passengers have safe access to flights and that these airports—and there are many—can help the surrounding region grow.

Unfortunately, for the past few years, our requests have been forgotten. Not a word has been said about this for over two years. The government has not come back in any way, shape or form to the proponents who are waiting for answers about economic proposals that could generate revenue for the state and major economic spinoffs for the region. As it happens, one of those regions is in my riding: Sherbrooke, which was known as the “Queen of the Eastern Townships”.

• (1145)

As my colleague said, this is one of the few centres in eastern North America with more than 200,000 inhabitants that unfortunately does not have a functional airport with rules, standards and regulations in place enabling it to function. The municipality of Sherbrooke, which owns infrastructure on lands surrounded by smaller municipalities in the RCM of Haut-Saint-François in my riding, including Westbury, Cookshire-Eaton and East Angus, is impatiently awaiting the day when it can say yes to a whole list of projects. There are many economic development projects that have the support of dozens of economic and political partners in the region.

The area is home to the Université de Sherbrooke, Bishop's University in Lennoxville, and more, including the Centre hospitalier universitaire de Sherbrooke and a number of major corporations, such as Domtar, BRP and Waterville TG. Even companies as far away as Stanstead, which is 45 minutes from the airport, and the Mont-Mégantic observatory could benefit from spinoffs generated by a viable and functional airport that would promote tourism and farm tourism.

Here is what I would like people to know about my region: it is a beacon of farm tourism with amazing locations all around Massawippi and Memphrémagog lakes. All economic players could benefit. In fact, not only will nearby regions benefit, but also those 30 minutes, 45 minutes or an hour from the airport. We need economic development. We need to create long-term jobs. Companies and small businesses really need support; they need an economic driver. They have been waiting for this for 30 years—since before my colleague was born. People have been fighting for a viable, functional airport in Sherbrooke for the past 30 years.

Many efforts have failed, but right now, all of these partners want to work together and ensure that the Sherbrooke airport will serve as a tool for economic development and as a benchmark. We would then be able to stop turning down projects. The chamber of commerce has to turn down development projects every month because there is no air or rail link. Let us forget about rail for the moment and focus on the air link. It would be so simple to work together, with the government, to ensure that not only the Sherbrooke airport, but also the many other airports in Quebec and Canada that are awaiting this designation, actually get it.

Private Members' Business

Many levels of government, including the city of Sherbrooke and the RCMs of Haut-Saint-François, Coaticook, Memphrémagog and Granit could all benefit from the windfall that would arise around the airport, not only from the travellers, but also through sustainable industrial and economic development. There could be jobs in research and development projects. Consider, for example, Enerkem, a biomass technology company where scientists are engaged in research, development and innovation that are exported across Canada. Many companies are waiting for this. They know that with a major benchmark just outside of Sherbrooke, the region could develop its economy and create jobs at a time when things are otherwise rather gloomy. It is crucial that we work together, with the government, since all the partners are there, ready and waiting to move forward.

In closing, as I said, many regions across Canada stand to benefit if only this government would be more responsive to the pressing needs of shrinking local economies. A positive response to my colleague's initiative could provide hope to thousands of workers across Canada.

• (1150)

[English]

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today in support of my hon. colleague's motion. This motion, as I am sure members are aware, asks the government to develop a mechanism that would give airports not currently eligible to receive passenger and baggage screening the ability to purchase screening services from the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, or CATSA, as it is more commonly known.

In my remarks today, I would like to highlight how our government has long supported the security of our air transport system, as well as the economic benefits that this system brings to us. I am encouraged by the fact that my hon. colleague, the member for Sherbrooke, who is a very impressive young man, has put forward a motion that highlights just one of the many initiatives our government is currently working on to promote jobs and growth while protecting Canadians.

As members of the House know, our government has long advocated policies that promote jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity. This pursuit of national prosperity, however, rests on the foundation of our national security. Indeed, as reflected in Canada's National Security Policy:

There can be no greater role, no more important obligation for a government, than the protection and safety of its citizens.

With this in mind, I want to spend a few moments highlighting some of the most salient features of our current approach to aviation security before turning my attention to the motion itself.

Aviation security—the security of aircraft, airports, and all elements of the aviation sector—is a key component of Canada's national security framework.

Canada, as many members know, was a world leader in aviation security long before the events of September 11, 2001. Following the tragic bombing of Air India Flight 182 in June 1985, Canada's civil

aviation program was rapidly transformed to include more rigorous measures for screening passengers and their belongings.

The threat to aviation has not diminished in the decades since the Air India tragedy, nor have our government's efforts to mitigate it. The creation of a national screening authority, CATSA, in 2002; the introduction of in-flight security officers; the reinforcement of cockpit doors; and, in 2007, the world's first dual biometric iris and fingerprint airport identity system for workers accessing restricted areas are all examples of improvements made to Canada's aviation security system. Other examples include 100% screening of checked baggage, the implementation of the passenger protect program, and, more recently, the rollout of a national air cargo screening program.

My aim in sharing these security achievements with the House today is to stress that the security of air travel and trade is the principal focus of Canada's aviation security system. At the same time, it is very important to consider that the purpose of security is to protect, not to hinder, air transport. Aviation security measures must not harden the system to a point where they severely undermine the efficiency and competitiveness of the sector that they are trying to protect.

As I noted in the beginning of my remarks, security is a foundation upon which prosperity is built. As such, striking the right balance between investing in security and improving efficiency will always be a key feature of any government's decision-making process. Indeed, the two must go hand in hand.

Our government recognizes the important role that aviation plays in a country the size of ours. Indeed, airports, air carriers, and associated businesses are important parts of a supply chain necessary to meet the needs of the Canadian shippers and travellers who are contributing to economic growth and job creation across this country. Moreover, the Conference Board of Canada estimates that in 2012, Canadian airports accounted for \$4.3 billion in real gross domestic product, but had a total economic footprint of \$12 billion, generated almost 600 direct jobs, and contributed over \$3 billion in federal and regional taxes.

With our security fundamentals well in place, our government is also looking closely at innovative ways to make Canada's aviation security system more cost-effective and convenient for passengers as well as for the industry that directly serves them. Presently, for example, small airports not designated for mandatory screening in the aftermath of 9/11 say that they face difficulty in attracting commercial flights. Many have indicated that the lack of security screening has become a barrier for further economic development in their communities.

• (1155)

In response, the Minister of Transport has been exploring ways to enable these smaller airports, like the one in my hon. colleague's riding of Sherbrooke, to obtain screening services and thereby connect to the wider aviation network. That is why our government supports the motion before us today: it reflects the work we have already undertaken.

Private Members' Business

As we continue to work toward finding the most appropriate solution to this issue, we need to ensure that the overall security of Canada's civil air system is preserved. That is why we have proposed an amendment to the motion so that screening would be delivered in the same nationally consistent manner under the authority of CATSA. Standards are very important.

In addition to a standardized security approach, the government also supports some form of user pay approach. A cost recovery approach would ensure that revenue streaming from mandated screening would be insulated from the cost of a screening service that would be primarily for the benefit of the local economy.

In short, any mechanisms developed to give smaller airports access to the broader national airport system for economic development purposes will need to ensure that national security standards continue to be met.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate.

The hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine has about eight minutes for her remarks today.

Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House today to support the motion moved by my colleague from Sherbrooke. This motion would be quite useful not only for his riding, but also for roughly 400 airports across the country. It seeks to allow non-designated airports to provide CATSA-recognized security screening. This mechanism would address a problem faced by the 400 airports I mentioned.

In 2004, in the wake of the events of September 11, a list of designated airports was created in order to enhance air transport security. As hon. members know, when we go to the airport we have to go through scanners, empty our pockets, and sometimes even remove our shoes, depending on the airport. These security measures are controlled by CATSA.

The motion of my colleague from Sherbrooke, an intelligent motion that is very important for his riding and also for other airports, calls on the government to allow these airports to acquire, at their expense, the same security mechanisms that the other airports have. This provides a solution to the airports that currently want to obtain this same screening. The Conservatives already talked about this measure in 2013, when they agreed that this situation had to be resolved. Nonetheless, nothing has happened since. My colleague therefore decided to move this motion in the House today in order to get things moving, because airports are major economic drivers for a number of regions.

As my colleague said, Sherbrooke, a city of 200,000 people, still does not have a designated airport. It is tough. As my colleague from Compton—Stanstead was telling me, the chamber of commerce sometimes has a hard time attracting tourists because this region does not have a good transportation system.

I lived in the Sherbrooke area for five years when I was at university. I was quite involved there, so I know what an impact an airport could have on that region. We are calling on the government to be open to the idea of allowing non-designated airports to provide

screening. Everyone who travels by air wants to benefit from these mechanisms.

Air safety is a priority for the NDP, as is the safety of all transportation, whether it be rail or marine transportation. However, people are more likely to see the importance of security screening when it comes to air safety, where passengers are involved. We are therefore asking that non-designated airports be allowed to benefit from this type of security screening. There are 518 airports in Canada, 87 of which are designated. As a result, there are many airports that need these services.

Adopting such a measure could lead to economic growth in many regions. The simplest solution would have been to designate more than these 100 airports, particularly airports that serve a large population, such as the one in Sherbrooke. However, the other parties rejected that option. That is why we are trying to have this motion adopted.

I was pleased to hear my Conservative colleagues say that they are going to support this motion and propose some amendments, since this motion is very important for the Eastern Townships.

• (1200)

I would like to thank the member for Sherbrooke. In my opinion, he does a phenomenal job of standing up for his constituents in the House. We have heard him speak on this subject, but also on many other issues. He is the youngest elected member of the House. He really shines. It is interesting to see how some members of the House are able to move a bill forward, even though they are in opposition. People ask us what we can do. This is further proof that we can do great things, even though we are members of the official opposition.

Many stakeholders support our position, including the City of Sherbrooke, all of the municipalities and RCMs in the Eastern Townships, and the universities and hospitals in the region. To date, 10 airports have had their application for designation rejected by the government.

Before I close, I would like to name them because these are airports and cities that could benefit from the motion. They are Puvirnituq; Trois-Rivières and Schefferville, Quebec; St. Catharines in the Niagra region of Ontario; Bromont, Quebec; Cold Lake, Alberta; Dawson City, Yukon; Edson, Alberta; Sherbrooke, Quebec; and the Northern Rockies regional airport in British Columbia. All of these airports will benefit from the work of the member for Sherbrooke. I want to commend him for all that he has done.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member will have three minutes and thirty seconds to finish her speech if she wishes.

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***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***PIPELINE SAFETY ACT**

The House resumed from February 26 consideration of the motion that Bill C-46, An Act to amend the National Energy Board Act and the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is an honour to rise in the House to speak on behalf of my constituents from Surrey North.

Bill C-46, An Act to amend the National Energy Board Act and the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act would amend the statutory liability regime for federally regulated pipelines in Canada. The bill includes absolute liability for all National Energy Board regulated pipelines, which means companies would be liable for costs and damages, irrespective of fault, up to \$1 billion for major oil pipelines, pipelines that would have the capacity to transport at least 250,000 barrels a day. Companies would continue to have unlimited liability when they were at fault or negligent.

The bill is a much needed and long overdue first step toward a true polluter pays regime for pipelines in Canada. The official opposition, the NDP, has been calling on the government to bring in legislation so we have a true polluter pays system.

I think the Conservatives understand what polluter pays is, however they are reluctant to make it happen in Canada. Canadians understand what polluter pays means. Even my children understand what it means. Unfortunately the Conservatives have chosen not to understand its meaning to protect their friends in the oil companies, friends who are damaging the very environment of Canada.

I think Canadians understand what polluter pays means. As I pointed out, my children understand that if one makes a mess, then one cleans it up. It is not for the next generation to clean up that mess, and I will share a story of my children to demonstrate that.

I have two children, a son, Jaron, who is 8 years old, and daughter, Jessica, who is 18. My son is a typical eight year old. He makes a mess, whether it be with his toys, or paint or a lot of other stuff, as it is the case in every Canadian household. Children make messes at home. However, one afternoon there was a huge mess of toys in the livingroom. My wife asked Jaron to clean up the mess he had made from playing with his friends. He looked at her and then looked at my daughter and said that she would clean it up for him. Jessica looked at him and said, no. He had made the mess and he would have to clean it up. Jaron then went running to his mother and told her that his sister would not clean it up. His mom told him that it was his mess and that he would have to clear it up. He understood that. He knew it was his mess and he needed to clean it up.

This is a very basic concept. Whoever makes the mess must clean it up. Unfortunately if the Conservatives' friends in the oil industry make a mess, or if a pipeline erupts or is damaged, they do not expect the oil companies to clean it up. The Canadian taxpayers have to do that. How fair is that? If most Canadians understand the concept of polluter pays, why can the Conservatives not understand that? I think the Conservatives understand it, but they are trying to

protect their friends in the oil industry and are putting the liability on Canadian taxpayers.

The bill before us is the first step with regard to the polluter pays, unfortunately the implementation of many of the proposed changes in Bill C-46 are left to the discretion of the National Energy Board and cabinet, or the details are left to regulations.

• (1205)

Bill C-46 leaves considerable leeway for politically motivated decisions and backroom arrangements between operators and the National Energy Board, a regulator that lacks credibility on the pipeline front. We are therefore left with uncertainty as to whether the bill goes far enough.

I come from British Columbia, and we have seen the opposition to the northern gateway pipeline. We know the mess that the National Energy Board has created where legitimate people were not allowed to testify or make their presentations in front of the NEB. The Conservatives have put in so many roadblocks to have a fair process. If we are going to have pipelines, there has to be a clear process in place to ensure that all of the considerations are taken before a decision is made.

The Conservatives have made a mockery of the process, and they have gutted the very environmental regulations that are supposed to protect not only our environment but also our resource sectors in this country. They have failed to take a leadership role to show that some of these projects are viable and that we take into consideration the environmental regulations and guidelines to ensure we have projects protected. Again, the polluter pay system is something that is not foreign to the Conservatives; they choose to be on the side of the oil companies instead of Canadian taxpayers.

Bill C-46, as a first step, makes some important improvements to Canada's liability regime, but the lack of certainty about the degree to which polluters would be required to pay undermines these improvements and leaves uncertainty as to whether the taxpayer would still be on the hook for cleanup costs when \$1 billion in fault or negligence cannot be proven.

• (1210)

The amount of \$1 billion is a drop in the bucket when it comes to a major oil spill. We have seen oil spills cost much more than \$1 billion. There needs to be more to ensure that Canadian taxpayers are not left holding the bag that Conservatives are passing on from their friends in the oil companies to the taxpayers. That is not fair. Canadians expect parliamentarians to ensure that liability stays with the polluter, not with the taxpayer.

Government Orders

When it comes to profits, the oil companies will gladly make sure that they take those profits, and Conservatives actually help the oil companies. If they lose money, that loss is nationalized on the backs of the taxpayers. People in my constituency clearly would not want that to happen. I have talked to many people in my constituency who want a system where we ensure that liability stays with the polluter and not with taxpayers.

I have a minute left, and I could go on in this subject because it is very much a concern to people in my constituency. Basically, there is no doubt that Canada's natural resources are a tremendous blessing and the energy sector is a driving force of our economy. The NDP vision for leveraging those resources to create wealth and prosperity does not sacrifice social or environmental sustainability.

The vision of the official opposition can be summed up in three key principles: first, sustainability, to make sure that polluters pay for pollution they create instead of leaving costs to the next generation; second, partnerships, to make sure that communities, provinces, and first nations all benefit from resource development, and that we create value-added, middle-class, high-paying jobs in Canada; and third, long-term prosperity, to leverage Canada's natural wealth to invest in modern, clean energy technologies that will keep Canada on the cutting edge of energy development and ensure affordable rates into the future.

• (1215)

Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite noted that this legislation is a step in the right direction, as many of his colleagues have already done. In fact, one even stated that they have been looking forward to legislation like this for some time.

My question will be directly put: Will the member and his colleagues be supporting this legislation?

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu: Mr. Speaker, as members know, it is a small step in the right direction.

We have been calling for this legislation for a long time. During the four years I have been here, the Conservatives have failed to see that the polluter must pay. They are more interested in protecting their friends in the oil industry than in actually protecting taxpayers.

This bill does not go far enough. We are hoping for some amendments to be brought in at the committee stage. I hope the Conservatives will accept those amendments to make the legislation better, to protect Canadians and not the oil companies.

At this second reading stage, I will be supporting this bill. However, it is on the condition that we will make this bill stronger so that Canadians are not left with the liability, that polluters are left with the liability. The polluters have to pay.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague rightly noted that the liability cap at \$1 billion is a problem. In Kalamazoo, Michigan, close to where we reside, there was one oil spill into the river there that cost \$1.2 billion to clean up.

My question for my colleague is, why is it the liability capped at that rate? If that circumstance took place in our country, for that one incident alone, taxpayers would be on the hook for \$200 million.

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu: Mr. Speaker, the hard-working member for Windsor West is absolutely right.

Who are the Conservatives trying to protect with the \$1 billion liability? We all know it costs much more to clean up some of the messes created by oil spills. Conservatives have continued to protect their friends in the oil industry and are burdening future generations with the polluter costs.

We have been asking the Conservatives to ensure that the polluter pays. The very people who pollute the environment and who cause damage to the pristine environment around Canada should be the ones who pay. We should be taking preventative measures. This is something we need to invest in to ensure that these oil spills do not happen in the first place.

Time after time, whether it is on crime prevention or on taking preventative measures to ensure we have a solid network of secure pipelines, Conservatives have failed to invest. If we are going to generate the natural wealth we have in this country, we need to ensure that we have secure, safe pipelines in place. Conservatives are not looking out for Canadian taxpayers. As usual, they are trying to protect their oil company friends.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the question from my friend from Windsor West about the Kalamazoo pipeline spill.

However, I rise to put this to my friend from Surrey North. Actually, the \$1.2 billion was spent after the Enbridge corporate culture was described by the U.S. regulators as a culture of corporate negligence. The \$1.2 billion did not result in the cleanup of the Kalamazoo River. The Kalamazoo River remains contaminated with bitumen and diluent because they have been unable to figure out how to clean up this particular type of mess.

The pipelines that are under consideration for Canada are all being proposed to carry this mixture of raw bitumen mixed with fossil fuel condensate called diluent or dilbit.

Certainly it would be far more preferable not to put dilbit in pipelines at all, but to process it in Alberta. I wonder if the hon. member agrees.

• (1220)

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu: Mr. Speaker, I like the “culture of corporate negligence”. That is the very culture that the Conservative government has been trying to protect. Canadians expect better. They expect our government to stand on their side. The government has failed to protect taxpayers.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to stand in my place and speak to this important piece of legislation.

The pipeline safety act is another example of our government's commitment to protecting both Canada's economy and the environment. Our government knows that the two do go hand in hand.

As Canadians know, our government is dedicated to creating jobs, economic growth, and long-term prosperity for everyone across this great land. That is our first priority. However, we also recognize that jobs and economic growth cannot come at any price. As the Minister of Natural Resources has said repeatedly, no project will proceed under our plan for responsible resource development unless it has been proven safe for Canadians and for the environment.

In fact, we have spelled it out very clearly as a commitment in our Speech from the Throne:

Our government believes, and Canadians expect, that resource development must respect the environment. Our Government's plan for responsible resource development includes measures to protect against spills and other risks to the environment and local communities.

The pipeline safety act is one more example of our government's promise made, promise kept approach to governing. I would like to read two more sections from our throne speech, because they outline the necessary action we promised to take on pipeline safety:

Our government will: Enshrine the polluter-pay system into law; Set higher safety standards for companies operating offshore as well as those operating pipelines, and increase the required liability insurance.

With Bill C-46, we are delivering, just as we promised and just as Canadians would expect from their government. I am truly proud of that. We are doing exactly what we said we would do.

Specifically, this new legislation for pipeline safety focuses on prevention, on preparedness and response, as well as on liability and compensation.

As the Minister of Natural Resources said when he launched this debate, the amendments in this act send a clear message. The Government of Canada will ensure that Canada's pipeline safety system is world class, that first nations are involved in pipeline safety operations, and that taxpayers are protected. These are fundamental responsibilities for a federal government, and we are fulfilling our obligations fully and directly.

I am also pleased to see that members opposite have agreed that Bill C-46 is another important step in our efforts to ensure that Canada is a world leader in pipeline safety. As the member for Hamilton Mountain said, "I would be less than honest if I did not acknowledge that the amendments appear to be a step in the right direction".

Moreover, the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley said, "This may sound strange, but I have looked forward to some version of such a bill for many years". It is strange, since New Democrats are completely opposed to all form of resource development. However, we appreciate that they recognize an excellent piece of legislation when they see one.

Just as important, it appears that all sides of this chamber have finally acknowledged that Canada's energy sector is the key engine driving our economy. The oil and gas industry alone contributes almost 8% to our gross domestic product. It employs 360,000 Canadians directly and indirectly, and it generates more than \$23 billion annually in government revenue to help pay for social programs like health care, education, and infrastructure.

At the same time, pipelines are crucial to the safe transport of oil and gas across our country and to markets beyond our borders. As

Government Orders

we have heard many times during this debate, Canada has an enviable record on pipeline safety. Of all the oil and product transported through about 73,000 kilometres of federally regulated pipelines in Canada, 99.999% of it has arrived safely.

My colleague from Nanaimo—Alberni captured this point very well with a reference to his home province of British Columbia. He said:

We had a pipeline going through Burnaby for more than 60 years, and most people in Burnaby did not even know it...

As my colleague for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry said:

...most homes in Canada are heated with natural gas, all of which is delivered by pipelines, but Canadians do not need to give it a second thought because it all happens so safely and seamlessly every single day.

● (1225)

Canada has a reputation for building and operating pipelines safely. This is one of our country's many strengths, and our government is determined to keep improving upon this record. That is why we have already implemented other important measures. For example, we gave the National Energy Board new authority to levy administrative monetary penalties and additional resources to increase its inspections and audits each year. As a result, oil and gas pipeline inspections have increased by 50% a year and comprehensive audits of pipelines have doubled.

The pipeline safety act would move those yardsticks even further. I would like to highlight a few examples. At the top of the list is the proposal to enshrine in law the polluter pays principle, to ensure that polluters would be held financially responsible for any costs and damages they cause. The legislation would also introduce absolute no-fault liability and require companies operating pipelines to hold minimum financial resources for incident response. For companies operating major oil pipelines the requirement would be set at \$1 billion. As well, the pipeline safety act would, in exceptional circumstances, provide the NEB with the authority and resources to take control of incident response and cleanup when a company is unable to do so. Also, the new legislation would expand NEB authority to recover costs from industry for that backstop.

Furthermore, we are working with aboriginal communities and industry to enhance the participation of aboriginal peoples in all aspects of pipeline operations, from planning and monitoring to responding to incidents. This would ensure that aboriginal peoples participate fully in related employment and business opportunities.

These are all right and good measures. They are perfect examples of how our government is leading the way in protecting the well-being of Canadians, our communities and the environment. They also remind us of how safety standards can and should be enhanced as technologies evolve and regulations are improved.

Government Orders

The pipeline safety act delivers on all of these fronts. It ensures that Canadians keep setting the bar when it comes to the safe transport of oil and gas. I urge all members to support this valuable piece of legislation.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I know it is a degree of precision, which we do not often get in this place but references to pipelines generally, in this place and in the media, refer to oil pipelines or gas pipelines. In fact, as far as I know, all the pipelines that are currently being promoted, whether Keystone or Enbridge, Kinder Morgan or energy east, are actually about shipping raw bitumen to tidewater to get it sent to other countries for refining. It is actually not even crude oil. It is pre-crude. It is bitumen mixed with dilutant, otherwise called dilbit. It does pose different threats in the case of a spill and because of those different threats, the cap at \$1 billion would be unlikely to recover the costs for polluters.

I would like to ask the hon. parliamentary secretary if there has been an analysis, with which she is familiar, of the different costs between cleaning up dilbit, dealing with crude and dealing with refined product.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, we know that between 2000 and 2011, federally regulated pipelines boasted a safety record of over 99.99%. Pipeline companies would remain fully liable when they are found at fault or negligent in the unlikely event of a spill.

An analysis of historical examples demonstrates that this level of absolute liability and financial capacity provides world-class coverage. The average cost of major pipeline spills in North America has resulted in cleanup costs in the range of \$20 million to \$50 million.

• (1230)

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke a bit about the engagement that the government wants to have with aboriginal communities as we move forward with pipelines. I wonder if she could talk just a little more about the opportunities that this is going to present for our aboriginal youth, employment opportunities and moving forward with new places and new careers.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, the natural resources sector is the largest private employer of first nations people in Canada. In the next decade, over 400,000 aboriginal youth will be entering the workforce, creating an unprecedented opportunity to address the need for new workers in the oil and gas industry. In 2012, more than 13,500 aboriginal people worked in the Canadian energy sector. We have developed this plan closely with industry and aboriginal communities to provide training for aboriginal communities on pipeline monitoring and response. This would allow first nations to continue to make important contributions as a full partner in the development of our natural resources.

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague quoted her colleague from Nanaimo—Alberni and said that he thinks people in Burnaby did not realize that a pipeline ran through their community. I am not sure how my colleague made this determination. However, putting that aside for now, I can assure her that after the 2009 Kinder Morgan spill, she would be hard-pressed to find a resident in Burnaby, in fact the Lower Mainland, who does not realize that a pipeline goes through that community in the Lower Mainland.

My question to my colleague is why smaller pipelines are exempt. These are important, as she is pointing out, in the transportation of oil. Why are the small pipelines exempt and why is there so much discretionary authority being given to the NEB and the Governor in Council instead of creating the certainty that even industry would want and require?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that we are doing exactly what we said we would. We have been very clear that through this legislation our government is ensuring that Canada's pipeline safety system is world class, that first nations are involved in pipeline safety and operations, and that taxpayers are protected. We held a technical briefing, at which time that question was asked, and it is my understanding that regulations will provide further precision for companies that are transporting less than 250,000 barrels per day.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on this important bill to have the polluter pays principle apply to some of the government's legislation, which has been long sought after in this chamber. Therefore, Bill C-46, an act to amend the National Energy Board Act and the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act, will be receiving our support to send it to committee.

There are some issues with this bill. It is lacklustre in some components, whether that be with respect to the clarity of the National Energy Board's oversight or liability. We have talked a bit about that today. However, the significant Achilles heel of the bill is the determination of the cleanup costs for companies that reach the \$1-billion liability limit. That might sound like a lot of money on the surface, but in reality we have had spills that have cost more than \$1 billion in terms of cleanup. I will speak to one in my area. Although it is an American example, our energy is integrated and it happened in a river that is connected to the Great Lakes tributary system. It affected the largest clean water supply. This is important not only with respect to the environment and water consumption for individuals but also to the general economy. We have ships that service all of the Great Lakes right out to the oceans, as well as tourism worth hundreds of millions of dollars with respect to the ecosystem. To give some perspective, over 800,000 U.S. gallons of oil escaped into the Kalamazoo River from a 30-inch pipeline. It got into the water system and required \$1.2 billion U.S. to clean up. Given the value of our dollar today, that would be much higher than it was at the time. The reality is that it affected us.

To give those who are listening to the debate today an idea, a lot of effort and public money was spent to clean up the Great Lakes and other ecosystems. Therefore, it is not just about the damage and the problems that are caused at the moment a spill occurs, it is also about undermining all of the public investment that has been done to try to restore some of our ecosystems because we have treated them poorly so many times.

Government Orders

Most recently, we were able to celebrate the release of the sturgeon back into the Kalamazoo area, which is important to both the ecosystem and tourism sectors. A lot of hard work has been done to improve the terms and conditions by which we can use those and we have turned a negative into an asset. Therefore, when a spill takes place we cannot think of it in the context of that one moment, that one spill and that one time. When we look at the spills we have had across the country, there have also been legacy costs due to other related effects on the community, with respect to loss of use of water resources or land. Canadians have been quite clear and have consistently shown poll after poll that they do not have any confidence with respect to companies being able to clean up and contain oil spills affecting land and, in particular, water. A few years back, we saw some more modest spills that had shown up unexpectedly in the Detroit River when people found oil washing up on the shore. The company had no idea there was a spill.

Ironically, at one point in time if companies were fined for an oil spill or received a corporate fine or penalty, they could claim it as a tax deduction. I am proud that in 2004 the New Democrats fought to get that law changed so that they could no longer write off the costs of polluting. Not only did the polluter not pay, it was rewarded because it was a business-related expense at the time. That can no longer happen and is a step forward.

• (1235)

However, we are still left with some problems related to this bill. As I have noted, Canadians do not have confidence in the cleanup. Part of the problem that we have with the bill is that the National Energy Board's ability to act and investigate would not be sufficient.

I would point to the poor track record of the Conservative government. It is important that we did some see some action related to the horrible incident in Lac-Mégantic, but for some time now, we have been warning about some of the problems that the government has in relation to self-regulation.

I was on the transport committee when we tabled a report on rail safety in this chamber. I cannot say what was done when we were in camera, but I can say that the report did not have a dissenting opinion put with it. That was odd, because there were things that were clearly missing in the report that we tabled. A report prior to that talked about the safety management systems and how there was a culture of fear at CN and CP.

With a self-regulating body, are people going to feel strong enough and confident enough to go forward and challenge some of the industries that clearly have the ear of the Conservative government? This is a concern that I have with the National Energy Board. As we move to the self-regulation aspect, having seen cuts to the regulatory oversight, is that going to be enough? I do not think that it will be. That is what causes me major concern about this bill. It is the liability and accountability.

I would like to conclude with this. As I mentioned, in terms of their confidence in cleaning up oil spills, only 27% of Canadians are confident that the Government of Canada is able to respond effectively to a significant oil spill on water. That is significant. That lack of confidence from Canadians would be felt from coast to coast to coast and on our inland operations where we get our freshwater supplies.

We will move this bill to committee, but we will be asking significant questions to try to figure out why there is a \$1 billion cap and why taxpayers should be on the hook for negligence.

• (1240)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to get some clarity on the issue of pipelines, because it depends on who we talk to within the New Democratic Party about the energy east pipeline. I believe that the Leader of the Opposition has commented to the effect that he is somewhat bullish regarding the development of the energy east program. Some of his colleagues have even been a little bit bolder in their opposition to it.

Can the member provide some clarification? It has a lot to do with pipeline safety. There is no doubt about the need for energy east. Could the member provide some clarification on the whole project? What is the NDP's position?

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear. Generally speaking, our position on natural resources is that we should be in control of them by appropriately managing them and making sure that when we use them, it is done with the polluter pay principle and is sustainable. That is how we believe Canada's natural resources are best suited for use.

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, among the provisions in the bill that have caused me a little bit of concern is one that limits the prescription period for liability claims to an absolute cap of six years. The limitation is three years from the time damage appears and materializes, which is a principle that we tend to recognize in tort and liability law generally. However, no matter when damage may materialize, whether health or environmental, there is an absolute cap of six years.

I wonder if my colleague feels that this is a problem, in that it seems to cut off at the knees the idea that medium- and long-term damage could materialize. That damage would not be claimable.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. It is a point I had written down but never did bring up in my comments.

This is a very important point, because we would be limiting the window in which damages can be claimed. That window should be open. If damages take place, the polluter should pay for them. Whether the damage is discovered sooner or later should not be a factor.

It could take years to determine the source point of environmental damage or leakage. It may not be as obvious as in the case of the Kalamazoo River. It could be a longer-term problem with a pipeline that could basically be absolved from the process. Again, it is similar to that of setting \$1 billion for damages. Why are we setting these caps with arbitrary numbers?

What we should be doing is making sure that the funding is going to be there to pay for it and that the proper insurance is in place. Second, no matter when the damage takes place, the company must be held responsible.

Government Orders

•(1245)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for Windsor West for his speech and for again raising this issue of the pipeline rupture and spill in Kalamazoo, Michigan. I think it is particularly instructive to look at that, because it was a pipeline carrying dilbit.

Certainly this was the first dilbit spill that the United States Environmental Protection Agency ever had to deal with. It reported that it was basically impossible to clean up and it brought Enbridge back to the site over and over to try to clean it up.

I referred earlier to Enbridge's culture of negligence. U.S. regulators referred to Enbridge's response as Keystone Kops. Enbridge had a pipeline spill alert with high-tech equipment that would ring in a control room the minute there was a rupture. In fact, the alarm bells did ring, but the Enbridge guys in the control room went around shutting off the alarms because they did not believe them. They did not believe there was a rupture. They thought there was a malfunction somewhere else in the system. When the next shift came on, they did not warn them that all these bells had been ringing. The next shift came on and started pumping raw product right out through a broken pipeline, and that is when most of the spill occurred.

The legislation is fine as far as it goes, but I would like my friend's comments. Now that we know that dilbit is virtually impossible to clean up, why would we put it in pipelines at all?

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for raising in greater detail what took place in Michigan, because I think it is important.

Coming from that area, I know how much work has been done over the years to try to clean up the Great Lakes and the tributary systems that feed the Great Lakes. It has been a real challenge. We have all heard the stories of the Hudson River being on fire and a series of things like that, but we have had a series of other problems in the Michigan area as well.

There has been a lot of public investment, not so much on the Canadian site but on the American side, because we share this treasured resource. When we have a spill like this through the negligence of Enbridge, it undermines all the other taxpayer-funded initiatives that try to make it a better place to live.

Ms. Joan Crockatt (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to what is in many ways groundbreaking legislation, because today we are setting a gold standard. This is a gold standard of environmental protection in the energy business, and that is something all Canadians should be proud of.

The measures we are introducing in Bill C-46 would have a positive impact on everything, from international energy markets to setting technical standards to fostering continued public confidence in Canada's world-class pipeline safety system. Yes, it would impose some hardship on energy companies—something we are cognizant of, particularly in the low oil price environment we are living in right now—but it would reap rewards in public trust, because the public needs to understand that in the unlikely event that there was need for

a cleanup, taxpayers would not be left paying the bill. That is something this legislation would do.

As the minister has said many times, we cannot deliver our vast energy resources to global markets if we do not first garner public support in our own backyard. I want Canadians to know and spread the word to their neighbours, friends, co-workers, and relatives—and this is important—that Canada ranks in the top four countries in the world in environmental standards around our energy industry. We are number one in many areas, and this is something that we need to know and should be proud of. Bill C-46, the pipeline safety act, would add another gold standard to our environmental protection record in this area.

I want to talk now about supply and demand.

As Canadians, we understand the importance of the oil and gas sector. Certainly in my riding of Calgary Centre, that is what people live and breathe. All of us across Canada know how essential it is to have such things as natural gas delivered to our homes to light our furnaces and heat our houses when we have the brutal weather we have had in areas of Canada recently.

We also know that we need gas when we go to local service stations when we are taking our daughters to ballet or baseball or our sons to hockey. We understand that somebody, somewhere, will have to fuel the planes to fly us to see our loved ones living three provinces or three time zones away. All of us are consumers of this great resource.

The pipeline safety act was designed to address both our need and our desire for energy to be delivered safely to our communities and beyond. Every single one of us in this country utilizes this resource, and to pretend otherwise is simply not accurate. The bill also recognizes that Canadians inherently know that the demand for energy at home and abroad is a fact of modern life. In fact, energy is essential to move people out of poverty.

We have to develop our energy resources with a strong, world-class environmental safety system. According to the International Energy Agency, the world will need 37% more energy in 2040 than it consumes today, and that is going to include some of our resource.

Canadian pipelines currently are moving about three million barrels of oil every day. If we were to turn off all those pipelines, we would be adding 15,000 tanker trucks to our roads every day or putting another 4,200 railcars on the rails every day just to meet the current demand. Of course, these other modes of transportation go right through towns and cities and consume more energy, which in turn increases our greenhouse gas emissions.

Government Orders

Simply put, pipelines offer a very clean and efficient way to deliver the energy that all of us need every day. In Canada, they represent the safest way to transport oil and gas. As the Minister of Natural Resources has also said, Canada boasts one of the most enviable safety records in the world when it comes to transporting oil, gas, and petroleum products by pipeline. I thought it was interesting that in his speech, the member opposite was talking about an oil spill that did not occur in Canada, where we have among the safest pipelines in the world.

Between 2008 and 2013, for example, 99.999% of the oil and gas products transported through federally regulated pipelines arrived safely. Pipelines are clearly the way to go. The only question is how we keep building on our world-class safety system, and the pipeline safety act is our answer. We want to create the safest energy transportation system in the world. That might sound overly ambitious to some people, but we know that with political will and Canadian engineering, we can help make it happen.

• (1250)

The legislation before us will get us there by strengthening pipeline safety. It has three key pillars: first, incident prevention; second, preparedness and response; and third, liability and compensation.

Looking at prevention, we have committed to responsible resource development in Canada. We are delivering it. That demands that we take every possible measure and precaution to prevent incidents from even occurring. That is why we are proposing amendments to the National Energy Board Act that would build on other recent improvements, such as increasing the number of inspections and audits conducted every year and giving the National Energy Board the authority to levy penalties for non-compliance. Why? It is because we want to further improve the transparency and operation of the NEB under its enabling legislation.

Prevention starts even before that. It starts with the design and the construction of pipelines. In addition to this new legislation, the government will seek guidance from the NEB on the use of the best available technologies. Canada is really at the front end of many of these technologies. They are very exciting. They are being used in pipeline projects. They include materials, construction methods, and emergency response techniques, one of which is a really cool SmartBall. It rolls through a pipeline and can detect the slightest little change in pressure or a hiss to detect a pipeline problem almost before it occurs. These are really exciting developments.

On preparedness and response, the bill would ensure a robust response in the very unlikely event of an incident. It would require companies operating pipelines to have a minimum level of financial resources. It would not be just insurance. Pipeline operators would be required to keep a portion of that money, \$100 million, readily available for rapid response if an incident should occur.

On liability and compensation, the third pillar, the bill would enshrine the polluter pays principle. We believe that polluters, not Canadian taxpayers, should be financially responsible for any cleanup costs. This would also give our companies skin in the game. They would know that in the unlikely event that they had a leak or spill, they would be paying the bill. That would give them even more incentive to use the best environmental safety practices they could

find and would give the public confidence that they would not be picking up the tab.

We are proposing absolute liability, which is something no other country in the world has. Truly, this is a gold standard. The no-fault liability would mean that companies would automatically be responsible for damages. They would not have to wait to see who was at fault. It would be \$1 billion for major oil companies, regardless of who caused the incident. It would require companies that operate pipelines to have matching financial resources to deal with any incidents.

Finally, the bill would allow, if necessary, the government to pursue operators for environmental damages over the entire life cycle of a pipeline, including abandonment. This ability would be truly world leading.

In conclusion, when it comes to moving oil and gas, government and industry must strive for the highest safety standards possible. We are aiming for a world-class standard that all Canadians can trust, the gold standard.

I am supporting the pipeline safety act. It will help us set that gold standard for safety. The Liberals and the NDP often vote against increased pipeline safety measures. They certainly have in the past. I am hoping for their support on this particular bill. It will make Canada number one in the world.

• (1255)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Calgary Centre, who is quite familiar with oil since her province is known for its oil, said that it was a matter of trust.

I disagree, because this is more than a matter of trust. Residents who live 4 km away were endangered when 30 to 35 train cars derailed in Gogama over the weekend, early Saturday morning.

This bill is about pipelines. However, how can we ensure safety from beginning to end when oil is transported through a pipeline? It is not just a matter of trust; it is also a matter of responsibility.

My question for the member is the following: When damages exceed \$1 billion, who will foot the bill if not the taxpayers?

[*English*]

Ms. Joan Crockett: Mr. Speaker, of course the derailment is very regrettable. It is a derailment by train. This pipeline safety act is designed to allow Canadians to utilize the safest system in the world for transporting oil and gas by pipeline. I think that portion of the question was certainly answered.

Government Orders

Canada will be the leader in the world in pipeline safety when this comes through. We have the safest pipelines in the world. It has been said that if the Keystone pipeline were to have been approved, it would be the safest pipeline in the U.S. We have the technology in Canada, and we are utilizing it to show Canadians.

People who live in Alberta, who deal with the energy industry every day and where pipelines are an everyday fact of life, understand how safe they are. My niece's partner works in the industry. He is called out at night if there is a leak of more than one litre.

This is an industry that has a 99.999% safety record. The opposition members should start letting Canadians know that this is an industry they should be behind, and I find it unconscionable that they increasingly vote against very good legislation like what we are seeing here today.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians appreciate the importance of our environment, and they have certain expectations that I believe the government should be attempting to meet.

The member talked about 99.999% and said that it is the best in the world. It is fair to say that it is not because of the government that the pipeline industry as a whole is going out of its way to make sure that it is as safe as possible. I believe that it has a lot more to do with the expectations Canadians have and the companies, at least in part, trying to meet those expectations.

Would the member agree that there is still a great deal of room for improvement? In fact, that is the reason we are bringing the bill forward. If she agrees to that, would she be sympathetic to the idea of having possible amendments that would give the legislation that much more strength so that we could reinforce just how important safety is when it comes to our pipelines?

● (1300)

Ms. Joan Crockatt: Mr. Speaker, there were components of that question I could agree to. However, one of the things we need to understand is that we are at the top of the world. Canada is now at the top of the world. We are pushing the level of environmental safety in this industry above all other countries in the world.

One of the push-backs from industry is that they are worried that they are going to be uncompetitive because of other competitors that are supplying oil, such as Algeria. The number one source of oil for Quebec right now is Algeria. Are the pipeline safety standards in Algeria similar to those we are implementing here in the bill today? Absolutely not. This is state-of-the-art legislation that will give us state-of-the-art environmental standards in our pipeline industry. I look forward to the opposition's support.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-46, the pipeline safety act.

As I pointed out in my question, Canadians have a reasonable and high expectation that industry will ensure that our pipelines are safe and secure, not only today but well into the future. The Liberal Party is committed to ensuring that this is the case. If at all possible, it would be wonderful to say that we have a 100% safety and security record. We need to at least set that bar very high.

In her response, the member for Calgary Centre made reference to Algeria. We do not need to compare Canada to Algeria. We have our own standards and expectations. I hope the government, in going to committee, is not going to take the approach that because we have a 99.999% record there is no room for improvement. There is room for improvement. The government has recognized this, at least in part, by bringing forward the legislation. Hopefully, if amendments come forward through the committee process that would improve the safety of our pipelines, it will listen and respond accordingly. That is an important aspect as we get ready to go to committee. As the Liberal Party critic has clearly indicated, the Liberal Party will support the bill going to committee.

Bill C-46 does a number of significant things. The most important is that it enshrines the polluter pays principle. If we were to canvas, I think we would find that there is virtually unanimous support for that principle. It is something that is long overdue, and it is great to see it being incorporated in Bill C-46.

Bill C-46 deals with a few more issues I would like to quickly point out. It would better enable the National Energy Board to provide direction on using the best technologies available for building and operating pipelines. The NEB would also have a role in aligning federal and provincial pipeline safety.

We often hear about the 70,000 km plus of pipelines the federal government is, in essence, always watching over indirectly. I would suggest that in some areas, it is doing it more directly.

There are also other pipelines out there, and there needs to be coordination with our provincial counterparts. Many, including me, would suggest that it should go beyond that to include first nations and others.

Bill C-46 would give the National Energy Board the authority to take control of an incident if deemed necessary. I think most people would have anticipated that this would have been the case. The bill provides more clarity in that whole area.

The bill would provide for unlimited liability when at-fault or negligent actions are taken. There would be an expectation that the NEB would ensure that the companies responsible would actually have the funds necessary, which would lead to insurance contracts and so forth.

The bill also deals with an important point on which there has not been much debate, and that is the area of abandoned pipelines. There are, in fact, some abandoned pipelines, and the bill deals with that issue.

It is one thing to talk about pipeline development, and I will spend a bit of time on that, and pipelines that are fully commissioned and bringing product to market. However, there are, at times, decommissioned pipelines we need to spend some time, energy, and resources on to ensure that the environment where those decommissioned pipelines are is protected.

● (1305)

There are reasons to believe the legislation, which will ultimately pass through committee, will be of benefit, both to our environment and to the industry as a whole.

Government Orders

My understanding is that even industry stakeholders, in particular companies, are at the very least understanding of why the legislation is here today. If they have any understanding of public opinion and want to address the high standards that have been established by Canadians, they will be supportive of the legislation. There will be some areas of concern, but at this point I believe there is substantial support for the bill going to committee.

There is a great deal of need to ensure we get this right. Over the last number of years, the Prime Minister has invested a great deal of his political capital on one issue at great cost: the development and exportation of oil. It has cost tens of thousands of jobs in other sectors. He has made Canada more dependent on the price of oil, to the degree that the government indefinitely put off presenting its budget, which is somewhat bizarre.

The Prime Minister's inability to deal with the needs of future exportation of oil, whether it is to other provincial jurisdictions or to the United States, and his failure to work in consultation to develop pipelines that will be in the long-term interest of Canada will cost hundreds, if not billions, of dollars in the future. This means good quality jobs will be lost because of the incompetence of the Prime Minister on the file. We all need to be somewhat concerned about that.

On the one hand, we have the inability within the Conservative Party to get the job done. On the other hand, the New Democrats talk about pipeline safety, which means no pipeline development or just no real interest, from my point of view. We saw that in part when the leader of the official opposition went to the United States to tell Americans to say no to the Keystone pipeline. In the Prairies we understand how anti-west the leader of the official opposition can be at times.

With the development of our natural resources, the economic opportunities and how that improves the quality of life for all Canadians, it is to the benefit of the House to get this right. We in the Liberal Party recognize there are economic opportunities, but there are also environmental responsibilities. We believe we are in a position to say to Canadians that we understand the issue, unlike the approaches of the current government and the New Democrats.

It is the attitude of working with our counterparts, understanding the needs of industry, understanding the needs of first nations and those of other stakeholders, and our environment. In the right situation, working in consultation, it can be done. The alternative, as others have said, is this. If we do not do what is necessary, and we want to at least attempt to meet the markets, we would have phenomenal percentage increases in rail line and semi-truck transportation of oil and gas, which is no safer than our pipelines.

•(1310)

Ms. Joan Crockatt (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I found the speech of the member opposite a little amusing. He has criticized the Leader of the Opposition and his party for being anti-west when we know the Liberal leader has been against the gateway pipeline and west coast tanker traffic. He had members of the Liberal Party lambasting Alberta MPs for speaking out to help our energy industry keep moving and continuing to make the contributions it does to Canadians. However, that is an aside.

The member for Winnipeg North talked about wanting some amendments to the bill. I find this somewhat typical of the Liberals. It is airy-fairy. They have no amendments to put forward. They have nothing specific that they can suggest, unless it is more taxes, a fact they are hiding from Canadians. We know the Liberals are all about taxes.

Do the Liberals have specific amendments, even one? Do they have any clear ideas whatsoever on the bill?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I will address the member's first comment. It is interesting that the Conservative spin tries to get out messages which are just not true. The reality is that the Conservative government, and the Prime Minister and the member for Calgary Centre need to be sensitive to this issue, especially as they are members of Parliament for Calgary, has failed completely in its development of the pipeline needs of the future. There has been a huge vacuum of leadership under the government. As a direct result of that, we have lost thousands of good quality job opportunities, not to mention the potential that could have been achieved in market growth.

We in the Liberal Party are not fearful of market growth on condition, and I said this when I spoke. We need to have balance. We have to protect the environment. Canadians demand that of us. The Liberal Party is prepared to deliver on both of those counts.

In terms of potential amendments, the member should listen to my colleague from Halifax West, who has spoken on the bill and this issue, not only today but at other opportunities. I am sure he would be happy to sit down with her and explain a lot of wonderful ideas.

•(1315)

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have what I think is, ultimately, a simple question for our colleague. When did he and the Liberal Party get religion?

When the Liberals left power, the liability limit was a mere \$40 million. It was not as if the oil industry was not robust. It was not as if the shape of it was not more or less the same as it is now. Yet now, we have the Liberals standing up and saying okay, because of popular pressure, somehow the government is doing the right thing.

Where were the Liberals the entire time of their tenure, until roughly eight years ago?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the thing about time is that things change. I suspect that we did not see the New Democratic Party jumping out of its seats during question period, saying "let's increase the limit to a billion dollars". In time, there is a need for change.

Within the Liberal Party, we believe that as things evolve, we need to bring forward legislation to improve upon the system we have in place. How wonderful it would be if we could pass legislation today that would cater to all the needs in 10 or 20 years from now.

Government Orders

When issues come to the floor of the House, or when stakeholders come to the table to talk about the importance of issues, there is a need for us to at least try to deal with them. Here we have an issue in which I believe there is virtually unanimous support on aspects such as the polluter pays principle. We should continue to look at how we might improve upon that principle.

The NDP opposes any sort of real development of a pipeline. As I indicated, pipeline safety to the NDP is no pipeline. We in the Liberal Party do not believe that. We believe there are environmental and economic concerns, but there is also the potential for development and getting our product to the market. All of us as a society would benefit from that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Pilon (Laval—Les Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak today to a bill that addresses the concerns of many of my constituents in Laval—Les Îles, Bill C-46, An Act to amend the National Energy Board Act and the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act. Although this bill is a first step toward a true polluter pays regime for Canadian oil companies—which is what the NDP wants—this is something the government should have done a long time ago.

The bill also amends the statutory liability regime for federally regulated pipelines in Canada. Bill C-46 includes absolute liability for all pipelines regulated by the National Energy Board. That means that oil companies will be liable for costs and damage, irrespective of fault, up to \$1 billion for major pipelines, that is, pipelines with the capacity to transport at least 250,000 barrels of oil per day. That is definitely an improvement over existing laws. However, there are significant improvements to be made to this bill and grey areas that we feel need to be clarified, as is always the case with this government.

First of all, the bill before us does not include absolute liability, which I mentioned earlier, for natural gas companies and other operators of non-oil pipelines or for small oil pipeline companies. Under this bill, that will be determined by future regulations or by cabinet.

I am honoured to be a member of the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations. My colleagues on the committee, including the members for Honoré-Mercier and Beauharnois—Salaberry, would be able to talk about how extremely slowly this government, like the Liberal governments before it, deals with certain regulations. The committee regularly scrutinizes regulations from 1980 and 1990. Believe it or not, we recently dealt with a regulation that has been pending since 1976. I am therefore very suspicious of this government's ability to manage a matter of such great importance and to act efficiently and quickly when it comes to regulations.

The Conservative government has a reputation for being slow to respond to urgent situations, unless they are politically advantageous and can be used to appease its political base, as we have seen many times, including with Bill C-2 and more recently with Bill C-51. Since the Conservative base does not consider defending the environment to be sexy, this government has taken years to act—and it has not done nearly enough, if you ask us—in order to solve the problem of liability in the event of an oil spill if a pipeline breaks.

Ian Miron, a lawyer with Ecojustice, sees the \$1 billion liability limit as insufficient. According to him, no liability regime can truly be considered a polluter pays regime unless and until polluters are made absolutely liable for the full costs of environmental harm. While the \$1 billion limit may be considered an important first step for some companies, just look at what happened in the case of the Kalamazoo River spill in Michigan. Cleanup costs can quickly add up to \$1 billion in the case of a major spill, and that does not even include compensation for damage.

The bill for the Enbridge spill in the Kalamazoo river is \$1.2 billion. That does not include any damages or losses. In that type of case, we realize that the liability limit set at \$1 billion is hardly enough and that the taxpayer will likely have to cover the rest of the bill yet again.

It is therefore quite understandable why so many people from Laval in my riding and my colleagues in the region are so concerned about Enbridge wanting to go through the area. The consultation process is flawed and does not include any consultation or fulsome discussion with the public and various stakeholders. There is just as much concern over the idea that in the event of a spill, the companies' liability is limited.

• (1320)

I already hear my colleagues opposite saying that we are anti-oil and anti-pipeline. That is pure rhetoric. The NDP wants responsible and sustainable development. There is no doubt that the natural resources we have in Canada are a real boon.

The energy sector is an essential driver of our economy. However, our vision for enhancing these resources and creating wealth and prosperity must not come at the expense of the social and environmental sustainability of our economy. For far too long, the Liberals and the Conservatives have been telling Canadians that they must choose between the environment and the economy. That is not true. They do not have to choose.

A new vision is needed for the future of our energy resources. The NDP has such a vision, and it is based on three key principles. The first is sustainability. We must ensure that polluters pay for the pollution they create instead of leaving those financial and environmental costs to future generations.

The second is partnership. We must ensure that our communities, provinces and first nations all benefit from resource development and that we create value-added jobs for the middle class here in Canada.

The third is long-term prosperity. We need real long-term prosperity, not just meaningless words from the Conservatives. We need prosperity to leverage Canada's natural wealth to invest in modern, clean energy technology that will keep Canada on the cutting edge of energy development and ensure affordable rates into the future.

Government Orders

Bill C-46 is a step in the right direction when it comes to companies' financial liability. It is important to note that the bill also has some serious shortcomings, which I mentioned earlier and which we truly hope that the government will consider and fix in committee, in the spirit of collegiality. One particular shortcoming is the exclusion of gas companies from the absolute liability process. These companies are absolved in the current version of the bill.

However, it is even more important that in the future—at third reading, we hope—the bill include provisions that are nowhere to be found in this version of the bill. This includes, for example, the need for oil and gas companies to hold extensive consultations with communities, like my own community of Laval. This would ensure that the public can have its say and that the company that wants to put a pipeline through a particular area is accountable to the public in the region with respect to the security of the facilities and environmental standards.

Unfortunately, under this government, the environmental assessment process has been literally gutted, as have so many other environmental regulations since 2011. We are still holding out hope that the Conservatives will finally listen to reason and that they will listen to the people who have concerns, as we are doing in the NDP.

In conclusion, the bill before us today is an extremely important one. It is crucial for all of us, no matter the party, to do things the right way. Over the past four years, this government has rushed vitally important bills through the House, without meaningful debate and without being open to amendments that would improve bills or even address potential flaws.

Unfortunately, Bill C-51 is very representative of this reality. Therefore, I hope that Bill C-46 will mark a new way of doing things for this government, because as parliamentarians we must work in the interest of those who elected us, not in the interest of those who contribute to the Conservatives' campaign fund.

• (1325)

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, could my colleague tell us a bit more about sustainable development, which he mentioned in his speech?

Mr. François Pilon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Toronto—Danforth for his question.

We know that oil reserves will run out one day. We must invest oil profits in new technologies. As we know, oil will not last forever.

I went to Dubai about two years ago. New technologies are being developed even there. When I asked the people in Dubai why, even there, they were developing other technologies, they told me that they know the oil will not last forever and that now is the time to start looking for alternative solutions.

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Laval—Les Îles for his excellent speech and for saying that there are, in fact, some good points in this bill. We will support it and try to improve it with appropriate amendments.

Still—and this is important—he did refer to what this bill does not contain. This bill does not mention the environmental laws that have been attacked, diminished and weakened during the years of Conservative rule.

That does not help to build pipelines; quite the opposite. We have a serious problem if the necessary consultations are not carried out. For example, in the case of the energy east pipeline, there is a slapdash rush to finish the consultations in a way that makes no sense, without doing the environmental assessments needed to ensure that the project is solid, environmentally responsible and safe for the public. No one has asked for public approval or social licence.

I would like the hon. member to tell us what is missing in this bill with respect to environmental assessments and social licence.

• (1330)

Mr. François Pilon: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Drummond for his question.

For more than a year we were both members of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. While I was on that committee, the government made cuts to environmental assessments. Now they have added time limits. When someone asks for approval of a pipeline or similar project, there is a time limit and even if the environmental assessments are not complete, the government can decide that the time is up, whenever it likes.

Of course, that worries me. Also, even though the members on the other side of the House tell us that pipelines are 99.99% safe, people will not be happy if the remaining 0.01% happens in their back yard.

Ms. Paulina Ayala (Honoré-Mercier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague to tell us more about social licence for the pipeline project. I would like to know if he can add some information on this subject and tell us, for example, what the mayors of various cities say about pipelines in their areas.

Mr. François Pilon: Mr. Speaker, we in Laval know that a pipeline will be going to the riding of Honoré-Mercier, where I lived for several happy years.

Everyone, including the mayors, is worried and wonders what will really happen. Are we adequately prepared in case of a spill? Neither this bill nor our current resources will be enough to respond to a spill.

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to wish you a very happy retirement. We have all appreciated your time in this House.

I have a lot of worries and questions as I enter this debate on the bill. The pipeline safety bill is a contemporary issue that links transportation and safety.

Government Orders

In recent years, a number of serious incidents all over North America have repeatedly brought this issue to the forefront of many citizens' concerns, including the people of my riding, Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles. For example, many of my constituents have said they are worried about the oil terminal proposed for the port of Cacouna. Pipeline safety and security are under close watch by the Canadian people.

Moreover, this is a crosscutting debate that affects several levels of government, such as municipalities, provinces, territories and other social groups and communities, including first nations.

As I speak today, I hope the government will listen to my fears, take note of my questions so it can answer them, and show its good faith and its openness to dialogue and to the amendments we will be proposing later.

I want to tell the House about three main aspects of this bill: the importance of favouring prevention over reaction; the cap of \$1 billion on the polluter pays principle applying to private companies' spills; and the future of our energy resources.

I have a lot to say about the importance of favouring prevention over reaction. After a decade in power, the Conservatives are looking tired, or maybe even lazy. They are tired of having to meet the needs of the population and the middle class and tired of facing criticism. Their masks are beginning to slip, and we can see what lies behind.

The Prime Minister's stubbornness has caused considerable damage to our environment and our economy. Why did he not seize the opportunity afforded by this legislation to be proactive? The Conservatives always seem to be in reaction mode, as if they have to wait for the very worst, for things to hit rock bottom, before they will take action. It should not be that way. Canadians expect better.

There is a total lack of leadership when it comes to pipeline regulation in Canada. However, the real question we need to ask ourselves is this: is that because of laziness or is it because it is in the Conservatives' interest to help oil companies? The statistics, data and testimony about the effects of spills are compelling.

The Conservatives are dragging their heels on this. Pipeline incidents have been happening for a long time now. Maybe they should stop by the Transportation Safety Board of Canada's website a little more often. The website posts monthly statistics on pipeline incidents, and there are incidents every month.

The Conservatives also introduced disturbing new standards for reporting incidents. This is what a Radio-Canada article had to say:

Until July 2014, any spill, no matter how small, had to be reported to the TSB. On July 1, the federal body harmonized its regulations with those of the National Energy Board, the NEB. From now on, only spills of 1.5 cubic metres or more have to be reported.

That means that pipeline-related incidents need to be reported only if they are in excess of 1.5 cubic metres. Our government agencies do not record spills that are smaller than that.

Am I the only one who finds that disturbing? The Conservatives have kept us waiting quite a while when it comes to figuring out who is liable for oil spills resulting from broken pipelines.

I would also like to take this opportunity to emphasize the dire need for more inspections and more monitoring, as well as measures to prevent oil spills. We cannot allow this government's lack of leadership to endanger communities, infrastructure, wildlife and plants.

It is also important to talk about the polluter pays concept.

• (1335)

The NDP has been defending this principle for quite some time. Since the Conservatives are stuck working with us, our ideas seem to have inspired them. Still, it took a tragedy for them to act.

The Lac-Mégantic tragedy served as a lesson for the Conservatives. We cannot allow companies to operate on Canadian soil if they cannot respond appropriately in the event of fault or negligence. However, we must realize that it does not take long to spend \$1 billion in the event of a spill. Consider the costs associated with decontamination, compensation, damage to infrastructure, and so on.

A number of experts shared their concerns regarding this \$1 billion limit, indicating for instance that a spill in an urban setting could easily cost \$5 billion or \$10 billion. We have to make sure that polluters pay for the pollution they create, rather than pass the cost on to future generations, namely, our children and grandchildren.

Ian Miron, a lawyer with Ecojustice, has said that no liability regime can truly be considered a polluter pays regime unless and until polluters are made absolutely liable for the full costs of environmental harm.

As for the cap, it will certainly be the taxpayers who end up paying cleanup costs over \$1 billion when fault or negligence cannot be proven.

We admit that Bill C-46 does make some important improvements in the liability regime for pipelines in Canada. However, why should the taxpayers have to pay the bill if there is a spill or some other accident?

I am also worried that the bill does not include absolute liability for gas companies and other operators of non-oil pipelines and small oil pipeline companies. Why not? The Conservatives want to do this later, through regulation or a cabinet decision. Why not do it now, while we are having an open, transparent, public debate?

Government Orders

We know that the government likes to work behind closed doors. Too many aspects of this bill are left to the discretion of the National Energy Board and the cabinet. The Conservatives seem to be leaving a lot of leeway for politically motivated decisions and secret agreements between the operators and the National Energy Board, a regulatory body that lacks credibility regarding pipelines.

That is why we are not certain this bill goes far enough to protect the safety of all Canadians.

Finally, with regard to the future of our energy resources, the NDP has a vision of long-term prosperity. The Conservatives are trying to make people believe that a New Democratic government would not be good for the economy, but that is completely wrong.

Canadians have been told for too long that they must choose between the economy and the environment. That is a false choice. We propose a different course that will favour economic growth and protect the environment.

I would like to say something about something that is very close to my heart, and that is the principle of sustainable development. When we talk about sustainable development, we are talking about social licence, environmental protection and economics. If more attention had been paid to social licence, there would not have been so many failed pipeline projects. No one is making the effort to consult people and make sure that Canadians are safe.

• (1340)

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague.

She is probably already aware that there was another explosion last weekend in northern Ontario, as another train exploded. Over the past three years, the transportation of petroleum products on our railways has increased by 1,600%. This size of increase is completely overwhelming. By 2024, even if we build the three oil and gas pipelines that have been planned, there will be an additional 1 million barrels of oil that cannot be transported through the pipeline system and that ultimately will be carried by rail, by train.

Perhaps she could tell us how she views this increase and the fact that there is only \$1 billion in freight liability? We have seen that the cost for Lake Mégantic has now reached \$600 million.

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his question.

Indeed, there was another oil spill and this time the trains were involved. It happened on Friday night. It was called a “Lac Mégantic 2.0”, because it happened 4 km outside an urban area and it could well have resulted in another human disaster.

Clearly, our railways, our tracks and our crossings, are in a terrible state. Canada is responsible for making sure the system is safe. The system is in fact far from being safe. I travelled across Canada on the train and I hoped to arrive at my destination without having an accident, because I think it is unsafe.

Regarding the pipelines, we must ensure that they are safe, in terms of oil spills and terrorist activity. That is what we are looking at now. However, a pipeline that goes from one end of the country to the other means that there are great distances to be monitored and secured. Social acceptance is related to the environment, security and

the economy. We are therefore asking the government to look into this issue again.

Mr. François Pilon (Laval—Les Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles for her excellent speech.

I wonder whether she knows why the Conservatives have been telling us for some time now that the pipelines are 99.99% safe, and why they are so resistant to increasing the liability to more than \$1 billion if they are so sure it would never be used.

• (1345)

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: Mr. Speaker, previously, just before the excellent leader that we have currently, we had a leader who went to war against the major oil companies, big business and the banks. There was a reason for that. It is true that we see a problem in terms of social acceptability and safety.

The \$1 billion cap is not sufficient. These days, \$1 billion is the same as \$1 million was back in the 1980s. It is proportionally the same in terms of accidents. There are far too many claims and the consequences of an accident are too great to put limits on liability. We should have a polluter pays regime and it should be paid for entirely by the users and operators.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have a situation in northern Ontario right now, in the Gogama region, where there has been a third derailment. Crude oil is burning in the Mattagami River. We know there is a major environmental impact from the movement of bitumen and crude. Questions are being raised in terms of the Gogama accident about oversight and safety. This is the same argument that is being dealt with on the pipelines.

We have a government that has stripped the environmental protection laws of this country to push the pipelines through, which has created a serious backlash in the population who do not trust the government to put the interests of environment ahead of the very narrow interests of the Alberta oil lobby.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague what she thinks needs to be done to ensure that, however we are transporting crude oil, whether it is through pipelines or on trains, we ensure that public safety is first and foremost a priority.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: Mr. Speaker, it is another ecological disaster just a few kilometres from people's homes. The people living there were really very close to a major disaster. The consequences are enormous. We really have to look into the issue of safety, as I was saying earlier. In this case, the cause was not a pipeline but a railway. The railway tracks and crossings are in an absolutely deplorable state.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to the bill on pipeline safety. In my view, it is a good first step toward ensuring pipeline safety, but there are still problems.

*Government Orders**[English]*

I want to speak to the overall scheme of pipelines in Canada, acknowledging, as I said, that this is a good first step. There is much more that needs to be done. There are some areas of vagueness in this piece of legislation. Overall we still have the problem, which I will start with as an overarching concern, with the current energy strategy that sees us wanting to get raw bitumen out of the oil sands, particularly when the price of a barrel of oil was trading internationally at levels that allowed this to be a profitable activity. The strategy appeared to be to get as much raw bitumen out of the ground as fast as possible and ship it quickly to other places for processing and refining.

I take issue with some of the comments that were made earlier in this place by both Liberal colleagues and Conservatives. The assumption that getting raw bitumen to other countries is in Canada's best interest or even in Alberta's best interest is, in fact, opposed by the major trade union that represents workers in the oil sands. There are far more jobs to be created in the oil sands if the material is upgraded near the resource and preferably refined near the resource before being diluted with a diluent, fossil fuel condensate, which is shipped to Alberta to make the bitumen flowable.

It is this combination of bitumen and diluent that would be the product to be shipped under all the controversial current pipelines that we hear about, whether energy east or Keystone heading south, or the two very controversial and unacceptable projects that British Columbians do not want to see, the Kinder Morgan project, or the so-called Enbridge gateway project. All of these pipelines are about getting raw bitumen to tidewater for refining in other countries. Therefore, we should be questioning the whole strategy.

What is missing is actually having an energy strategy, having an energy policy in Canada that allows Canadians to know that we are maximizing the benefit of our natural resources and reducing the environmental impact of their exploitation. To maximize value, one of the first principles should be that we get as many jobs as possible out of every ounce of raw material, whether we are talking about shipping out raw logs from the forest industry, which we should oppose, or whether we are talking about shipping out raw bitumen from the fossil fuel industry, which we should oppose.

That also speaks to the dangers of pipeline spills and tanker spills. Under previous legislation, Safeguarding Canada's Seas and Skies Act, the current administration has brought up the liability levels for tanker traffic as well. I just want to note parenthetically that around liability and the Green Party's larger concern around tanker safety, each supertanker is independently and individually incorporated. Therefore, in the event of a catastrophic accident, we can have all the laws in the world that say that they are going to be absolutely liable and they will pay for their damage, but the reality of tanker traffic is that, in the case of a major accident with billions and billions of dollars of damage, they are much more likely to go bankrupt and leave Canadians holding the bag.

I do not want to overlook that there is an international fund into which the industry pays for tanker safety, the ship-source oil pollution fund, but that is only accessible for up to \$250 million per incident. Again, we know from the experience with real disasters that tanker accidents can be in the billions of dollars. That is speaking to

our previous history with tankers carrying conventional crude, the Exxon Valdez being the most notable and still not cleaned up. We know now from Enbridge's gross negligence in Kalamazoo, Michigan, that a pipeline rupture with dilbit is virtually impossible to clean up. Dilbit does not behave the way conventional crude does in freshwater environments. We have no experience whatsoever, and I underscore that, with dilbit in the marine environment.

• (1350)

As an intervenor on the Kinder Morgan hearings, I read through its evidence. It claims it has done experiments that show how dilbit will behave in a marine environment. It took large free-standing tanks in Alberta, added salt to the water, stirred, as they said to replicate wind and wave action, and then poured in dilbit to see how it behaved. That is the sum total of the knowledge base in Canada for how dilbit would behave in a marine environment.

Unalterably, the Green Party will oppose putting dilbit in tankers and open waters. We oppose putting dilbit in pipelines, not just because it will be hard or impossible to clean up and because the liability limits will not cover the damage, but because every pipeline is intended to take this stuff into tankers where we know the liability regime will not work because of the corporate structure of offshore oil tankers. The liability for Kinder Morgan, Enbridge, TransCanada and the like for dilbit stops at the end of the pipeline. Once they ship it into a tanker, it is not their problem.

Getting back to the bill, let me cover briefly why it is a good first step in a couple of areas and needs strengthening in others. Where it is a good first step is by enshrining the polluter pays principle into law. It is also good to see what is called "non-use value" for public resources being a compensable category. Non-use value basically means that environmental damage can be compensated. That is a good step as a principle. Some of the later clauses as to how this would come into force are unfortunately rather vague; there are still gaps in terms of how environmental damage would be compensated. I want to commend the administration for putting forward the concept of non-use value as a compensable form. It might create the potential for the National Energy Board to create new tools to go after polluters to get the money back as a result of a spill.

I do support the work of an environmental law group called Ecojustice, which has done a good synopsis of the bill for anyone who wants a quick review without having to go through the bill in detail themselves. The bill is too discretionary. It leaves a lot for the National Energy Board to develop its own rules and regulations around how this would be implemented. It does have significant gaps. For instance, oil pipelines carrying less than 250,000 barrels a day would not be covered under this regime. That is the scale of pipeline that would have the absolute liability.

Statements by Members

Again, as has been evidenced by quite a bit of the debate earlier today, the \$1 billion cap is not sufficient to cover the full costs of a spill involving dilbit. We know that from the Kalamazoo, Michigan spill, which hit \$1.2 billion and has not cleaned up the spill, as parts of the Kalamazoo River remain contaminated.

The other part of the bill that needs more work is that it does not impose unlimited absolute liability. There are ways in which that would be limited with the capping, and additionally with other provisions that the NEB can bring forward. Bear in mind that is taking away what existed under the Fisheries Act where the government had the ability to recover the cleanup costs for a pipeline spill to the full costs. In certain circumstances, we already had some provisions that would make a pipeline owner face unlimited absolute liability. That liability regime is now gone.

I will quote from the legal opinion of Ecojustice, which states:

No liability regime can truly and comprehensively be termed a polluter pays regime unless and until polluters are made absolutely liable for the full costs of environmental harm.

This bill represents a good first step, even with the criticisms that I have included in this presentation this afternoon. I want to make it clear that I will be voting for this bill. However, I would like to see the work done to improve and fill the gaps to make it less discretionary.

Overall, I would like us to focus more in this debate, which is often a dialogue of the deaf on the subject of what is in the pipelines. If it is dilbit, we should not be shipping it at all. Dilbit requires a two-way flow of toxic substances. First, the diluent has to be shipped. In the submission by Enbridge to the NEB, it said it would be buying its fossil fuel condensate from the Middle East. Therefore, tankers from Saudi Arabia would come all the way around and go through the tricky channels into Kitimat to put it into the western end of the twin pipeline, ship the diluent from Kitimat into Alberta, stir it in, and then ship it west. That is a cockamamie scheme.

I appreciate the attention of this House. This bill is a good first step, but the whole scheme needs to be reviewed.

● (1355)

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for, as usual, setting the global context in very environmentally sensitive terms.

I have a very specific question because the member appears to have read the Ecojustice summary that I have not yet had the chance to read.

There is one provision in the bill where it says the Governor in Council cannot make regulations that "...provide that the loss of non-use value", which the member has already said means environmental damage, "...in relation to damages to the environment caused...is a loss for which the [pipeline claims] Tribunal may award compensation".

It seems that it is saying that the pipeline claims tribunal cannot be charged with assigning compensation for non-use value damage. Is that a correct reading, or is there something else going on here to her knowledge?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member is correctly reading that, but there is also a liability section that I would direct him to, proposed section 48.12, that does allow for loss of non-use value. I think it is when they set up the special claims tribunal that they are limited. However, I believe the member understood that exactly right, and it is a weakness.

The Deputy Speaker: That will bring the debate to an end at this time. The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands will have approximately three minutes of questions and comments when we resume debate on this bill.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

IVAN MESSMER

Mr. Dan Albas (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I inform the House that last evening I learned of the passing of a distinguished citizen from my riding of Okanagan—Coquihalla. Mr. Ivan Messmer was a leader who gave greatly of his time and wisdom in serving the community of Penticton and also the citizens of British Columbia.

Mr. Messmer served as the mayor of Penticton for two terms, and later was elected as a member of the B.C. legislative assembly, where he served as the MLA for our region and as B.C.'s solicitor general. In later years, Ivan remained active behind the scenes providing sage advice and support to other elected officials.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Mr. Messmer's family and his friends during this most difficult time.

* * *

● (1400)

[*Translation*]

2015 TELUS CUP

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Rivière-du-Loup is hosting the 2015 Telus Cup, the National Midget Championship of Canada. From April 20 to 26, the best AAA midget team players from Quebec, the Atlantic and Pacific regions and central and western Canada will be welcomed by one of the proudest and best organized communities in the country.

Whether during the first Quebec Games in 1971, or during the Canadian speed skating championship in 1982, Rivière-du-Loup has shown that successfully hosting elite athletes is part of its DNA. Numerous NHL players have participated in the National Midget Championship since it was created in 1974. Among them, there were 55 first-round draft picks, which speaks to the national interest in this event.

Statements by Members

What is more, the Collège Notre-Dame de Rivière-du-Loup team, the Albatros, will take part in the tournament. The intensity of the team's players and team captain Raphaël Bastille, who finished first among the top goal scorers of Quebec's AAA midget league, promise great hope.

Congratulations to all the members of the event's organizing committee. Thank you to the players' families and the countless volunteers who will make the tournament a success. In closing, good luck to the Albatros.

* * *

[English]

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF CARLETON-YORK

Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the saying goes, it takes a village to raise a child, and that saying will ring true this coming weekend when Big Brothers Big Sisters of Carleton–York hold their annual Bowl for Kids Sake.

The vision of Big Brothers Big Sisters is that every child in Canada who needs a mentor has a mentor. Big Brothers Big Sisters offers a wide range of mentoring opportunities to meet the varied needs of volunteers, children, and families. Currently the local organization has 10 matches of bigs and littles as well as an in-school mentoring program.

Serving as role models, the mentors teach the importance of giving back, staying in school, and having respect for family, peers, and community.

I want to express my sincere appreciation for the work done by this local group, led by executive director, Mary-Beth Rideout, her board of directors, the event sponsors, and numerous volunteers who make these fundraisers happen.

This weekend will see 34 teams and 200 participants lacing up their shoes at the Woodstock Bowlacade. I encourage everyone in the local community to provide their encouragement and financial support to this event that leads to the development of young people, and, as a result, makes our rural communities stronger.

While this weekend is about raising money, we need to say a big thanks to all of the bigs who give the most valuable gift of all, their time.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was International Women's Day, when we celebrate the tremendous women in our lives who care for us, inspire us, and fight for equality, freedom, and justice.

We celebrate the many milestones achieved on the road to gender equality. Despite the strides, women still lag behind men in critical areas such as political representation and wage equality.

Canada ranks 19th among 142 countries regarding the gender gap, 42nd in female parliamentary representation, and a shocking 100th on health and survival.

Let us all recommit to fight for the rights and opportunities of women and girls in Canada and around the world. Empowering women is not just the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do. When women succeed, nations are more prosperous, safe, and secure.

[Translation]

Let us work together to create a world where our daughters and sons can achieve their full potential.

* * *

[English]

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Minister of Status of Women who last week led Canada's celebrations of International Women's Day and Week with the theme "Strong Women. Strong World. Improving Economic Opportunities for All".

The good news is that educational achievement among women has increased their economic opportunities, yet they remain under-represented in many sectors.

That is why our government has made significant investments through Status of Women Canada in projects that support women in skilled trades and women entrepreneurs. On January 8, the Prime Minister announced that the Canada apprenticeship loan is now accepting applications.

Throughout this year, I invite all Canadians to celebrate the tremendous achievements and potential of young women and girls.

* * *

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week I joined the leader of the official opposition and NDP Toronto caucus colleagues at the CBC headquarters in downtown Toronto, the building a Conservative-appointed board is signalling it wants to sell off.

New Democrats are demanding that the Conservatives reverse their \$115 million in cuts to the CBC, which have led to 650 layoffs since the 2012 budget. Those cuts are on top of \$440 million in cuts under previous Liberal governments.

We are also calling for an independent process for appointing members to the CBC's board of directors.

I frequently hear from constituents of Toronto—Danforth who are extremely concerned about the future and the fate of our public broadcaster. They want to see stable and adequate funding to keep it strong.

To quote one constituent, Nora, "I know mine is a very small voice in a very large auditorium, but please promote a good, independent and effective CBC. I think Canada needs this, and I know I do".

I urge the government to heed this call.

Statements by Members

●(1405)

UN SPECIAL ENVOY ON EBOLA

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to welcome the United Nations' Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Ebola, Dr. David Nabarro.

Dr. Nabarro's visit to Canada marks an important time in the international community's fight against the spread of this deadly and highly infectious disease. Without the strong leadership of individuals like Dr. Nabarro, the goal of getting to zero cases worldwide would be no more than a dream.

When it comes to confronting the Ebola virus, Canadians can be proud to support a government that is leading global efforts against its spread. To date, Canada has committed over \$110 million in health, humanitarian, and security contributions to help fight the spread of Ebola.

From coordinating the world's response to malaria in 1999 to managing crisis response operations in Darfur, Sudan, and in countries affected by the 2004 tsunami, Dr. Nabarro has made his life's work about protecting the health and the humanity of this world.

I want to thank Dr. Nabarro for his continued service and leadership in protecting global health and for strengthening the international communities' abilities in the fight against infectious disease.

* * *

ORGAN DONATION

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to once again highlight the importance of organ donation.

In Ontario alone, over 1,500 people are currently waiting for a life-saving organ transplant, while only 26% of the population are registered donors.

Each of us can relate to the importance of having hope in our lives. When my wife Betty died in May 2011, my personal faith and knowing that her organs saved the lives of five people allowed me and my family to find hope in the midst of our grief.

George Marcello, founder of the Torch of Life initiative and a transplant survivor himself, has made it his life's mission to raise awareness of organ and tissue donation and to offer others the same chance he received to enjoy a healthy future with friends and loved ones.

Tomorrow George will bring the Torch of Life to the Hill. I look forward to commending George for all of his important work.

I want to encourage every member to urge their constituents to register as donors at beadonor.ca.

* * *

ESPANOLA AUTISM ACCEPTANCE EVENT

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, autism takes many forms and is spread across our population with no exceptions.

Often what families and individuals facing the challenges of a diagnosis need most is acceptance and community awareness. That was the goal of the second annual Espanola Autism Acceptance and Espanola Rivermen event that took place on March 1st. In the lead-up to World Autism Day on April 2, this event brought more than 150 people together to raise awareness and have lots of fun.

Families from the North Shore and Manitoulin took in a number of activities, ranging from swimming, bowling, and Zumba to watching a hometown Rivermen hockey game.

The event was coordinated by Dennis Lendrum, who has been a champion of this issue since his grandson, Alex Bertrand, was diagnosed on the spectrum.

Dennis is already organizing for next year's event. Anyone who wants to stay informed or get involved can be in touch through the Espanola Autism Acceptance Facebook page.

I am sure all members will join me in sending our heartfelt congratulations to the volunteers, organizers, and participants involved in this exemplary event.

* * *

GWICH'IN INTERNSHIP PILOT PROJECT

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unlike the NDP and the Liberal Party, our government is focused on what matters most to all Canadians: jobs, economic growth, and long-term prosperity, including for northerners and first nations.

That is why I am pleased to report that on February 23, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development and James Wilson, President of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, signed a memorandum of understanding announcing the launch of an innovative new training and development pilot project, the Gwich'in internship pilot project.

This pilot project will provide Gwich'in participants year-long full-time internship positions within Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and the Gwich'in Tribal Council.

The paid internships will prepare Gwich'in participants for jobs in the public service and provide them with professional work experience in a variety of government functions. Our government will continue to get results for Yukoners time and time again.

Statements by Members

●(1410)

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say that New Democrats stand in solidarity with the teaching assistants at the University of Toronto, who have been out on strike for a week.

The members of CUPE Local 3902 are on the picket line seeking fair wages and better working conditions. They are seeking to improve upon the \$15,000 a year that they make, which includes salaries and scholarships.

They are not looking to join the thousands of U of T staff on Ontario's "sunshine list" or to make more money than the Premier of Ontario, as the President of U of T does. They are looking for a modest increase so that people who are actually teaching 60% of the courses at U of T do not have to be among the working poor.

As the president of the U of T Students' Union put it last week, the TAs' "working conditions are students' learning conditions".

It is time for U of T to get back to the bargaining table, earn their six-figure salaries, and negotiate a fair deal for students and for their teaching assistants.

New Democrats stand proudly in line in solidarity with CUPE Local 3902.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the NDP and the Liberals want to impose a job-killing carbon tax, the Conservative government is delivering the largest tax breaks in Canadian history. With our new family tax cut, the average family will receive more than \$1,100 per year to spend on their priorities.

But that is not all. We have also doubled the children's fitness tax credit and enhanced the universal child care benefit. All parents, including single parents, will benefit from our plan. That is over four million families and over seven million parents.

Perhaps only someone with a trust fund would think that middle-class families can afford higher taxes and higher prices, which is what the Liberal leader would do. We reject the high-tax, high-debt Liberal plan. Our government will continue to stand up for middle-class families.

* * *

[Translation]

ANDREW DOIRON

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I learned this weekend of the death of Sergeant Andrew Doiron, originally from Moncton. He was a pleasant, passionate and proud man. The memories of Sergeant Doiron's friends and colleagues are a testament to the character of this man whom we have tragically lost.

[English]

The fact that he rose to the level of sergeant in our Special Forces shows that Andrew was part of the best that Canada had to offer.

[Translation]

Many people in my riding knew him when he was a student at École Mathieu-Martin in Dieppe, and I know that the entire Greater Moncton community is proud to have known him and sad to have lost him so prematurely.

[English]

I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to his colleagues in the Canadian Forces. We also pray for those who were injured with Sergeant Doiron.

[Translation]

Above all, I would like to extend my condolences to his parents and his entire family. Know that our thoughts and prayers are with you in these difficult times.

* * *

ANDREW DOIRON

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour the memory of Sergeant Andrew Doiron of Moncton, New Brunswick. By all accounts, Drew, as he was affectionately known to his friends, was a force to be reckoned with.

He led a Special Forces detachment in Iraq. Before that, he had also been deployed to Niger and Italy. In Italy, he personally accompanied veterans from the First Special Service Force to the top of Mount La Difensa, which they had occupied during the Second World War.

He was a fierce competitor in the International Practical Shooting Confederation and won many three-gun competitions.

Sergeant Doiron was a man of action. His courage and indeed his life, which was dedicated to Canada's security, are a source of inspiration for us all.

Rest in peace, Sergeant Doiron. We will never forget you.

* * *

[English]

ANDREW DOIRON

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I join with all members of the House as we mourn the loss of Sergeant Andrew Joseph Doiron. Our hearts go out to his family, his friends, and the Canadian Forces community.

Our thoughts are also with the three brave soldiers who were injured. We wish them a swift recovery.

This is another reminder of the heavy responsibility we have as parliamentarians when deciding whether to send our men and women into harm's way. His family said, "Our son gave all and through his loss, we gave all."

His friends described him as passionate, determined, charismatic, funny, humble, and sensitive. These are words we can use to describe our own sons and daughters.

As we attempt to comprehend what Sergeant Doiron's death may mean, let us recommit ourselves to providing all the assistance we can to our veterans and to comfort all those who have suffered such losses.

* * *

• (1415)

ANDREW DOIRON

Mr. Robert Goguen (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise here today to honour the memory of Sergeant Andrew Doiron of Moncton, New Brunswick. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family, friends, and colleagues.

Known to his friends as “Drew”, he was a force that, by all accounts, loomed larger than life. He led a Special Forces detachment while deployed in Iraq. Other deployments included Niger and Italy. There, he personally escorted veterans of the first Special Service Force up Monte la Difensa, which they had occupied and captured during World War II.

He was an avid competitor in international practical shooting competitions. He competed successfully in numerous three-gun competitions. Sergeant Doiron adored skiing, physical fitness training, motorcycles, and dogs.

Sergeant Doiron's bravery and lifelong dedication to Canada's security is an inspiration to all of us.

Rest in peace, Sergeant Doiron. Lest we forget.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this weekend the New Democrats shared in our country's sadness at the death of Sergeant Doiron. Our thoughts are with his family and friends and his comrades from the Canadian Forces community. Our thoughts are also with the other soldiers injured in this incident. We stand with all Canadians as we reflect on Sergeant Doiron's tragic sacrifice.

Could the Minister of Defence give us a precise account of what happened this weekend? How did Sergeant Doiron die?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Halifax for her condolences. I join with all members in expressing our most profound condolences to the family of Sergeant Doiron. His comrades, the other three Canadian troops wounded on Friday night, are in our thoughts and prayers.

This incident was a tragic question of friendly fire resulting from mistaken identity. Our troops followed all of the established protocols that they have for several months in these kinds of training missions. They were well within the rules of engagement of

Oral Questions

their advise and assist mission to provide training to the Kurdish peshmerga.

Obviously, our operators are ensuring that steps are taken to ensure there is no repeat of this tragic incident. There are three investigations that we hope to see the results of very soon.

[Translation]

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since the start of this mission in Iraq, the government has been hiding the truth from Canadians.

In the beginning, it talked about an air mission and training. Now we have discovered that our troops are on the front lines and being targeted by the enemy and that there have been Canadian casualties.

The Prime Minister must tell us the truth. How many Canadian soldiers are presently in a combat situation in Iraq?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to express our sincere condolences to Sergeant Doiron's family. We are obviously keeping in our thoughts the three Canadian soldiers who were wounded Friday night near Erbil.

Our soldiers are professionals and among the best in the world. They have been fulfilling their mandate of helping and advising the peshmerga and the Kurds. Unfortunately, Friday night's friendly fire incident was the result of a reconnaissance error by the Kurdish militia. Our commanders in the region are obviously making the necessary changes and there are three investigations into the incident.

• (1420)

[English]

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the Conservatives have not been transparent about this mission from the start. Women and men of our armed forces, their families and all Canadians deserve to know the truth.

The mandate for this current mission is ending in just a few weeks. The decision about deploying our service people overseas is among the most important decisions that we make as parliamentarians. Therefore, could the government tell us when a debate and a vote on a mission extension will occur?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the truth is that Canada believes we have a responsibility, a moral and national security responsibility, to act in the defence of global security and of our own security against this genocidal terrorist organization, ISIL, this death cult that has sought to destroy entire minority communities, that has explicitly declared war on Canada. That is why we have Canadian special operations forces in their advise and assist mission in northern Iraq. That is why we have the Royal Canadian Air Force flying sorties against ISIL positions in Iraq.

Of course, we believe there is an important ongoing role for Canada to play. If we seek an extension, we obviously will table a motion in this place.

*Oral Questions***RAIL TRANSPORTATION**

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Northern Ontario has now seen three train wrecks in less than a month. Two of them in Gogama and one between Hornepayne and Oba. The last two were only a few days apart this week.

This most recent derailment had 94 cars on the train carrying crude oil. Thirty-five of them derailed, caught fire and several ended up in the Makami River.

The people of Northern Ontario are concerned about their safety, about the destruction of air and water quality. Could the minister tell us what measures she has taken to protect the communities of Northern Ontario today?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, always, the safety and security of Canadians is Transport Canada's top priority. In the past number of years, strong statements and strong actions have been taken with respect to trains and the movement of goods and transportation of dangerous goods in the country. Most notably is the fact that we have moved 5,000 cars out of the system and that we have brought in new standards to be followed for tank cars. We are working with the United States on a new tank car standard to be utilized in the future. We have been working diligently on this file since then.

We need to wait to see the response of the Transportation Safety Board as to why this accident happened.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the standards are not working.

[*Translation*]

There was another derailment in northern Ontario on Saturday. This time, 35 cars carrying oil derailed and caught fire. Three weeks ago, in the same area, 30 cars of the same type were involved in another derailment, yet the TSB had found that the new Class 111 tank cars did not perform any better than those involved in Lac-Mégantic.

Will the minister finally put in place stricter safety standards to protect Canadians?

[*English*]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last year we took an unprecedented move of indicating that over the next three years we would be moving out of the system the DOT-111 cars.

We are working with the United States on what a new system will be in terms of a new tank car standard. We have changed the operating procedures for railways in our country. We have added inspectors. We have invested hundreds of millions of dollars.

The safety and security of Canadians in the transportation of dangerous goods is our top priority. We work diligently on this, and we will continue to do so.

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I ask my question, I would like to say that the tragic death of Sergeant Andrew Doiron reminds us once again of the risks our soldiers face on our behalf.

[*English*]

We owe Sergeant Doiron a debt that cannot be repaid. We extend our most sincere condolences to his loved ones.

[*Translation*]

According to the CIBC's analysis, job quality in Canada is the lowest it has been in the 15 years that the bank has been collecting statistics.

What is the government doing to respond to the deterioration of job quality?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, of the 1.2 million new jobs created, 85% are full time, 80% are in the private sector and approximately two-thirds are in high-wage industries.

We are reducing taxes not only for families but also for the companies that hire workers.

The Liberal Party believes that the budget will balance itself, but that is not true, just as it is not true for families' budgets either. Given the opportunity, the Liberals would raise taxes, which would be harmful to families and employment.

● (1425)

[*English*]

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week's CIBC report shows that the Canadian job quality index is at its lowest point on record. It confirms what middle-class Canadians already know: that more jobs now provide lower pay and fewer benefits.

The Conservatives are so out of touch that they boast about their jobs record. Does the Conservative government understand the findings of the CIBC report? Does it understand that the quality of Canadian jobs has reached a new low under its watch?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is what the *New York Times* actually said about the middle class in Canada, "Life in Canada, Home of the World's Most Affluent Middle Class".

The article then compares the Liberal era, actually, saying, "After-tax middle-class incomes in Canada — substantially behind in 2000 — now appear to be higher than in the United States".

We have the wealthiest middle-class in the world. Its net worth has gone up by approximately 40%, and take-home pay, after taxes, after inflation, is up 10%. The middle class is better off with us.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only good-paying jobs the Conservatives want to protect are their own.

Oral Questions

CIBC is not alone in raising the alarm on Canada's job market. The Bank of Canada has reported that Canada's jobs market is weaker than unemployment rates suggest. The bank has reacted by lowering interest rates.

However, our soft jobs market cannot be fixed by monetary policy alone. Why are the Conservatives ignoring the facts and delaying the budget? Why do they not understand that Canadians need a real plan now for good jobs and growth?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have a real plan. It is called the low-tax plan for jobs and growth. It has put \$3,400, on average, into the pockets of the average Canadian family.

The Liberal Party has a one-point plan for the middle class: raise taxes. We oppose the high-tax plan of the Liberals. We are not surprised they would have one, because their leader believes that budgets simply balance themselves.

Families know this is not the way it works around the dinner table. They know we have to keep taxes low and the economy strong, and we have to work hard to get the job done.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the trial of former Conservative senator Mike Duffy will start in less than a month. He is facing 31 charges, ranging from corruption and fraud to breach of trust. The Prime Minister's Office is at the core of this scandal. Furthermore, a number of his closest advisors have been subpoenaed, including his former chief of staff.

Can the Prime Minister tell us how many members of his inner circle received subpoenas and can he tell us whether his current chief of staff, Ray Novak, will testify?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as you know, we will continue to provide every possible assistance that we can to the crown in its case against Mr. Duffy.

[English]

We know the NDP and, of course, the member and a number of members over there owe hundreds of thousands of dollars, in fact, millions of dollars. The member, I believe, owes \$22,000 to the taxpayer of Canada. I certainly hope the member will find the time to cut that cheque to the taxpayers of Canada.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Well, Mr. Speaker, those bizarre evasions will not make this one go away, because we know from the RCMP investigation that at least a dozen key Conservative insiders are involved in the Duffy expense scandal and the PMO-orchestrated cover-up.

With the Duffy trial about to begin, will the Prime Minister tell us how many of his current staff have received subpoenas and does the Prime Minister know whether there is any indication that he himself will be called as a witness by the defence?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I just said, we will continue to provide every possible assistance that we can to the Crown in its case against Mr. Duffy. I contrast that to the NDP.

When the Leader of the Opposition had the opportunity some 17 years ago to come forward with information that would have helped the people of Quebec, he chose to hide that information.

Again, the NDP owes some \$2.7 million to Canadian taxpayers. Instead of just paying the money the NDP members owe to the Canadian taxpayers, they are doing everything possible to hide and ensure that they do not pay it. What they have to do is come clean and pay the taxpayers back the money they owe.

● (1430)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is something watching my hon. colleague fumble through his Rolodex of the ridiculous.

Let us stick on the issue here, because not only are Conservative insiders being subpoenaed, but last week we learned that a number of key Conservative MPs have been called to testify.

Let me ask a simple, straightforward question. Who will be on the hook for the legal bills of the Conservative Party insiders and MPs? Will it be the Conservative Party, because this had to do with Conservative malfeasance in fundraising and bribery, or will it be the taxpayer? It is a simple question.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we know is that the NDP owes the taxpayers over \$2.7 million, and it will be the taxpayer who is on the hook if NDP members do not do the right thing and pay up. For instance, the member for Trois-Rivières owes \$30,000. The member for Honoré-Mercier owes \$29,000. The member for Jeanne-Le Ber owes \$31,000. The Leader of the Opposition some \$400,000. The Leader of the Opposition with the whip owes some \$600,000 to the Canadian taxpayer. They should make it easy and just pay it back.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives allowed many employers to abuse the temporary foreign worker program, increasing unemployment and driving down wages, while foreign workers were cheated and abused. However, now a Conservative MP makes the disgusting claim that the real problem here is that too many brown-skinned people are coming to our country. This comes on the heels of all the fearmongering and divisive politics we have seen from the Conservatives.

How could the Conservatives blame Canadians and the temporary foreign workers for a program that they have messed up so badly?

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member immediately realized that his comments were unacceptable. He has apologized, and I think we can move forward from here.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, instead of letting their member from New Brunswick Southwest make offensive, racist comments, the Conservatives should be working to fix the negative effects of their temporary foreign worker program, such as an increased unemployment rate and lower salaries.

Instead of looking for scapegoats for their own mismanagement, will they finally acknowledge how much they messed up?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have already acknowledged that there were problems with the program. That is why we made adjustments. We proposed financial penalties and even prison terms for anyone who abuses the temporary foreign worker program.

We encourage employers to hire Canadians before hiring foreign workers. We have limited the percentage of foreign workers in a given workplace. We will continue to work on fixing the problems.

Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, here is another sign of the depressed climate: on Thursday, the executive of Resolute Forest Products announced the permanent closure of paper machine #9 at its mill in Alma. This represents a loss of 85 jobs and some difficult months ahead for many families. My thoughts are with them today.

The worst part is that these jobs will be transferred to Tennessee in the United States.

Will the Conservative government finally do something to protect jobs in our regions and show some leadership with respect to the forestry industry?

Hon. Greg Rickford (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has provided unprecedented support to the forestry industry. Our focus on innovation, energy efficiency and market expansion has produced remarkable results. Wood exports to China have increased by 1,400% since 2007, and we produce state-of-the-art products from coast to coast.

Unlike the member, who voted against supporting the forestry industry, we are taking steps to create jobs and support forestry industry communities.

• (1435)

[English]

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while eating breakfast before heading to work, a Timmins father found a note from workers who are now out of work. The note was written on the last box of cereal ever produced at the London Kellogg's plant by three workers who had each put in more than 20 years of work at the factory, the same factory where I worked as a university student. Kellogg's closed last December, putting 550 people out of work.

Why have the Conservatives stood by while so many good manufacturing jobs continue to disappear? Where is the jobs plan?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course, we have not stood by. We have put in place programs like the advanced manufacturing fund and the automotive innovation fund that have resulted in job growth in this country since the recession. There have been 1.2 million net new jobs created since the depths of the recession. As a matter of fact, just in the month of January, 10,700 new manufacturing jobs were created in the Canadian economy. It is in large part because our government has kept taxes low and we have kept the Canadian economy competitive. If my hon. colleague from London—Fanshawe would like to know, she should know that 5,000 new jobs were created in her hometown of London, in spite of the fact that she is an MP for London.

[Translation]

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have abandoned more than just the manufacturing sector. Never has the job market been so precarious.

The CIBC employment quality index indicates that job quality is at an all-time low. The Conservatives have managed to perform even worse than the Liberals, if you can believe that. The CIBC believes that the decline is here to stay and could even last for decades.

When will the government finally take action and make employment for middle-class families a priority?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the facts show the opposite. The median net income of Canadian families has increased by 44% from 2005 values, when the Liberals were in power. Disposable income after tax and inflation has risen by 10% across all income levels since 2006, most of all among the poorest families.

We have achieved this by lowering taxes and implementing the universal child care benefit. The NDP wants to raise taxes and claw back all of those benefits. We will not let them do so.

[English]

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the CIBC report is clear. Job quality in Canada reached a record low this year, in 2015, no argument about that, and it is declining on all fronts. After decades of Conservative and Liberal mismanagement, middle-class families are working harder and are falling further behind. Part-time jobs, lower-paying jobs, precarious employment are replacing full-time work, and the Conservatives clearly are in denial.

Will the government finally wake up and make full-time, middle-class jobs its priority?

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, low taxes and more jobs are our priority and it is working. We have 1.2 million net new jobs since the bottom of the recession: 85% of those jobs are full-time; 80% are in the private sector; almost two-thirds are in high-wage industries. At the same time, incomes have gone up. The net worth of the average family is up by over 40%. These are the hard facts and the hard realities to which the NDP should become accustomed. We are getting taxes down and we are getting jobs up.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Aboriginal women and girls are five times more likely to be murdered in Canada. Unfortunately, the Minister of Status of Women has dismissed this ongoing tragedy by blaming aboriginal men, by highlighting domestic abuse. She has sadly demonstrated her ignorance of the RCMP report, which found that indigenous women were actually less likely to be killed by a spouse or a former spouse than non-indigenous women.

Will the government finally accept the consensus, get the facts straight and call for a national public inquiry now?

Mrs. Susan Truppe (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these are terrible crimes against innocent people. The RCMP itself has said in its own study that the vast majority of these cases are addressed and solved through police investigations. We do not need another study on top of the 40 that we already have. What we need is for the police to catch those responsible and ensure they are punished.

Now is the time, not for more talk but for action. The minister tabled her action plan last September and it is a very good action plan. It would help address and combat violence against aboriginal women and girls.

* * *

● (1440)

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this weekend, when he thought he was only speaking to Conservatives, the member for New Brunswick Southwest, and a former communications director to the Prime Minister no less, referred to “whities” and “brown people” to divide Canadians. This is unacceptable. Will the Prime Minister denounce these words in no uncertain terms, and will the Prime Minister also request that the member apologize to Canadians, in this House?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member has apologized.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is not good enough.

Just a few weeks ago, the Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism asked Iranian Canadians why they had not stayed in Iran, and he was forced to apologize.

This is becoming a pattern in the Conservative Party. The Conservatives use racially or culturally divisive language when they think they will not get caught, and then offer up hollow, insincere apologies.

Is the Prime Minister caving to pressure from the old anti-immigration Reform Party?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member immediately recognized that the comments were unacceptable. He apologized.

We speak about the broader job market. The reality is we have a good-news story that there are 1.2 million net new jobs: 85% full-time, 80% in the private sector, two-thirds in high-wage industries. Incomes are up, taxes are down. We are moving in the right direction.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the sad saga of the death of Corporal Stuart Langridge continues. At least now the family will not have to sue the Department of National Defence in order to get the department's response to the upcoming report of the Military Police Complaints Commission. However, the family members have still never been shown the results of the previous military board of inquiry into their son's death. They have never been briefed on the inquiry. With the family here in Ottawa today, will the new Minister of National Defence give the family members the findings of the internal board of inquiry in the death of their son, Corporal Stuart Langridge?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course we continue to express our sorrow to the family of Mr. Langridge for what happened, the tragic incident that occurred. I can confirm that last Friday the Provost Marshal of the Canadian Armed Forces did remove the protected designation for the interim report, so that it can now be made public. With respect to the specific request made by my friend from St. John's, I will look into that matter and get back to him as quickly as possible.

[Translation]

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the family of Corporal Stuart Langridge deserves better. Not only did the corporal's family never receive the results of the board of inquiry into their son's death, but National Defence waited for 14 months after his suicide to tell the family that their son had left them a note.

Will the minister finally show some decency and compassion and sit down with the family to tell them what really happened?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her question.

We continue to keep Corporal Langridge's family in our thoughts.

On Friday, the Canadian Forces decided to publicly release their response to the interim report of the Military Police Complaints Commission.

As for the specific question the member just asked, I will discuss it with my officials and get back to her as soon as possible.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians and many experts are increasingly concerned about Bill C-51.

Now we can add to that long list Canada's Privacy Commissioner, Daniel Therrien, who said he is very concerned about the repercussions of Bill C-51 on people's privacy and the protection of their personal information. He is calling for better oversight mechanisms for intelligence agencies.

Will the minister listen to the commissioner and will he be open to amendments?

[*English*]

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, information sharing is absolutely essential. Canadians would expect that if one branch of government had information pertinent to national security, it would be able to share the information with other branches of government.

When we talk about activities that would warrant information sharing, I am just going to list a few: espionage, sabotage, covert foreign influence activities and terrorism.

The legislation, Bill C-51, which is coming to committee tomorrow, has adequate safeguards built in to protect the privacy of Canadians. We are not going to privilege the rights of terrorists over the rights of Canadians with this bill.

• (1445)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first it was former prime ministers and former Supreme Court justices. Now the Privacy Commissioner and even the Canadian premiers have weighed in on the risks of adopting Bill C-51. Even the B.C. Premier says that Bill C-51 could impinge on the fundamental rights enjoyed by Canadians, and that if we give away our freedoms, "We will regret that forever...it's very hard to get them back".

Experts and Canadians all across the country have recognized that this bill is fatally flawed. Why is the minister refusing to listen to them?

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, Canadians would expect, if they do not already think, that when one branch of government has information pertinent to national security, it will be able to and is currently sharing that

information. That is simply not the case. It is one of the gaps that was identified. It is one of the measures that is included in Bill C-51.

Let us talk about some other activities that warrant information sharing. They include proliferation of nuclear, chemical, radiological or biological weapons; interference with critical infrastructure; and interference with global information infrastructure as defined in the National Defence Act.

This legislation already has adequate safeguards built in to protect Canadians' privacy. It is why we brought forward the measures that Canadians expected.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for several years, our men and women in uniform have been taking part in a multinational campaign against trafficking and organized crime in the Caribbean Sea.

Can the Minister of National Defence update the House on the status of our operations in the Caribbean Sea to prevent illegal drugs from coming to our shores?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform members that this month, Her Majesty's Canadian Ships *Goose Bay* and *Shawinigan* seized over 1,000 kilograms of cocaine in a major drug bust in the Caribbean Sea. These dangerous narcotics would have otherwise landed on our streets and in our communities.

We are proud of our Canadian Armed Forces members who worked with the United States Coast Guard and U.S. Navy in this successful disruption. We will continue to work with our allies to fight transnational criminal activity and keep Canadian communities safe.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the latest case of BSE was discovered, the Minister of Agriculture said he did not think it would interfere with trade, but here we are, a month later, and the list of countries that have banned Canadian beef is growing.

Last week, China closed its borders. Including South Korea and Taiwan, that makes six important markets that have now banned beef exports.

With every week that passes, these restrictions cost our farmers and our economy. Why have the Conservatives failed to protect our beef exports, and what are they doing to restore them?

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, to the Minister of National Revenue and for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government continues to proactively engage with our trading partners to ensure that our markets stay open, and to reopen markets to Canadian beef as quickly as possible.

Oral Questions

With regard to the countries that have imposed temporary restrictions, these markets, while important, represent a small percentage of our overall beef trade. Meanwhile, the World Organisation for Animal Health recognizes Canada as a controlled risk status country. We expect our trading partners to continue to recognize this status.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after Belarus, Peru, Taiwan, South Korea and Indonesia, now China is closing its borders to Canadian beef in the wake of the latest case of mad cow in Alberta.

By cutting the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's budget by 20%, the Conservatives jeopardized Canadian beef exports. The Conservatives played fast and loose with our producers' livelihood, and that is completely irresponsible.

When will the Conservatives take action to protect our Canadian producers and avoid a new crisis?

[*English*]

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, to the Minister of National Revenue and for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, the World Organisation for Animal Health recognizes Canada as a controlled risk status country. We expect our trading partners to continue to recognize this status. Meanwhile, our government will continue to proactively engage our trading partners to ensure that markets stay open and to reopen markets to Canadian beef as quickly as possible.

* * *

• (1450)

[*Translation*]

HEALTH

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, the Minister of Health suddenly announced financial assistance for thalidomide victims. However, this was done without consulting the victims, who were notified just a few minutes before the minister's press conference, and the announcement was short on details.

Why did the minister not meet with the members of the victims' rights group before making her announcement?

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these events from the 1960s remind us of why we need to take drug safety so seriously.

On Friday, the minister announced historic assistance to cover the health care needs. There is going to be up to \$180 million distributed among fewer than 100 survivors, until that last living survivor.

She has been in ongoing conversations with the group. Of course, these will be important payments: a \$125-million immediate payment, tax free, and then \$168 million, tax free, in ongoing support.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government has a moral obligation to help thalidomide survivors.

They have paid a lifelong price for the government's belief that thalidomide was safe, but three months after the House unanimously passed a motion calling for full support, the minister announced a package that may or may not meet the needs of the thalidomide survivors.

There was no consultation and very little communication from the minister. Before making the announcement, what did the minister do to ensure that the compensation would meet the needs of the thalidomide survivors?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nothing can ever change, and we certainly have deep sympathy and regret for the ongoing struggle thalidomide inflicted.

There have been ongoing conversations since the motion passed in the House, and actually prior to that. In actual fact, the historic announcement the minister made on Friday is for up to \$180 million for the fewer than 100 survivors. This support is going to be available for the last living survivor.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, under the former government of former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, the premier of Ontario and the mayor of Toronto stood on the shores of Lake Ontario and committed to transform the waterfront of our great city.

It is time for the next investment. The province is ready. The city has set aside its money. But where is the federal government? Three hundred and twenty-five million dollars is needed, and much like the budget, the finance minister is hiding under his desk and will not come forward.

Will the finance minister please commit this money, fund the flood proofing that is needed in the Lower Don Lands, fund the transit, and get the Unilever site off to the races? Will the federal government please commit to the city of Toronto and the province—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs.

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we always work with our partners. We respect the jurisdiction of provinces and municipalities. We do not manage the cities here in Ottawa. We respect the fact that there are city councils and mayors doing their jobs, and we will continue to do so. The Minister of Finance is doing his job.

*Oral Questions***CBC/RADIO-CANADA**

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a quote:

We have said that we will maintain or increase support for the CBC. That is our platform and we have said that before and we will commit to that.

Who said that in Vancouver on *CBC News* on May 3, 2011? It was the former heritage minister, now the Minister of Industry.

Why did the Conservative government's budget 2012 take a hatchet to Canada's national broadcaster, slashing \$150 million from the CBC budget? Why did it break its promise?

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find the question somewhat surprising from that member, who used to be a Liberal minister during the nineties when they cut almost \$400 million from CBC. Aside from the hypocrisy, we in fact provide over \$1 billion a year to the CBC, and we all know that there are some challenges in the media environment right now. The president has indicated that as well. We will continue, as I said before, to monitor the situation, but I am not going to respond to another question from a party that frankly does not deserve to ask a question about cuts.

* * *

[Translation]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, from 2010 to 2014, the Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec failed to use \$131 million.

While employment is in decline and the retail and manufacturing sectors need help in modernizing, the government has been sitting on money voted by Parliament.

Why is the minister trying to save money at the expense of the economic development of Quebec's regions? Will he at least commit to using all the money voted by Parliament for that purpose this year?

• (1455)

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is completely false.

It seems awfully difficult to ask the NDP to understand balance sheets and budgets. When amounts are not spent, they are carried forward from one year to the next.

We announced a program over seven years for Lac-Mégantic. I am informing my colleague that he will see some of the money for Lac-Mégantic again next year because it will not all be spent this year. This program is over seven years, over many years. These ad hoc programs in the forestry industry and community infrastructure are multi-year programs.

When the money is not all spent over the course of one year, it is still available the next year. It is as simple as that.

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the truth is that 99% of the money that goes unspent is returned to the consolidated revenue fund. The minister needs to stop his tall tales.

Instead of diverting \$131 million earmarked for the economic development of Quebec, the minister should start listening to the regions. Then we could create some jobs in the regions.

For example, we could improve the facilities at the Drummondville airport, which is in serious need of some federal funding.

Does the minister realize that his incompetence is compromising the economic development of Quebec's regions?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely false and ridiculous. After more than four years here, the member should know how things work.

As a matter of fact, I was back in Drummondville, the member's riding, last week to promote economic development because the local member does not appear to be doing his job. Members on this side are continuing to do their jobs.

What those people are saying is untrue. It is easy to understand. Everyone knows that the money is not spent all at once. It depends on how proponents progress with projects. If a project is not completed over the course of a year, the money is carried over to the following year and remains available. It is not hard to understand.

* * *

[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under our government, trade, investment, and tourism between Canada and China has been growing to the benefit of Canadian families and workers. Could the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration please tell us more about the exciting announcement made this weekend that will make it easier for Canadians to travel to China?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hard-working member for Don Valley West for his question and for his work on this issue. Yesterday I was very pleased, together with my colleague, the Minister of International Trade, to announce that Canada has reached an arrangement with the Chinese government whereby Canadians will have the opportunity to apply for 10-year multiple-entry visas to go to China.

Today Chinese business people and family members who travel often to China have to apply for a new visa every time they go, whether that is twice a year, twice a month, or every few days. Under this new arrangement, they will make one application and get a visa for 10 years. That is great for our business relations, it is great for families, and it is great for Canada-China relations.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the situation of Haitians in the Dominican Republic has been receiving attention for some time now. Abuse is taking place in the streets. There have been injustices at sugar cane plantations. Thousands of people are expected to be deported.

Could the Conservative government tell the House whether there have been discussions with the Dominican and Haitian authorities? Furthermore, does the government expect Canada to play a role in protecting human rights there?

[English]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is deeply concerned about these events and the subsequent violence, which is affecting both nations, as a result of a constitutional tribunal that could render countless Dominican-born persons of Haitian descent stateless. Canada encourages the governments of the Dominican Republic and Haiti to work together in good faith to resolve these issues as quickly as possible in a non-violent manner.

* * *

[Translation]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Réjean Genest (Shefford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since January 23, the Turk family has sought sanctuary in the Rougemont church to avoid deportation to Turkey. They have three children, are Kurds and fear for their safety.

I raised the subject with the minister, but all he did was pass the buck to other departments. The family needs answers and concrete action.

What will the Conservatives do for this family, considering that they are already well integrated into their community?

● (1500)

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member certainly knows, Canada has the most generous immigration system and refugee determination system in the world.

I cannot comment on the details of this case in the House. I can continue the conversation with the hon. member if he wants, but in most cases, once all avenues of appeal are exhausted, we require the people involved to leave the country.

* * *

[English]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, hundreds of thousands of Canadians have earned enormous respect at home and abroad by answering the call to fight against tyranny and evil around the world. We know that injuries to soldiers can have a lasting financial impact on their lives and the lives of their families. Can the Minister of Veterans Affairs please update this

House on what our government is doing for our injured veterans and their families?

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Pickering—Scarborough East for the question and for his service in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Today I was pleased to announce the retirement income security benefit, which will help veterans who are moderately or seriously injured in their service to Canada, and their families, with financial certainty in their retirement years.

I have also asked the department to take the multiple levels of benefits, which are lifetime benefits, and streamline them into a single pension for our most seriously injured veterans.

I would like to thank the ombudsman and stakeholders who have been working with us on this issue. It will provide certainty to families. We have been listening, and we are acting.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, over half the health claims and medical discharges of wounded soldiers are due to MSK, that is, musculoskeletal problems. This is a financial burden on both the system and the veterans. MSK care, including chiropractic in the early stages, reduces both long-term costs and lifelong pain. Will the government commit to an MSK strategy for veterans in Thunder Bay North and across Canada?

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, certainly if a member of the Canadian Armed Forces has a musculoskeletal problem, the good thing is that the Department of National Defence has chiropractors and world-class medical care, because our desire is to see that injured person return to duty and be given the time to do that. If the member medically releases, our system of medical and vocational rehabilitation will provide world-class support for that veteran, including chiropractic support and other services, to help him or her transition to civilian life.

* * *

[Translation]

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, FD): Mr. Speaker, along with hundreds of others, I was in Rimouski yesterday to reaffirm the importance of having a high quality public broadcaster for all regions of Quebec. Like the people of Montreal and Quebec City, citizens who live in Abitibi, Côte-Nord, Saguenay, the Lower St. Lawrence and the Gaspé have a right to information on subjects that affect their communities. We also want people everywhere else to hear about us.

Routine Proceedings

Does the minister realize that she has a responsibility to protect the CBC, rather than simply repeating the same empty rhetoric that is insulting to CBC employees?

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, we are protecting the CBC with an investment of over \$1 billion a year.

We are aware that the industry is facing some challenges right now. The president of the CBC has said so himself. That being said, once again, we are providing the Crown corporation with enough funding to fulfill its mandate in English and in French across the country.

* * *

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, a fourth derailment in a matter of weeks reminds us how vulnerable our municipalities and the people who live there are, since the government has failed to implement proper oversight measures for the railways since the Lac-Mégantic tragedy. We notice instead that the trains are longer and heavier and travel more quickly and the new tanker cars are not any safer.

Since her bill does not address all these problems, will the Minister of Transport put in place additional safety measures, along with enough human and financial resources to enforce them, as the Union des municipalités du Québec is calling for?

• (1505)

[*English*]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have an excellent relationship with UMQ as well as with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Without their advisory group, we would not have been able to get as far as we have and be able to introduce legislation that looks at all the concerns they had and make sure that we listen to those concerns and entrench them into law.

I continue to work with those institutions and appreciate very much everything they have done to make sure we have a solid piece of legislation.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, EI claimants are being told that from the date they apply for EI, the timeframe to process their claim is 28 days. However, this process is taking much longer than 28 days.

Claimants contact my office, and we contact Service Canada. We are told that additional time to process a claim is because of a backlog.

In addition, there is an issue when our office is overloaded with calls from constituents who are unable to reach the toll-free lines of the call centre. Sometimes claimants are put in the queue for up to an hour, and in some cases they hit a problem and they are cut off.

Can the minister confirm that the 400 new agents have been hired as promised? If not, is there a plan to hire, train, and allocate them to areas where they are most needed in the next 28 days?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the allocation of staff is being timed to coincide with the peak seasons around summer and winter.

I can say now that we have increased efficiency in processing EI claims by 42% over the last 10 years. Two-thirds of claims are now wholly or partially automated, and the majority of claimants are now paid within 28 days of being approved for the claim.

However, our broader plan is to get as many Canadians back to work as possible. About 1.2 million net new jobs have resulted from our low-tax plan, and going forward we will ensure that taxes stay low so that we can create more jobs. We will not increase taxes, as the Liberals suggest.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to 95 petitions.

* * *

PETITIONS

AGRICULTURE

Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of several of my constituents asking for respect for the right of small-scale family farmers to preserve, exchange, and use seeds.

HOUSING

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I have the honour of presenting a petition both crafted and signed by the residents of Halston Hills Co-op in my riding of Burnaby—Douglas. I would like to thank Lil Cameron for her leadership on this project, as well as for all the work she does.

The petition calls on the federal government to immediately reverse its cuts to social housing, cuts that will result in a loss of \$1.7 billion for low-cost housing by 2030. Renewed funding would allow Halston Hills to preserve rent subsidies for existing units, complete much-needed renovations, and redevelop a portion of its land to create specialized units for seniors.

I urge the government to pay careful attention to this petition.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to bring forward a petition signed by many of my constituents in regard to the issue of small farms in the south. In particular, they are asking the government to ensure that Canadian policies and programs are developed in consultation with small family farmers and that they protect the rights of small family farmers in the global south to preserve, use, and freely exchange seeds.

I appreciate the efforts they have put in to get these signatures.

SEX SELECTION

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting two petitions. The first petition calls on the House to condemn discrimination against females occurring through sex-selective pregnancy termination and to support Motion No. 408, which condemns sex selection.

• (1510)

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition acknowledges that current impaired driving laws are too lenient. Petitioners are looking for the implementation of new mandatory minimum sentences and want the Criminal Code to redefine the offence of impaired driving causing death as vehicular manslaughter.

[Translation]

ST. LAWRENCE BELUGAS

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I recently had the pleasure of meeting grade six students from the Allion School and St. Lawrence Academy.

[English]

The students are very concerned about the dangers facing the beluga whales in the St. Lawrence River. They presented me with a petition to that effect, which I am tabling today on their behalf.

[Translation]

They gathered hundreds of signatures from people who are calling on the Government of Canada to impose a moratorium on all the work being done off the coast of Cacouna, in order to protect the belugas and guarantee an intact natural environment for them.

I am proud of the students at Allion School and St. Lawrence Academy in LaSalle for their commitment to protecting the environment and the St. Lawrence belugas.

[English]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, I again have petitions from across my riding from Dorion, Geraldton, Schreiber, Marathon, and Thunder Bay. The petitioners say that the VIA Rail route on the north shore, which was cut over two decades ago despite being one of the busiest and most profitable of VIA Rail's routes, is an important component of our local economy, both for tourism and for residents, because of cutbacks to bus service and because it is one of the most efficient ways to travel and is integral to reducing pollution and harmful climate change.

Routine Proceedings

Petitioners are asking us to please re-establish passenger rail service along the spectacular north shore of Lake Superior to Thunder Bay and on to Winnipeg.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour today to stand and present a petition on behalf of hundreds of Canadians who are concerned that the current impaired driving laws are too lenient. Petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to implement tougher laws, including new mandatory minimum sentencing for those persons convicted of impaired driving causing death, and also to redefine the offence of impaired driving causing death as vehicular manslaughter.

[Translation]

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to rise today to present two petitions.

The first concerns genetically modified organisms.

[English]

The petitioners are from across Canada, including Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Ontario. They are all asking that any genetically modified products be labelled so that consumers can make informed choices.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from residents of Vancouver and the Lower Mainland. They are calling urgently for the House of Commons to provide protection to prevent the extinction of the southern resident killer whale.

This is particularly in relation to the particular vulnerabilities and sensitivities of these cetaceans to noises. It is to reduce the decibel level and also the disturbances to these incredibly important creatures, now endangered, by protecting their critical habitat from vessel intrusion.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Jay Aspin (Nipissing—Timiskaming, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to the House a petition from petitioners in Nipissing—Timiskaming who are asking for respect for the right of small-scale family farmers to preserve, exchange, and use seeds.

Points of Order

Specifically, the petitioners ask the Government of Canada and the House of Commons to commit to adopting international aid policies that support small family farmers, especially women; to recognize their vital role in the fight against hunger and poverty; and to ensure that Canadian policies and programs are developed in consultation with small family farmers and protect the rights of small family farmers in the global south to preserve, use, and freely exchange seeds.

* * *

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if a supplementary response to Question No. 522, which was initially tabled on September 15, 2014, could be made an order for return, this return would be tabled immediately.

• (1515)

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 522—**Mr. Charlie Angus:**

With respect to the Prime Minister's use of the government owned fleet of aircraft since January 2006 and for each use of the aircraft: (a) what are the passenger manifests for all flights; (b) what are the names and titles of the passengers present on the flight manifest; (c) what were all the departure and arrival points of the aircraft; (d) who requested access to the fleet; (e) who authorized the flight; (f) what repayments or reimbursements were made by passengers as a result of these flights; (g) what is the total cost of these flights; and (h) what is the total cost by year?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to supplement my initial response to the point of order raised just before the constituency week by the hon. House leader of the official opposition concerning the February 26 meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

First, the record of the meeting has now been published on the Internet. I know that my counterpart had tried to seek unanimous consent to have a report deemed presented from the committee, and now he has a supply day motion on notice to that effect. If anything, that goes to show transparently the contempt he has for the view that committees ought to be the masters of their own proceedings.

Glancing at the evidence for the meeting, I see that at about 1:30 p.m. that afternoon, the committee chair, the hon. member for Prince Edward—Hastings, said in response to a point of order:

The only recommendation that I would make is the later and later we go, the longer and longer we go, the shorter the fuse the chair will have for areas in which there are going to be challenges....

“Short fuse” might have been an apt expression because during the subsequent debate, until about 4:30 p.m., I understand that there were about a dozen more points of order respecting the relevance and repetitiveness of interventions, even including a point of order by the NDP's deputy public safety critic about the remarks of the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Public Safety.

The usefulness of the debate was clearly petering out, which is not surprising given that before 10 a.m. the NDP public safety critic, the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, said on behalf of his party, “we will be voting against this subamendment”. Even though everyone's voting position had been confirmed very early on, we saw hours and hours of NDP filibustering. Uninspired though it was, it was full of irrelevance and repetition which led to many points of order.

It was, of course, the last point of order that was consequential. Let me quote briefly from the minutes of the proceedings:

The committee resumed consideration of the subamendment of [the parliamentary secretary].

A point of order was raised regarding repetition, and [the member for Northumberland—Quinte West] requested the Chair decide to put the question on the subamendment, the amendment, and the main motion under consideration.

We then go on to read that there was a ruling, which in turn was appealed, and that a majority on the committee agreed with the appeal.

I wanted to make reference to this in order to confirm that the entire factual premise of the NDP House leader's point of order simply did not happen. He said that the hon. member for Northumberland—Quinte West moved a motion for the previous question. The member simply did not, and the records of the committee prove it. It was instead a challenge respecting relevance and repetition, matters that are addressed by our Standing Orders and are thus applicable to committees. They are matters that may be ruled upon by committee chairs “subject to an appeal to the committee”, as Standing Order 117 provides.

As I also said on February 27, having two members arguing about proceedings of a committee on which neither of them sits proves a sound premise for leaving committees' procedural disputes where they belong, in committees.

Of course, I am confident that the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster, a senior officer of the House, would not have intended to mislead the House, so I imagine that he will come back to correct the record so that the House does not persist under any misapprehension of the facts.

Previously I quoted a number of rulings by Mr. Speaker Milliken, but I have found one more that I want to add. This comes from page 3678 of the *Debates* for June 10, 2010. He said:

All members who have intervened in this matter have acknowledged that the Speaker does not sit as a court of appeal to adjudicate procedural issues that arise in the course of committee proceedings. Indeed, on numerous occasions, Speakers have restated the cardinal rule that committees are masters of their own proceedings and any alleged irregularities occurring in committees can be taken up in the House only following a report from the committee itself. There have been very few exceptions to this rule.

Government Orders

He then went on to say:

However, having reviewed the evidence submitted, there is little to suggest that in the case before us the circumstances warrant the chair breaking with the entrenched practice of allowing committees to settle issues related to their proceedings, particularly since the member himself stated that “the chair had the support of the majority of the members of the committee”.

Who was the member that Speaker Milliken was referring to who had raised the point of order in that earlier case? It was the member for Burnaby—New Westminster. He should clearly understand that a majority decision at committee should not be appealed here to the Speaker. He has tried it before. Apparently unsatisfied, he is trying it again. I hope that he will learn his lesson.

Finally, I will close by quoting Mr. Speaker Lamoureux’s ruling, at page 1397 of the *Journals* for July 24, 1969, and his view of the chair’s role when called upon to sit in appeal of committee proceedings, just as the NDP House leader would have you do today, Mr. Speaker.

● (1520)

This is the Speaker’s ruling that I am quoting from:

The Speaker is a servant of the house. Hon. members may want me to be the master of the house today, but tomorrow, when, perhaps in other circumstances I might claim this privilege, they might have a different opinion.

It would make me a hero, I suppose, if I were to adopt the attitude that I could judge political situations such as this and substitute my judgment for that of certain hon. members, either a majority or, perhaps, sometimes a minority. But I do not believe that is the role of the Speaker under our system. I am not prepared...to take this responsibility on my shoulders. I think it is my duty to rule on such matters in accordance with the rules, regulations and Standing Orders which hon. members themselves have turned over to the Speaker to administer.

That concludes my supplementary submissions.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. It is my pleasure to come back with some additional comments.

I was almost tempted to raise a point of order on the relevance of the intervention from the government House leader because every time he stands up he seems to be proving the point we made at that outrageous committee meeting where the rules we are governed by were so clearly violated.

The government House leader or members of the Conservative Party have now intervened three times, and at no point have they contradicted what is clearly the fundamental rule in the rule book, which states very simply, and I am referring to *O’Brien and Bosc*, page 1057, as the Speaker knows so well, that in committee “motions for the previous question are inadmissible”. That is the fundamental rule that was broken.

That was the rule that the Conservative majority tried to steamroll through. The political comments they make, or the ad hominem attacks they make on individuals, simply do not go around the fact that they violated a fundamental rule.

There was a new bit of information brought forward by the government House leader where he attempts to claim that the previous question was not moved. I want to restate what I stated a week and a half ago, that the Conservative member very clearly said, “I am asking you to...put the question on the subamendment, the amendment, and the main motion now...”.

It could not be clearer than that. There are fundamental rules that were broken in committee, and that is why we have brought it to your attention, Mr. Speaker. Very clearly, despite the political rhetoric coming from the Conservatives, the rule book cannot be thrown out by Conservatives. They have to respect the rules under which we are governed. They cannot throw them out. They cannot rip them up. They cannot burn that book. They have to follow the rules.

That is why we have raised this issue. What happened at the public safety committee was outrageous, and there is no doubt about that. It was also a very clear contravention of the rules.

We may come back later to add to our submission, but I think the case is very clear. The Conservatives violated those rules under which we are governed. That is what we submit today.

The Deputy Speaker: I would ask the opposition House leader that if in fact he is going to be presenting further argument, he advise the table as soon as possible. I know the Speaker wishes to make a ruling on this matter as quickly as possible.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PIPELINE SAFETY ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-46, An Act to amend the National Energy Board Act and the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands still has 3 minutes and 30 seconds for questions and comments.

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member if she is familiar with the work of scientists, technicians, and academics on double-walled pipelines with sensors in between, which are close to being spill-proof. Of course, they are not mentioned in this bill, but an increasing number of experts feel they are necessary to prevent the kinds of problems to which the member has already referred.

● (1525)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, speaking to Bill C-46 relating to pipeline safety, I thank my colleague in the Green Party, the member for Thunder Bay—Superior North.

There have been a lot of advances in the technology, particularly for double-walled pipelines. None of the current pipelines being proposed across Canada are double-walled. There is no question that if there are two walls with sensors between each of the two walls in a pipeline and sensors to detect leaks, that it is far more likely to operate a system where leaks are less frequent. It would be a significant improvement on the safety measures for the currently proposed pipeline.

Government Orders

What I want to stress, as I did in my speech, is that the Green Party opposes any of the currently proposed pipelines, whether they are heading west or east or south or potentially north, any pipeline determined to deliver raw bitumen to tidewater, to ship overseas, carrying the very dangerous mixture, the very environmentally damaging mixture of bitumen mixed with dilbit. That is something we would oppose.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her speech.

There are categories of liability in the event of a spill. If fault or negligence is proven, there is unlimited liability; if it is not proven, liability is limited to \$1 billion.

I would like my colleague to tell us more about the problems this could create, because there would obviously be a legal process to determine liability, which, in my view, would delay compensation.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

The \$1 billion cap is really a problem because there is the possibility, and even the probability, of pipeline disasters where the costs would exceed \$1 billion. For example, there was the Kalamazoo River disaster in Michigan caused by Enbridge. More than four years later, the river is still polluted.

[*English*]

Dilbit spills, as far as we know, cannot be cleaned up, at any cost, and the attempts so far to clean up in Kalamazoo have exceeded the \$1 billion cap set out in Bill C-46. That means that whatever is left over in terms of cost within Canada would be absorbed by the Canadian government, Canadian taxpayers.

I know that Conservative members have pointed out that the Kalamazoo, Michigan spill occurred in another country, but it was still caused by a major Canadian company.

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to be rising to speak to Bill C-46, an act to amend the National Energy Board Act and the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act. We know the bill deals with the whole question of liability for pipeline spills.

My riding of Toronto—Danforth is a very strong environmental riding. The environmental consciousness of the average citizen is exceptional. Constituents are very concerned about the serious environmental risks associated with pipeline projects in Canada, including oil spills. It is also important to say they also understand that pipelines are directly tied to the facilitation of accelerated oil extraction and oil export that is at cross purposes to the urgent need to fight climate change, the single most important challenge the world faces and, indeed, the single most important challenge that we have faced for decades without acting properly on it.

Many also realize the particular risks of localized pollution of diluted bitumen once it spills in any form, whether from a tanker or from a pipeline, as the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has been emphasizing in today's debate. My constituents have very little faith that the government is taking steps in general to ensure that these

kinds of environmental concerns are thoroughly addressed. They need to know that the environment is being protected and that necessary preventive and response measures are going to be put in place.

Of course, I take these concerns seriously. When it comes to major resource projects like pipelines, the NDP believes that proper community consultation, respect for the rights and title of aboriginal peoples, and rigorous environmental assessments are the bedrock of any kind of viable sustainable development approach. This has not been the approach taken by the government, by and large, in the review, for example, of northern gateway, Kinder Morgan and Keystone XL, and in the same flawed process that was applied to Line 9 and is now being applied to Energy East.

The legislation we are debating today is, however, a step forward. Bill C-46 seeks, among other things, to ensure that some polluters will be absolutely liable for harm caused by a pipeline spill, including environmental damage, what is termed in the bill as non-use harm. The bill includes absolute liability for all National Energy Board regulated pipelines. That means companies would be liable for costs and damages, irrespective of fault, up to \$1 billion for major oil pipelines, which are pipelines that ship or transport more than 250,000 barrels of oil a day. Where there is fault, including negligence, there is no cap, and that is a good feature of this bill. For those under 250,000 barrels a day, it is left to regulation. Therefore, there is lack of clarity as to what the liability cap will be for smaller operations.

It is a good start, as I have said, and that is why, of course, I will support it at second reading. From what I have heard, most of my colleagues, if not all of them, also will be. We need to send it to committee for further study and amendments, and this is exactly the kind of bill where there will be real expertise brought to bear from across the spectrum. I honestly hope the committee will have enough hearings to go into the finer details of the bill to get it right. There seems to be a cross-party consensus that it needs to be done right, by and large, and it is not the kind of bill that should be overly politicized.

We in the NDP have long been consistent in our position that companies, corporations, and not taxpayers and not citizens who call on the public treasury for other government programs, should cover the cost of pollution. The bill is long overdue as a first step toward a polluter pays regime for pipelines in Canada.

Government Orders

There are some other specific provisions I should briefly point out by way of being somewhat laudatory of what the government has put forward in Bill C-46. One is that aboriginal governments, termed “any Aboriginal governing body”, in the bill, are treated similarly to other governments, municipal, provincial and federal, in terms of the role they play in cleanup and being compensated for any kind of cleanup they have to do. Other powers and rights are given to them as well, and that is something.

Additional remedies, as part of the judgment that a court can give under offence provisions in the National Energy Board Act, include such creative possibilities as ordering the creation of scholarship funds for environmental studies. This is written into the bill.

● (1530)

Interim compensation is possible as one of the orders from the new pipeline claims tribunal, which can be called into being in cases of so-called designated companies. The system set up by the bill would have the ability to access as much of the pooled liability reserve funds as the National Energy Board would deem needed in the case of designated companies. Therefore, when a company is sharing a pooled fund, to ensure it has enough money, it is not just its share of the pooled fund that can be accessed, but the entire fund, at least on my reading.

Also, in terms of the kinds of fines that come with the offence provisions that already exist in the National Energy Board Act, there are a number of new headings under which aggravation of damages could be sparked, or what kind of extra factors would mean higher fines. One of the aggravating factors is where there is evidence that shows that the corporation allowed the spill to happen essentially as part of an economic calculus in order to save costs, in order to make more money.

All of these things are to be commended in the bill. There are, however, more than a few problems.

The first problem has been mentioned a few times, and that is setting the limit on liability in cases of so-called non-fault at \$1 billion, which may not be sufficient. The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has already indicated clearly that we know it has already cost more than \$1 billion for the cleanup in the Kalamazoo River area. We also know the cleanup has not actually worked and to some extent the attempt goes on, whether a real cleanup will ever be possible given the nature of diluted bitumen.

Second, much of the bill is heavily laden with regulatory and discretionary provisions. An awful lot of power is given to the cabinet and the National Energy Board to set out detailed regulations. This includes, for example, that this new pipeline claims tribunal exists in the act in a very general way. The Governor-in-Council, however, would be given the power to make regulations on virtually everything to do with this tribunal, including in subclause 48.47(a) “prescribing the terms and conditions of appointment of its members”. There is nothing in the act—we have nothing to look at—to know what kind of tribunal this would be. Where are these members going to come from? How are they going to be appointed? How do we know this tribunal will be a fair and adequate replacement for the courts, for example, in the stream of cases that might go to it? There is actually a lot of room for

manipulation of that pipeline claims tribunal by virtue of so much being left out of the act.

Other problems are more in terms of how things are left to regulation, even as the act has taken care to ensure some things cannot be regulated. For example, it appears from my reading that the Governor-in-Council cannot prescribe higher amounts than the \$1 billion on a company-by-company basis. It is allowed to say yes for a certain kind of pipeline that carries much more than 250,000 barrels per day that the liability limit should be more than \$1 billion. However, it cannot do that on a company-by-company basis, although it would be specifically allowed to do it on a company-by-company basis for pipelines involving under 250,000 barrels. Therefore, if there is a company that is notorious for having problems, notorious for non-compliance, notorious for being a greater risk and yet still is in the game so to speak, there seems to be a prohibition on treating that company differently. There is a kind of formal equality idea here, which is a problem.

In terms of the amount of cash on hand that a company has to keep in order to cover liability, the National Energy Board is not required to ensure that the money on hand includes enough money for any potential loss of non-use value, which is code in the bill for environmental damage relating to a public resource. This is part and parcel of a couple of features we discussed earlier in questions and answers in relation to an earlier speech. There are a couple of areas in which, although the act starts out by saying so-called “non-use value”, environmental damage is covered as one of the three major heads of damage that the bill’s liability provisions are meant to go to, but there are other provisions in the act that seem to claw that back.

In conclusion, this is a good start for sure, but at the same time it is a bill that needs close scrutiny in committee. It is the kind of scrutiny that will be very easy to understand in terms of what is necessary to improve the bill. I hope all parties will gather together to do that.

● (1535)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate a number of the comments the member has made.

The Conservatives will often talk about the safety record of our pipelines. One of the things I have come to know over the years is that Canadians see the value of the transportation of our oil and gas through pipelines, but at the same time they do have an expectation, justifiably, to ensure there is a high sense of security and safety related to the pipelines. To that extent, it is good we have the legislation before us.

The member might want to provide some comment on living up to the expectations that Canadians have as a whole when it comes to protecting our environment and so forth, when we talk about the whole issue of pipeline security.

Government Orders

• (1540)

Mr. Craig Scott: Mr. Speaker, as far as I understand, from one set of figures that I have, Canadians have differential confidence in different means of transporting oil. Twenty-nine per cent feel confident that rail is safe. After Lac-Mégantic, we know why that figure is so low. Thirty-seven per cent believe that oil tanker transport is safe, which is still low. Closer to 50% think pipelines are safe. It is absolutely true: part of the premise of the question is that there is some sense that Canadians understand that pipelines, as compared to other methods, may be safer.

At the same time, I want to emphasize one thing that again the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has been emphasizing. Diluted bitumen is a very different commodity from other forms of oil, whether it is semi-processed or more refined. The specific problems that can be caused by spills of diluted bitumen have to make that kind of transportation by any means, but especially by pipelines, across anything resembling environmentally sensitive areas a special consideration.

When we throw into that the idea that refining at source or upgrading enough at source—that is in Alberta—is itself going to add so much more to the value of the economy in Alberta, such that less has to be taken out of the ground in order to generate the same revenues, there seems to be a good case to be made for the fact that pipelines should not be used in what is ultimately a rip and ship understanding of getting bitumen out of Alberta at all costs.

There are ways for a transition to a post-carbon economy—keeping as much of that in the ground as possible while allowing higher value-added oil to come out of Alberta—to be achieved as we are moving toward that greener economy.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Toronto—Danforth spoke about how important the environment is to him and his constituents. The people of Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles feel the same way.

They care about the environment and about protecting it. The Conservatives seem to be the only ones lagging behind in responding to disasters. They take one step forward after a disaster happens. There have been three recently in northern Ontario.

Does the member not think that public safety should be a higher priority for the current government? Should this government not act more quickly and better protect Canadians?

Mr. Craig Scott: Mr. Speaker, we really need to focus on the participation and role of the people in the communities these pipelines are going through and of the people in the communities where the oil is extracted.

It is also important to note that Bill C-628, introduced by our colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley, deals with this very topic, which is the need to give people and communities a stronger voice in the environmental assessment process.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise and speak on behalf of the people of Timmins—James Bay, and speak on the issue of Bill C-46, the so-

called pipeline safety act, the amendment to the National Energy Board Act. As I rise today, back home there is great concern in my region about the third derailment in this past month in our region. There were two tanker derailments in the small community of Gogama, one at Hornepayne. Twenty-nine cars carrying heavy crude went off the tracks. A number of them are still burning out of control in the Mattagami River right now. The Mattagami River runs from that part of northern Ontario right through the heart of the city of Timmins, through communities like Smooth Rock Falls up into the Missinaibi and the Moose rivers in James Bay. A huge drainage area of 37,000 kilometres is affected.

This heavy crude is burning in a fish habitat very close to the community of Mattagami First Nation and very close to Gogama. We need to look at these issues in terms of government policy. We saw the horrific tragedy at Lac-Mégantic this past summer and we saw the failed safety measures. We saw the promises that have been put in place allowing companies to look after themselves, that somehow Canadians would be better protected in this privatized world and that if we let corporations look after themselves without oversight, everything will be fine. Many good people in Lac-Mégantic died because of that.

If the train had derailed just a few kilometres from where it did, not into the river but into the community of Gogama, we could have had a repeat of Lac-Mégantic. For all of us across so much of Canada and across the north, our communities are built on the rail lines. Across the street from my house, the Ontario Northland carries its heavy duty sulphuric acid from the smelter in Rouyn-Noranda. In fact my street address is Mileage 104, on the railway line. We are so closely tied to the issues of safety.

I speak of that in terms of the huge economic impact the oil industry has on our country. It is a huge driver, but also we need to start addressing the growing environmental impact to make sure that there is a balance. There will be some people who say “we will not ship by rail anymore, let us get the pipelines through and once the pipelines are through, we will not have to worry anymore”. The problem is the lack of a long-term vision of the government where, as my colleague from Toronto—Danforth said, they only believe in the rip-and-ship philosophy.

There is something fundamentally, economically wrong when the vision of our national economy is to take raw bitumen out of the ground, ship it 2,000 kilometres to a port in Quebec so it can be shipped off to China or someplace else to be processed. That is an abomination. That is not an economic plan. The people who carry the risk are the people living along that pipeline because the government stripped all the environmental protection acts, stripped the Navigable Waters Act so that the need to have the shut-off valves along the rivers does not exist anymore.

We are told that somehow this is in all our interests. I see oil industry ads all over Ottawa say “It’s your oil, it’s our oil, let’s do the right thing”. It is not our oil. It should be Canada’s interest. No, it is our risk. The benefits are going to the Koch brothers in the U.S. They are going offshore. Ask any northerner at the pumps, for all the damage they suffered in the economy lately, when have they ever had a break on gas prices. We never had one.

Government Orders

We need to look at this. There are some good things in the bill about issues of liability. I ask people back home about the processes that are in place to protect the public. If I look at the National Energy Board, I do not feel much comfort. I guess if I were an oil lobbyist, I would feel great. If I were a big Suncor or Sunoco, I would think the National Energy Board is good. Energy east is a major project that is happening. The public has a right to participate because if we talk about moving bitumen through pipeline, there needs to be public buy-in and they have to understand what is at stake.

• (1545)

The National Energy Board needs to hear from the citizens about what is at stake. However, citizens do not get to write a letter to the National Energy Board. They have to get approval to write a letter in order to be able to write a letter. The National Energy Board does not accept unsolicited letters. People have to apply and then it will decide whether or not their opinion counts. That is not how to build public trust. That is not social licence. The National Energy Board will decide whether the letters will be posted or whether to outright refuse them.

Therefore, granting or refusing a project application impinges on whether or not there is a direct effect on the interests of the person, the degree of connection between the project and the person, the likelihood of severity of harm that a person is exposed to, and the frequency and duration of a person's use of an area near the project. I am trying to interpret what that means. Maybe if I live right on top of the pipeline I get to go to the hearings to say whether or not I like it. If I am like the citizens of Timmins, in the case of the Gogama derailment, if I am part of the larger population of 37,000 square kilometres who has been impacted by this present derailment and if it was a pipeline blowout, would any of those people be allowed to speak at the National Energy Board hearings?

The issue we are dealing with here with crude, with oil, are about a national vision that says that there is no point processing and upgrading in our own country where we can create value-added jobs and ensure the great gifts we have in terms of resources of oil, gas and mineral production. There is no national vision to upgrade, to make sure there is value added, so we are taking less out of the ground because we would see more in our economy. However, we are being told that somehow we should trust the pipeline agenda because the government has turned our country into a petrol state and, like all petrol states, it is corrupt. We see its attack on birdwatchers, on environmental organizations, on anyone who speaks up against its agenda.

We are supposed to believe that bitumen is just like oil, but it is not. I am looking at Bill C-46 that talks about a \$1-billion liability, which was surpassed in terms of the damage that Enbridge did to the Kalamazoo River. It is still being ordered by the Environmental Protection Agency to go back and fix the damage it did to the Kalamazoo River. It may not ever be able to fix the damage it did to the Kalamazoo River because it did not have the proper oversight.

I am thinking of a pipeline running through northern Ontario like the train that ran through Gogama. If there is a blowout and it is carrying bitumen, is there enough protection in this bill to offset the billions of dollars in damage that would accrue? If this northern gateway pipeline had ever gone through and it was blowing bitumen

out through the B.C. mountains, how would anyone be able to get to that? When one drives up through the mountains in B.C., sometimes there are trucks at the bottom because it was too difficult to get down to the trucks that went off the edge. How would we be able to somehow get the bitumen off those rivers? That is why President Obama rejected Keystone, contrary to the demands of the Liberal Party and Conservative Party leaders. He said it was not in America's interests to take the risk without the benefit.

Therefore, I am looking at where we need to be as an economy. Our natural resources are vital to us but there has to be social licence. It has to be done safely and with the long-term implication that if companies will be moving products like bitumen out of the ground they are doing it in a safe way. They failed with our rail. We have had too many accidents and we need accountability there. However, if we are supposed to trust that this bill would protect us on pipelines, when we see the collusion of the oil interests and the Conservative government, I do not believe them for a moment and I do not think Canadians do either.

We are interested in this bill and want to bring it to committee, but there is a bigger issue with respect to environmental accountability that has to be addressed by this nation.

• (1550)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member makes significant reference to rail, and points out the many deficiencies. His colleague just gave some percentages in terms of what Canadians really believe. It is clear that there is a great deal of concern related to safety in regard to the shipping of oil and gas products via train. However, it is nowhere near the same concern in regard to pipelines. Canadians as a whole tend to give more support to its transportation through the pipelines.

My question for the member is related to trains. If the marketplace here in Canada or abroad is, as is being projected, continuing to grow in its demand, what are the member's thoughts in terms of train transportation of this natural resource versus pipeline? If he wants to add on the issue of the security component, that would be nice.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that up to this point in Canada there has been a higher comfort level with pipelines because we are used to pipelines in Canada. The natural gas pipelines that run across this nation are part of the economic engine and we are used to them. However, we are dealing with something different here when we are talking about high-pressure bitumen, and when we are talking about pipelines that are 40 years and 60 years old. These raise serious questions. When we see the stripping of the environmental protection laws that has happened in this country, it undermines people's confidence and the confidence of our international partners.

Government Orders

I do not know why President Obama would ever stand up with the current Prime Minister and say, “Yes, we love your oil agenda because you stripped all the environmental laws; you act like a gang of ruffians when you talk about anything about the environment, you insult the environment; you act like you believe you’re in the end times and you want to get the oil out as quickly as possible”. None of our international partners are going to want to be close to that.

If we are going have confidence, whether in rail or in pipeline, there needs to be, number one, some sense that the Conservatives actually care about what is happening with the environment; and number two, that they care about safety.

At the end of the day, we are a resource-based nation. We need to develop our resource, but we need to develop it in a way that is safe, environmentally progressive and that respects the overall world movement to try to deal with this carbon and climate crisis.

• (1555)

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague mentioned the fact that the Liberal Party supports Keystone XL. This pipeline safety bill is long overdue. I can add to the support of Keystone that in my region of Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Enbridge Line 9 was outside of regulations since 1999. It shows that each of these two parties here in this House have been equally irresponsible in their care of the nation's pipelines.

Could my hon. friend expound on why we are standing opposed to Keystone, and how that differentiates us from the Liberal Party?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, Keystone does not make sense. We have been told about the thousands of jobs by the Liberal leader and the Conservative leader. We are talking about building a pipeline to the Montana border. Then the resources leave us. We are talking about exporting the product so it can be value-added elsewhere, so other countries make the most of it. What we need to do is move beyond this crazy idea of shipping raw product thousands of kilometres to a port, and we actually do the value-added in Alberta, in Saskatchewan, in Canada so we are creating the most and we actually benefit as a nation from it. Right now, the Keystone plan is dead in the U.S. Nobody wants to talk about it except the Koch brothers, the Republicans, and the Conservative and Liberal leaders. People have moved on.

We need to get our heads around moving toward a progressive, economic, environmental plan that will create long-term jobs; and that when we are using natural resources like dirty oil that we are doing it within a limited capacity so we are actually lessening the impact on our planet.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to speak in the debate on this bill.

As most of my colleagues have said, this bill is important because it is a further step toward applying the polluter pays principle, and I sincerely believe it is fundamentally essential, considering the unbridled increase in the development of various oil and gas resources in Canada and the potential consequences of that. We are aware of all the debates and reactions that oil and gas development and transportation by a variety of methods, including pipelines, give

rise to among the general public. It is really important to move forward and take at least this step in the best way possible.

Like all my colleagues in the New Democratic Party—I have not heard any dissenting voices on this issue—I support this bill at second reading, both because of its basic principle and because it contains some really positive elements. However, our support is of course conditional on the fact that we must be able to consider the bill in depth at the committee stage and that ultimately we can look at what is good, what has to be improved and what improvements can be made, in the hopes that the debate can be as broad and as deep as possible.

Moreover, I am taking this opportunity to say that I welcome the fact that the bill is not currently the subject of a time allocation motion. I do not know if that will happen. I may well be in dangerous waters just by bringing it up. I hope I am not giving my Conservative colleagues any ideas about moving a time allocation motion, but it is quite significant. It is also important that we have a very comprehensive debate on this bill and especially that we listen to the views from all parts of Canada. We represent very diverse populations that are sometimes spread over huge areas. As my colleague mentioned earlier, he represents a riding whose vast size is beyond all measure in comparison with the riding that I represent, which is much smaller and very urban. However, in view of some of the pipeline routes, my urban riding is likely to be very deeply affected if there were an accident.

The thing that is really important about the polluter pays principle is that it makes it possible to use an encouraging approach, that is, prevention, which relies on companies’ best practices. Companies wishing to build and operate a pipeline will go much further with their safety measures, doubling or tripling their monitoring and taking containment measures to ensure that they prevent spills as much as possible. If ever there were a spill, they would take steps to keep damage to a minimum.

As some of our colleagues have stressed, deplorable accidents have happened; just a few years ago there was a well-publicized accident along the Kalamazoo River, which was deeply contaminated following a large-scale spill. According to the findings of an investigation, the spill is worrying because of the way in which these types of pipelines are operated. At the end of the day, a company that provides minimum services in order to carry a crude or refined product has too little control and too few teams close by in order to ensure that when something goes wrong with the pipeline, it is identified and then corrective measures are taken as quickly as possible.

This is far from being useful because obviously we can develop our natural resources in a responsible manner.

Government Orders

•(1600)

We can do this without sacrificing environmental sustainability and social acceptability. I am talking about these concepts precisely because environmental development and economic development are two elements that are far from being incompatible. We have discussed, among other things, the idea of having a value-added product, for example, refining crude oil and offering derived products. Furthermore, we might well develop some expertise, which is also value-added and can be exported, not to mention using it here in Canada, in a way that creates high-quality jobs, in order to prevent accidents and reduce the risks and the footprint of the facilities that are already operating.

After discussing environmental sustainability, the other very important aspect is social acceptability, and especially participating in the partnership that can be created with the communities directly or indirectly affected by the movement of equipment, for instance, in the case of a pipeline that goes through a community or at the very least passes close to it. This is of course very demanding. Everybody realizes it. However, it is an essential practice because if the people's voices are heard and they are convinced that their concerns will be taken into consideration, it is much easier to gain their co-operation in reaching a solution or a result that will preclude unilaterally imposed measures. In fact, imposing measures unilaterally could well lead to fractious disputes and perhaps even to certain excesses. We cannot blame people for this. When people feel that their safety and the safety of their families is under direct threat, how can anyone criticize them for reacting strongly, for making demands, for challenging or wanting to block the project? Some parts of our country are currently going through this situation with projects that are up in the air, under consideration or being developed.

Once we have satisfied these questions of environmental sustainability and social licence, we will be able to ensure real long-term prosperity and, most of all, prosperity that is shared among all segments of society, with everyone's involvement. That is why it is very important for this bill to be thoroughly examined in committee and for the committee to hear a broad range of witnesses. I do not mean only expert witnesses, but also witnesses from civil society and the communities near pipelines and existing facilities. That will help us understand how some of the more controversial aspects of this bill need to be improved.

Of course, one of the aspects I want to touch on is the \$1 billion cap on liability when no fault or negligence is proven. This may seem like a very large amount; a billion dollars is an enormous sum. Still, would it be enough for a community like Quebec City, which includes my riding of Beauport—Limoilou, if there were a pipeline project with the potential to affect major sources of drinking water for hundreds of thousands of people? Those sources include the St. Lawrence River and a number of large lakes and rivers. What would happen if they were seriously affected over months or years? Losses would go far beyond that level, even if no fault were proven, the company was not liable and it was truly an accident.

•(1605)

Beyond Beauport—Limoilou and Quebec City, what meaning would that level of liability have if natural environments were permanently soiled?

It is possible to do the simple accounting, but it is essential for companies to realize that their liability must be absolute and that they must take every precaution to avoid accidents.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the potential development of the Keystone pipeline would provide all sorts of opportunities. There have been a number of stakeholders. The member's own party indicates that the Liberal Party supports it and the NDP opposes it. At the local and provincial levels, governments want to move forward with the Keystone project. There needs to be a lot of work done on it. The current government has dropped the ball on the issue.

If the pipeline does not go ahead, it would mean that we would have to find other modes of transporting that natural resource to the United States. Does the member believe that we should be looking at alternatives to pipeline construction and moving it through a pipeline, such as rail, which is not as safe as a pipeline, or does he believe that we should be limiting the amount of oil that is exported? I know that the standard line the NDP often gives is to go to refineries and refine it. Refineries are not being built. Is the NDP proposing that if it was in government, it would actually build a refinery?

•(1610)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very interesting question. Beyond Keystone XL, there is a debate in our society about what we are doing with our natural resources and what course we should be prepared to follow.

The Conservatives favour massive exportation of our raw natural resources. We wonder why the Canadian people are being asked to look at this as the only solution, since raw bitumen, along with the chemical mixture that makes it dilute enough to transport by pipeline, is a terribly dangerous cocktail. In Canada, we are not only facing these risks ourselves, we are exporting them to other countries. In the case of Keystone XL, that is the United States, but China and Europe could also be affected.

Why, then, do they want to proceed without any added value and without much thought as to the optimum solution?

Many other countries have shown the way with a much more sensitive approach that respects their own citizens and the whole world.

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou for his excellent work and his excellent speech.

This bill is certainly a step in the right direction, but its shortcomings are leading it the wrong way. That needs to be said. Since 2011 the Conservatives have been attacking environmental legislation. They have weakened environmental protections and limited public consultation. That especially worries people in Quebec because the energy east project is going to be approved.

I would like to ask my colleague what he thinks of this bill's shortcomings.

Government Orders

Mr. Raymond Côté: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Drummond for his question. I want to recognize the work that he does as environment critic, because he is asking a very good question.

Beyond this bill, the Conservatives are undermining Canadians' potential support for a pipeline project such as energy east by getting rid of the pipeline review process, when everything is in the hands of the National Energy Board, an agency in which Canadians unfortunately do not have much confidence.

Everything appears to be aimed at cramming a project that has not been properly reviewed down Canadians' throats, without any assurance that the project will be acceptable and without providing any information about the operator's record on greenhouse gas emissions, which lead to climate change. Everything has been streamlined and people feel like they are being held hostage by a project over which they have no control. It is absolutely deplorable.

[*English*]

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in favour of the bill. I think it is important, when public safety issues are before us, that we get them to committee as quickly as possible. I think we all have faith or hope that the committee process will improve safety issues when there is a discrepancy or a concern that they are too soft. However, we also recognize that the government on this measure is attempting to correct a problem that has been left long standing for far too long.

The issue of moving volatile substances safely through this country will be with us regardless of which side of the climate change debate we end up on, regardless of which side of the pipeline debate we are on, and which side of the rail lines we come down on because of one simple fact: moving resources to market requires us to manage some difficult chemicals and some difficult substances. Getting it right gives us peace of mind but also protects people. It also protects the environment if we do it properly.

The concerns we are starting to hear about the bill are not so much about the intent. We support that. They are not so much about the provisions to strengthen our already lax laws, as we can see from past pipeline incidents; the concerns are about oversight.

This parallels another conversation that is happening in this building, which is again about public safety. Oversight works when it is independent and when it is vigorous and when it is well supported by research, facts, and investigative powers but also with accountability models.

The concerns at present about the bill reach those same areas I just listed. For me, who represents a riding in the city of Toronto where the rail lines move through at the south end and the north end of the riding, getting pipelines right is extraordinarily important for the safety of the residents I represent and am speaking for today.

Every one of the derailments that has been listed in this House during the debate, including the one that happened over the weekend in Gogama, the second derailment this month, would have made it through the heart of the city of Toronto but for the poor luck to have happened where they did. They could have happened in one of those densely populated parts of Toronto, one of the most densely populated parts of Canada, and the impact would have been beyond

catastrophic. I do not think there is a word to describe what the scenario would have looked like.

We have huge issues, and it is precisely because of the lack of public oversight and of independent oversight over these public safety issues that even though we support the general intent of these sorts of bills, we get shy about them. We get very nervous about them. We can start to hear the corrections we think, if tabled and accepted, would make it a better bill. If we start giving voice to those suggestions, hopefully they will be heard inside the parliamentary committee.

In particular, on rail, if we do not move volatile chemicals by pipeline, they will move to market by rail. Quite clearly, accident after accident, allowing the industry to self-regulate and diluting the accountability models is having a devastating impact on the quality of transportation and the quality of our resource management system.

It is precisely because of the way we have walked away from enforcement, regulation, and accountability, in particular around oil, in particular around pipelines, that our trading partners, in particular the United States of America, have moved away from trusting us to manage these files properly. As a result, even the most enthusiastic supporters of the oil sands now cannot get that product to market efficiently. With the rail accidents right now, there is actually no way of getting it to the east coast.

It is thought that somehow not providing good government, not providing good oversight, and not providing independent accountability models is going to make things better. It has made things worse.

While we watch this pipeline proposal move through the House and on to committee, this is exactly the time and exactly the opportunity the government should be seizing to show us that it can listen, that it can take the good ideas coming from industry, the environmental movement, parliamentarians, and ordinary citizens, and actually craft legislation that gives people peace of mind that there will not be a major accident, and if there are accidents, that containment strategies are in place, and if containment strategies fail, that accountability is there.

● (1615)

Losing the drinking water for a small town, or losing the capacity to manage the environment for the long term because of a catastrophic spill, is an unacceptable outcome of economic development. Surely in this day and age we are smart enough to manage the resources more effectively.

Government Orders

Part of it is about exploring upstream possibilities for refinement. I hear members of the opposition party talk about doing all the refining in Canada. We know that the refining capacity of North America is stronger than the supply right now. The challenge is that unless we are prepared to subsidize the oil and gas industry to provide new forms of refinement and new forms of downstream processing, there is no way of realizing the vision they have placed on the table as an alternative to pipelines or rail.

Therefore, with the economic reality staring us in the face, with the understanding that the resources are going to move to market, the issue falls to us to find the right balance. Refine what we can, absolutely. Move it when we have to; we must accomplish this. To move it safely is the issue.

The challenge we are having with the legislation again comes down to oversight. If we take a look at the National Energy Board, it has become a de facto rubber stamp for decisions that have already been made by the government. The quality of the people appointed is not sufficient to give us the sense of confidence that if there is an issue that needs to be addressed we are going to get a response in both a timely and proactive fashion but also in an accountable way. That is the issue that concerns us.

Therefore, as the bill, with our support, makes it to the parliamentary committee, please do not do with it what has been done with so many other bills: refuse to listen to opposition ideas, refuse to listen to expert opinion, refuse to listen to the concerns of ordinary Canadians, and refuse to act in the interest of all of us together in concert. Please, hold meaningful hearings, change the accountability model, create independence in the accountability model, and go forward.

I think we will find that all of us can support moves like that that would strengthen the capacity of the current government to do what it is supposed to do, which is not just to stand back and eliminate government but to in fact push government forward into a position where it can be effective and can deliver the economic results we all want it to.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals were in power before the Conservatives.

Why did the Liberal government not conduct a thorough reform of the National Energy Board? What changes would it consider necessary for this to be done today in order to give the government concrete proposals?

[*English*]

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Mr. Speaker, this is an evolving issue. I think one of the things that has happened in the last 15 years is that the rate of change within the oil fields has been very hard to keep pace with, so the scope of the challenge has grown.

If we look at rail alone, in 2011 there were only 68,000 carloads of resource coming out of Alberta and moving through the rest of the country. Within two years, it doubled to more than 120,000 carloads. The rate of increase, the technological change, and what is being

shipped is changing. Looking back 20 or 15 years does not provide a blueprint for the future.

We know that the product is more volatile than it used to be. We know that the direction it is moving is changing as we speak. We know that the rate of extraction and the rate of shipment has multiplied by at least double since the start of this decade. Going back and asking us what we would have done in 2008 or 2009 is not the issue.

The challenge in front of us now is that so much of this is moving by rail. We could shift to pipelines, but the pipelines do not have the capacity and are not technically sufficient in their structure to carry it. With that volatility now in play, it requires a response.

Looking to the future is where we need to focus. Looking backwards in time is not going to resolve the issue we have in front of us today.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from my colleague, which were very well said.

I wonder if the member could provide further comment on the importance of having strong federal leadership on pipelines, whether it be Keystone or others, given the importance of our environment and our economy. That is something that we have seen has been somewhat lacking. It is critically important to work with the first nations and provinces. It is very important to get that social contract. Perhaps the member could provide some comment in regard to that.

• (1625)

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Mr. Speaker, the role of the federal government is not just to make decisions but to build consensus around decisions to make sure that what we do benefits as many people as possible, in the most efficient way possible, while protecting the environment. They are not exclusive dynamics. They are dynamics we actually have to keep in balance.

One of the things that concerns all of us as we see the pipeline issue get raised is the “my way or the highway” attitude of the government. Listening and learning from one’s critics is the best way to improve a policy. The absence of that consensus, the absence of reaching out to create partnerships that work, is a huge challenge. It is as big a challenge as arbitrarily saying that we will build a new refinery on the east coast and create jobs. If the market is not there, if the capacity already exists and we try to replicate that capacity in Canada, we are offering false promise to the east coast. We are not telling people in central Canada the truth, because there is not necessarily a market or a way of getting it to the east coast. At the end of the day, it is not something that will necessarily get buy-in if we are going to simply tax the resource to pay for the downstream expansion.

Government Orders

We have to work in partnership. The absence of that collaborative process and perspective and the inability to listen in committee are the hallmarks of the government. One of the reasons it is not getting progress on this file, and so many other files, especially on the international front, is that it refuses to collaborate. We can see it in the cities of this town and in the capitals around the world. A failure to collaborate is hurting the Canadian economy, and ironically, and sadly, it is defeating the interests of the very province that seems to elect nothing but Conservatives.

[*Translation*]

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 Montcalm, Health; the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North: The Environment; and the hon. member for Québec, Quebec Bridge.

Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make an aside at the beginning of my speech to point out that it is Quebec Intellectual Disability Week. As this will last the entire week, I hope that we are going to talk a lot about it and that there will be less prejudice against people with intellectual disabilities. I wanted to take this opportunity to mention this week here in the House.

[*English*]

I rise today in support of Bill C-46, an act to amend the National Energy Board Act and the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act at second reading.

Bill C-46 amends the statutory liability regime for federally regulated pipelines in Canada. The bill includes absolute liability for all National Energy Board regulated pipelines. Under the new law, a firm's liability for oil leaks and spills would be augmented to \$1 billion for major oil pipelines to cover costs for a large-scale rupture, regardless of fault. These are pipelines that have the capacity to transport at least 250,000 barrels of oil per day. A company would continue to have unlimited liability when it was at fault or demonstrated negligence.

The National Energy Board is set to take control of oil spill cleanups. As policy makers, it is our duty to have an in-depth analysis of all of the provisions that are part of a bill and to shed light on dark corners. Although this bill contains important measures that would allow for greater liability in the event of a disaster or an oil leak, there remains a serious cause for concern, mainly due to a lack of clarity and a lack of certainty. There is a lack of clarity because if the cleanup costs surpass \$1 billion dollars, Bill C-46 does not provide clear indications as to who would assume the cleanup costs where there is no proof of fault or negligence. There is lack of certainty because the implementation of many of the proposed changes would be left to the discretion of the National Energy Board or cabinet.

[*Translation*]

Although identifying those responsible for cleanup is important when polluters are to pay the bill for the pollution they caused, we must ensure at the outset that all prevention measures are meticulously developed and adequately strengthened, so that fossil fuels are transported under the best possible conditions. Our first priority should therefore be to prevent oil spills from happening. It is

essential that the production and transportation of crude oil is accompanied by an improvement in safety measures, regardless of the method of transportation used.

Today, a large proportion of Canadians do not have much faith in the way in which we transport oil. Only 29% of Canadians think that rail transportation is safe. Take, for example, the Lac-Mégantic disaster or the derailment in northern Ontario this past weekend. In my riding, there are many railways and this is of concern to my constituents. A great deal of oil is transported using these rail lines and people are worried about it. Here are a few more statistics: in Canada, only 37% of Canadians think that tanker transportation is safe, and only 47% of Canadians think that pipelines are a safe way to transport oil. I do not think this is very many.

These perceptions are shaped by the growing number of accidents over the past decade. The latest Transportation Safety Board of Canada report shows that pipeline accidents have increased significantly, from 71 in 2004 to 118 in 2014. The number of accidents has gone up by 47 per year in 10 years. In 2011, the Commissioner of the Environment pointed out that the National Energy Board had not managed to fix a number of known problems or to ensure that pipelines were properly maintained. The Conservatives have still not implemented an adequate monitoring and inspection system.

To address these problems, the NDP believes that the government must introduce solid regulations, increased monitoring and stricter inspection of the infrastructure in use. We believe that rebuilding a strict environmental assessment process to repair the damage done by the Conservative government should be a top priority. We also need strict legislative provisions for environmental assessments instead of the environmental regulations that the Conservative government is constantly contravening. This process must be carried out in collaboration with communities, government organizations, the provinces and territories, and first nations, which must be consulted and involved in a meaningful way.

● (1630)

Bill C-46 represents significant progress towards improving the liability regime, particularly by strengthening the powers of the National Energy Board, which, if the bill is properly enforced, will protect taxpayers by applying the polluter pays principle. However, the bill remains rather vague and does not address some crucial issues.

Indeed, the bill leaves some doubts about whether taxpayers will have to bear the cost of cleanups over \$1 billion when fault or negligence cannot be proven. Furthermore, too many provisions create uncertainty because their implementation will be left up to the discretion of either the National Energy Board or cabinet, not to mention that very few of the provisions in Bill C-46 are mandatory, and the application of many of them will depend on measures that the government will take.

From that perspective, Bill C-46 allows quite a bit of flexibility in terms of decisions made for political reasons and in terms of secret agreements between operators and the National Energy Board.

Government Orders

Many stakeholders in civil society have already expressed reservations about this bill, and the NDP shares those concerns.

For example, Ian Miron, a lawyer at Ecojustice, said that Bill C-46 is too discretionary in that its influence depends on how the NEB and cabinet decide to implement certain provisions. It is possible for some measures to be implemented for political or other reasons, which would leave Canadians without the protection and peace of mind that this bill purports to provide them.

An NDP government would give Canada a sustainable industry, enforce environmental laws, and take into account cumulative repercussions, public safety and respect for first nations in all of its decisions.

The NDP understands the need to stop excessively relying on fossil fuels. Our vision for development promotes economic growth and job creation, while ensuring social and environmental sustainability.

On this side of the House, we place particular emphasis on the development of renewable energy resources, such as solar energy, hydroelectricity, tidal energy, and biomass energy. Through this approach, we will create a significant number of well-paid jobs and make Canada a leader in the field.

The NDP has repeatedly criticized the government's lack of action and leadership on green and renewable solutions. By investing in renewable energy and energy independence, Canada will not only reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, but it will also foster innovation and create green jobs.

Canadians deserve to be represented by a government with a vision, a government that looks to the future and that wants to strike a balance between economic development and environmental protection.

The NDP promises to better manage our natural resources, invest in renewable energy and clean technologies and improve energy efficiency in order to build a more sustainable economy. Canadians know that they can count on the NDP.

Since becoming an MP, people have been telling me in their many emails and phone calls, and when I meet them going door-to-door, that the environment is a priority for them. They are concerned about what will happen to future generations. They tell me that we are heading towards a world where we are so reliant on fossil fuels that it will be difficult to change course.

I think this is a very important topic. As my colleagues have mentioned, this is a step in the right direction. I hope we will be able to improve the bill in committee. We believe in the polluter pays principle, but I showed that there are some shortcomings and we must absolutely fix them.

I hope that all parties in the House will be willing to work together, since this is very important for Canada and for our global environment.

● (1635)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are at an interesting point in the debate with regard to our natural

resources, and I think it is worth pursuing it in the form of a question.

Members of the member's party have brought forward opposition and outright denial in saying that we do not need Keystone. The NDP tends to say that we should look at ways to reduce worldwide potential consumption of oil-based products, as an example. My question for the member is this: does she believe that Canada should be looking at reducing its exportation of bitumen and other oil products?

[Translation]

Ms. Isabelle Morin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I based my entire speech on the fact that I think we are currently using too much fossil fuel. This is not something that can be changed overnight. There are certainly a number of questions to be asked about Canada's exportation of bitumen.

Every Canadian needs to consider their own consumption. As a government and as parliamentarians, it is also up to us to ask where we are going. Whether it is a matter of our exports, our consumption or our development of natural resources, we are a very lucky country. We have natural resources that we must use wisely, because future generations will suffer if we do not make good choices today.

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as I said, this bill is a step in the right direction. The government is finally waking up. It is implementing the polluter pays principle. That is very good. We have been wanting to apply this principle, which we believe is the very foundation of sustainable development, for a long time.

However, there are some improvements to be made, and one of the biggest problems is what has been left out of this bill. I have been a member of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development since my election, and year after year since 2011, I have seen environmental protections being weakened instead of improved. As such, it is hard to have a pipeline that will be socially acceptable, given that these projects are moving forward without a rigorous environmental assessment process. People have doubts about the safety of these pipelines.

I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about the importance of what is missing from this bill, in other words, rigorous environmental protections and assessments in order to make pipelines in Canada socially acceptable.

● (1640)

Ms. Isabelle Morin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and for the good work he is doing for the environment. I know that he is passionate about it and has worked very hard on it since being elected.

Government Orders

The member mentioned two things. Social acceptability is very important to me. Right now, the public does not trust the government when it comes to the environment, and has so many misgivings about the National Energy Board that it is alarming. Everyone has doubts because that trust is not there. A little earlier, I talked about Canadians' confidence with respect to transportation of natural resources. That is another important aspect.

My colleague talked about the environmental assessments that are being done. We saw that with the Gros-Cacouna oil terminal. The people had to rally for months to achieve the outcome we have now. There were demonstrations, and many individuals, environmental groups and marine biodiversity experts joined forces to make the government listen and halt the project.

People should not always have to rise up so much and work so hard to make the government listen. The point is, did the government do its job by conducting suitable environmental assessments for this project? I do not think so, and now it is responsible for regaining the public trust. It is the government's responsibility to prove that it truly wants a suitable environment for Canada and that it wants to do environmental assessments that people can really rely on, believe in and appreciate.

Ms. Paulina Ayala (Honoré-Mercier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are in the process of debating Bill C-46.

Our party will support the bill at second reading, because we want to go further. We feel this is a good step forward, but we must continue because we dream of a country that, like Sweden, Denmark and Finland, is capable of living with clean energies, which serve people well and reduce the harmful effects of pollution.

We are saying that this bill is a step forward, but a lot of proposals and amendments will be necessary in order to make it a really good bill. Bill C-46 leaves a great deal of leeway for politically motivated decisions and secret agreements between pipeline operators and the National Energy Board.

I am a member of the Standing Joint Committee on the Scrutiny of Regulations, and we can see that sometimes many things are left up to the ministers, who will end up making regulations. In some cases, they do not necessarily keep to the intent of the law. I would therefore prefer to have a bill that is clearly drafted and leaves no grey areas. Unfortunately, this is not the case with this bill. It is a little bit too general for my taste.

This bill does not necessarily include absolute liability for gas companies and other non-oil pipeline operators or for small-scale oil pipeline companies. This will also be established through future regulations or by cabinet. However, cabinet is the executive branch. Cabinet is not the legislative branch. Here again, partisan politics will be at play. It is a very sensitive area.

For us, as members of the NDP, it is important to begin by making it mandatory for companies to be liable for what they do to the environment. We are well aware that they are transporting raw materials by the means they have available to them, that is, pipelines, trains and so forth. There is always a risk. However, safety is fundamental and Canadians must be reassured. We feel that Canada must take measures to ensure that natural resources, these resources that are so dangerous, are developed and transported safely, because

we must protect our constituents. Communities must be consulted and engaged in a meaningful way.

We always keep in mind what happened in Lac-Mégantic. Last weekend, we learned that there was another accident involving the transportation of oil and that a fire was caused. Fortunately, this time, no one was killed. However, it is frightening. We talk a lot about security in our country, but this is also a security issue.

If oil companies really want to get Canadians' support, they must consider public opinion and provide information. They cannot do this by sitting back and discussing issues solely with the groups that want to make money. Canadians must be truly informed and their views must be considered in the decision-making process. Since information has not been flowing very smoothly and some has been hidden, people have begun to stand up against the pipelines. For instance, there is an article in *Le Devoir* that describes the municipal revolt against the energy east project. It states that, "At least 75 cities have voiced concerns about the TransCanada pipeline". That is 75 cities in Quebec alone.

Guillaume Tremblay, mayor of Mascouche, said, "We do not want this project in our city". In his view, there are a number of elements that point in favour of simply rejecting the pipeline that the oil company wants to build in the municipality, which is located north of Montreal.

He said that he is really concerned about protecting the artesian wells that many residents have, as well as safeguarding natural habitats. It has been said that if the oil companies cause damage, they will pay for it. However, that is not enough. It is not enough to simply repair the damage that has been done. We must consider producing sustainable energies that will eliminate people's fears. The mayors are already against the project; not all of them, but most.

Other citizens' groups are concerned, not just the ones that are involved in the decision-making. Another article was published in *Le Devoir* on Tuesday, March 3, entitled "early childhood centre concerned about Enbridge project". In this case, the centre is concerned about the reversal of the flow in line 9B, which passes through its backyard. Think about the parents that send their children to this centre. If a spill happens there, the children will be paying for it.

● (1645)

The director of the Gamin Gamine day care centre in Terrebonne is very concerned about the reversal of the flow in the pipeline, which will soon be sending 300,000 barrels of oil toward Montreal every day, because the pipeline passes through the centre's backyard.

People are asking us what is going to happen, and we politicians are obliged to give them real answers. We have to take this seriously. Schools are also concerned. These people fear for the safety of their children. This is a serious matter.

The Montreal metropolitan community believes that there are still unanswered questions. People do not feel as though they have been consulted and they are of the opinion that many of the answers they have received are not clear, primarily those concerning emergency plans. There is nothing about this in the bill.

Government Orders

Enbridge states, however, that meetings with the first responders in the municipalities concerned should be held in the next few weeks. It is as though the company is saying that it had planned to look into this later and that people should just trust it. Canadians should not be taken for puppets who can be manipulated into just about anything because they need gas for their cars. It goes beyond that.

Hydro-Québec has also sounded the alarm. It wants its concerns about the possible route of TransCanada's energy east pipeline to be heard at the National Energy Board public hearings to be held later this year. There are concerns about the proven phenomenon of corrosion.

In its letter, the crown corporation pointed out that the preliminary route proposed by the Alberta company runs along its high-voltage power lines for about 700 kilometres. Hydro-Québec is concerned that the project will limit the operation and growth of its network. However, electricity is a clean energy.

Hydro-Québec is concerned about what a pipeline leak would do to its own infrastructure. It mentions the risk of the presence of power lines, which could lead to corrosion problems for the pipeline. We really need a more in-depth study.

TransCanada acknowledges that it had similar problems with its Keystone pipeline in western Canada, after it went into service in 2010. However, the company's spokesperson, Tim Duboyce, says that the company has developed a technique called cathodic protection, which protects steel structures. That is a step forward.

Environmental groups such as Greenpeace are concerned about all these issues: "Hydro-Québec is very clear: there are risks."

As legislators, we cannot simply settle for supporting the polluter pays principle. We need to be more ambitious than that. Radio-Canada published an article on this topic. It said:

Pipeline operators are required to report any oil spills to the Transportation Safety Board of Canada.

The most recent report states that the number of accidents has decreased, but if you look at the number of accidents in relation to the volume of oil transported per pipeline, it is clear that the number of accidents has been consistently increasing for 10 years.

I invite everyone to take a little trip with me as we take a look at European countries. Since the oil crisis in the early 1970s, Sweden has invested massively in research on alternative energy sources, and it is working. Sweden is a huge consumer of energy per capita—about 16,000 kilowatts per person per year—but its carbon emissions are comparatively smaller. The country primarily uses wind energy and hydroelectric energy.

We need to continue to dream and go further. This bill is a step in the right direction, but it is not the last step. We need to take this very seriously. We are talking about our health and the health of our children and our planet.

● (1650)

[English]

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize in the House that if my colleague drives, flies, heats her

house, or eats, she is part of the consumer demand. All of us here are a part of that, so we all bear a responsibility.

One of the things I would like to do first of all is recognize the incredible innovation of the engineers who are building these pipelines and have actually done the construction.

I was very privileged when I was a university student to work in an engineering office where there was both a civil and an industrial end. One of my responsibilities in the drafting office was to work under the design draftsman who prepared the drawings. We had to go out and inspect the pipelines that were being put in for the water, sewer, and gas lines. I often had to tell contractors that they needed more granular B down there to put the pipeline in place. I feel that I was privileged to have the opportunity to do that.

I wonder if the member knows how much incredible engineering has gone into the construction of the actual pipeline. Does she know that when they send these intelligent pigs through to investigate the integrity of the pipeline, they can detect a piece of corrosion that is the size of a piece of rice? There is such incredible engineering that goes into it. I compliment our engineers for the design work they have done.

I wonder if the member would be prepared to hear from some of the engineers who have done the design work in our universities and construction companies here in Canada, and ask them for their opinion on the safety of our pipelines going across Canada.

[Translation]

Ms. Paulina Ayala: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her comments. I want to point out, however, that I use public transit a lot and I heat my house with electricity.

Of course, many engineers look after many pipelines, but we have to remember that a lot of engineers work with green energy sources. We should be focusing more on those kinds of energy. That is one way to look after our planet and take care of it. I also think we need to listen to people who are talking about hydroelectric power and wind turbines. On CBC the other day, I even heard about power that we can harness from waves, from the ocean. These are all powerful forms of energy that we can tap into. There are so many opportunities. We have the ability to use them. Young entrepreneurs and young engineers could make very significant contributions, but we are not giving them enough opportunity to do so. They are being told that only oil matters. We already have electric cars.

This does not mean that we will not support the bill at second reading. We are saying that this is first step. Oil is a reality; it is there. However, other sources of energy also exist, and we need to open the door to them and use them for everyone's well-being.

● (1655)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I must say that I am a big fan of hydro energy. After all, in Manitoba, as in Quebec, hydro energy is very important.

The member is not the only individual who has made reference to Keystone and energy east as projects that the NDP does not appear to want to support. I wonder if she could confirm that and tell us why she feels they are not worthy of support.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Ms. Paulina Ayala: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

If he listened carefully he will know that when I talked about energy east, it was to show that we have to listen to Canadians. Social acceptability is fundamental to the economic development of our country and of society in general. We have to stop thinking there is just a small group of people who make decisions and who have absolutely all the knowledge needed for making economic decisions. We have to listen to the people in order to avoid another Lac Mégantic. I gave examples earlier of people who work in a child care centre placed right next to where the pipeline will run. If our children or grandchildren went to that centre, we would be praying every day before they left.

We have not said absolutely “no”. If we want to agree to something, Canadians must also agree to it. We are merely the representatives of our constituents. We listen to them when we make decisions. That is true democracy. I speak here for the people who are not even being listened to. That is my job as a politician. I voice the opinions of the mayors of the towns. All those people are part of the decision-making. They are closer to the public than we are. That does not mean that we are saying categorically “no”. The answer is one that we will all give together, with Canadians.

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to a very important bill that is at the second reading stage. At the moment, this bill is very controversial, even though the NDP plans to support it at second reading.

I am going to read the title for the people who are kind enough to be listening to us on CPAC. It is the Act to amend the National Energy Board Act and the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act. The bill is at second reading. To ensure that people are able to follow us, second reading is not the final passage of a bill. Some of us are considering supporting a bill that is extremely flawed so we can send it to committee where a host of amendments will certainly be proposed. We will see how things go in committee in order to decide whether the bill then deserves support at third reading. That is the point at which it might be enacted into law for Canada.

In 2013, 1.3 million barrels of crude oil were transported through pipelines under federal jurisdiction in Canada. That shows the importance of this subject. In Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, we are currently having to deal with the presence of the National Energy Board, because at the moment, the processes that have been initiated are hugely problematic. As the entire country now knows, there is an oil port project in my riding that is directly associated with a very large pipeline project, energy east. We are in a completely ludicrous situation in my constituency, where, on the one hand, the promoter has unilaterally decided not to clarify anything about its project before the end of March, while, on the other hand, the National Energy Board is requiring that community stakeholders decide now whether they are going to be included in the consultations in a few months. Therefore we have very competent people who are spending hundreds if not thousands of hours preparing to participate in a consultation that is probably going to be about something other than what is being presented by the promoter

at this point. That makes this project a hot topic for the people I represent.

I am going to offer some explanation about the bill that is before us today. The bill includes absolute liability for all pipelines regulated by the National Energy Board. That means that the companies will be liable for costs and expenses and for damages regardless of fault, up to a maximum of \$1 billion for high-capacity pipelines, that is, pipelines that transport at least 250,000 barrels of oil per day. That is a very high capacity. For a middle-class person sitting quietly in Tourville, Longueuil or Trois-Pistoles, \$1 billion may seem like a large amount. Someone might say \$1 billion is wonderful, and if something happens, we will be protected.

I would remind people that things are relative here. I will take Lac Mégantic as an example. People have to understand that Lac Mégantic would not have been covered by this bill. We are talking exclusively about accidents associated with pipelines. In a situation like the one in Lac Mégantic, the money that was distributed to the families of the victims as compensation totalled \$200 million. That is just the money paid to the victims' families. The cleanup of the downtown area cost \$190 million. Of the 7.5 million litres of oil the train was carrying, 80% mostly leaked into the river. The cleanup is going to take years, and we do not yet know exactly how much it will cost, but it will be several hundred million dollars. Just by looking at the situation in Lac Mégantic, we realize that in relative terms, \$1 billion is virtually a minimum. We have not received assurance that the amount that must be available for protection in the event of an accident is sufficient.

I will give another example, a very tough one. It is the worst example in North America at this point, and it has been cited by at least three of my colleagues in the last few hours. It is the accident in Kalamazoo, Michigan. It involves the Canadian company Enbridge and 4 million litres of heavy crude that were spilled into the Kalamazoo River and wetlands. The last time I saw the figures, the damage amounted to over \$1 billion and there had been more than five years of cleanup. More than 80% of the bitumen spilled into the Kalamazoo River is still there in the environment, after over \$1 billion was spent. That is another example that puts this \$1 billion into perspective.

I also wonder where the \$1 billion comes from. Why \$1 billion?

● (1700)

This \$1 billion looks like a vote-getting figure, if you will pardon that term. The Conservatives seem to be using something easy to understand, something that looks big. However, if they had sat some experts around the table to estimate the kind of minimum guarantee needed for an oil spill, the experts would not have come up with \$1 billion. They might have come up with \$1.2 billion or \$1.3 billion. This \$1 billion is completely arbitrary; it is a round number, easy to remember. I hope that some very direct questions will be asked during the committee meetings where the bill will be considered.

Government Orders

The companies' liability would be unlimited only in the case of fault or negligence. What will happen in a case where fault is not clear or is disputed? We are talking about billionaire proponents here. If, literally, they want to hire an army of lawyers to try to prove the fault does not lie with them, how many years will it take to see the end of a court action disputing fault, with resources like that? Mr. Speaker, I think your training makes you an even better judge of that than I am. It may really be a very long time.

That runs counter to another aspect of the law that I question, which puts a limit of six years after the event on the right to seek compensation, if a person is a victim of the consequences. That does not work. In Kalamazoo, they have been cleaning up for five years, and there are still pollutants. In the years to come, people are therefore going to have to take stock again to determine whether their property and their health have ultimately been affected by that. The cleanup is not yet finished. It is not that people do not want to determine, in six years, whether they are affected or not; rather, the phenomenon is still in a state of flux. The victims are not acting in bad faith. Someone may realize only after seven or eight or nine or 10 or 12 years that they have been negatively affected by the event. Why suddenly impose a six-year limit?

The energy east project will carry 1.1 million barrels a day. That means 173 million litres every day. We all remember the damage caused by 4 million litres of crude in the Kalamazoo River. That cost over \$1 billion. Now, operators want to build a pipeline that will carry 173 million litres a day, or 120,000 litres every minute. Pipelines are relatively safe at the beginning of their life cycle, but often, near the end, tragedies or other serious incidents happen more regularly. An accident like the one in Kalamazoo, where managers took some time to close the valves, must never happen. Literally millions of litres of oil spilled into the environment. Think about it: that is 173 million litres a day. The same question remains regarding the \$1 billion.

There is another question I have not yet heard. Perhaps an esteemed colleague, a minister across the way, could answer this. Is the \$1 billion indexed? At the rate costs grow with inflation, in five or 10 years, \$1 billion will not be worth the same amount. A major accident could happen in my region over the next 40 years and we are told there will be a \$1 billion limit. If an accident were to happen tomorrow morning, it might already cost more than \$1 billion, and I did not see anything about indexing or mechanisms to guarantee that this will follow the cost of living, considering the astronomical costs associated with cleaning up these kinds of accidents.

I would like to finish on a more positive note and talk a bit about one of the NDP's key principles. What distinguishes us from the current government is, first and foremost, sustainability. We believe it is crucial that polluters pay for the pollution they create, rather than passing on the cost to future generations.

● (1705)

I have one last example. Now that the toxic effects of mines on the environment cost billions of dollars, laws require environmental protection funds to be set aside during mining operations so that we do not end up at the end of a project with a company that maybe made less profit, or left for another country, or suddenly disappeared at the end of a project to avoid paying to clean up the mess it left

behind. That kind of mechanism is missing here, and neither I nor most of my constituents find that reassuring.

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Quebec City's south shore for his heartfelt speech. I know how hard he worked on the Gros-Cacouna oil terminal file. I have to say that my colleague raised some very important issues.

I would like to comment on what some people might consider a bold remark he made about the Conservatives' vote-seeking approach. I am talking about the billion-dollar indemnity that might seem enormous, but is really quite inadequate in relative terms.

I remember everything about the saga—the ongoing saga—involving the Gros-Cacouna oil terminal and the Conservative government's lenient attitude toward the proponent. Despite the very serious objections raised by various stakeholders, including scientists, the Conservatives kept saying there was no problem and it was nothing to get worked up about.

Can my colleague comment on how that kind of leniency can ultimately result in a staggering cost to us as a society?

Mr. François Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, something I meant to talk about today was breach of trust, which goes back to what my colleague was saying.

In 2011, the environment commissioner said that the National Energy Board had not managed to secure better measures to protect the environment and the public when it comes to pipelines. It is now 2015. Nothing was done until this small step. It took years for a small, extremely questionable step to be taken.

Indeed, my colleague is right. First, the \$1 billion is highly questionable. Another major deficiency in this entire process of the Conservatives' bill is operational safety.

It is all well and good for the government to tell people that it will raise the ceiling in the event of a major accident, but what my constituents really want to know is what will be put in place to ensure that there are no major accidents. This is an unbelievable oversight.

It is akin to saying that it is a huge industry, this has to go through and if the pipeline breaks, then damage will be paid for. If we are talking to the farmers in my riding or the people in the municipalities who are concerned about their water supply, then we cannot use that argument.

These people want to know what guarantee there is that beyond the oil, their resources will be protected during operations, because those resources could be threatened by a major spill.

● (1710)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the transportation of oil and gas, we hear a lot about pipelines, and that is what we are talking about today. When Canadians compare transportation methods in terms of security and safety, they view pipelines as probably the strongest transportation method, followed by rail and then possibly long-haul trucking.

Government Orders

If Canada were to increase its overall petroleum export market, whether it is in Canada or south or wherever else it might be, does the member believe that the best way to get oil and gas to market is through pipelines, or does he believe we should be looking at alternatives?

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, there is something wrong in that paradigm with respect to rail transportation.

Right now, there are long-term contracts—from five to seven years—for products to be transported by rail. The industry tells people they must choose, when in fact, there is no choice. The industry says that it wants to move forward on both fronts. There will be more tankers filled with bitumen on the tracks. In addition, the industry wants more pipelines to transport and probably export the majority of the resource, especially in the case of the energy east pipeline. This is something made up by people who, I imagine, want to avoid a fundamental debate on whether we truly want to base our economy of the future on maximizing the transportation of a non-renewable resource. There is something wrong there.

Something really blew me away, especially because it was that a Liberal colleague who just asked me a question. He said that one positive aspect of the bill was that the National Energy Board could now focus on the people affected by the pipelines. He said that its mandate was not limited to the safety of the pipeline itself. This means that during the time of the Liberals, the act provided only for the protection of the pipeline and not the protection of those who lived around it. They allowed that to go on for decades. Unbelievable.

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to debate Bill C-46 today.

I am delighted because for once, this is a bill that has some good elements. Also, we cannot deny that oil transportation is a major issue and among those that most concern the public. People are worried and they have reason to be.

The figures given here speak for themselves and reiterate what I have heard before in many conversations. The public's confidence in the methods of oil transportation is very low: 71% of people believe that rail transport is dangerous. After what happened again in Gogoma on the weekend, that opinion may become more entrenched.

In addition, 63% of Canadians believe that shipping oil by sea is too risky. Quebeckers are terrified at the idea that a tanker might capsize in the St. Lawrence. An incident like that would cause widespread and irreparable harm to Quebec, since the river is such a unique and fragile environment, and of such crucial importance to us all. Pipelines are seen by the public as the least dangerous method, with 47% support.

Overall, nobody is really happy. People fear the worst. They are right to be worried, if we consider that the consequences of an accident are catastrophic and irreversible. The number of barrels of oil per day that travel by pipeline is enormous. When we talk about huge figures like billions of barrels a day, it is to be expected that the idea of a spill would immediately take on incomprehensible and terrifying dimensions.

Canada is first and foremost a country with natural resources that can be exploited. This has always been the source of our well-being and our affluence. The diversity of our common resources positions Canada and its provinces on a number of economic fronts at the same time. It is also the source of our tremendous technical knowledge, built over decades in response to the needs associated with resource development, for which we are internationally renowned.

In short, we are blessed with incredible good fortune, and that fortune belongs to all Canadians. This is our real national treasure. However, while it is certainly a blessing, that treasure sometimes looks like a curse. Tragic events have happened in the past. The risks of inadequate regulation of the oil shipment methods are clear. The Lac Mégantic disaster is so serious and so clearly connected with the federal government's complacency that I am surprised at how lax the legislative initiatives are.

In fact, the public has little faith in the government when it comes to its ability or desire to regulate the energy sector. If not the government, who should do it? The industry itself? Of course not. What we are seeing is a very serious legitimacy deficit. Canadians do not believe that the Government of Canada is going to protect them, or wants to protect them. That hurts.

I believe the people of Canada are entitled to expect that members of Parliament will make not just good decisions about pipelines, but the best possible decisions. All of us here have a duty to think about public safety, the sustainability of resource development and the resilience of the environment. Development of our natural resources that is responsible and scientific, the Conservatives' favourite adjective, is what will guarantee our survival as an affluent society. Of course, we have to assume that everyone here wants our society to survive and does not imagine that the world is going to end next week with the second coming of the Saviour. That remains to be seen, however.

I am well aware that we must not expect too much. The government has now taken a step toward a polluter pays scheme, which is encouraging. Holding the industry accountable is essential. It comes a quarter-century late and it was not very difficult to put forward, but we will take what we can get.

Bill C-46 introduces absolute liability for all pipelines overseen by the National Energy Board. This is a good initiative and it is the reason behind our support. Absolute liability in the case of fault or negligence means that the operator will have unlimited liability.

In the case of any other incident, the operator is liable up to a maximum of \$1 billion. By taking that approach, the government is clearly thinking only of physical damage and the repair costs that may be incurred. This initiative seems to be valid, but there are two points in Bill C-46 that are still vague. It is important that the public know that they might easily have to make a financial contribution in the event of a disaster.

Government Orders

First, if the case could not be made for negligence or fault, the government might have to absorb the costs. In addition, if the costs incurred exceed \$1 billion, we will have to pay anything above that amount. In some cases, the bill adds up very quickly and can easily exceed that limit. As several of my colleagues have done already, I would also like to refer to the accident caused by Enbridge in Kalamazoo, Michigan, which has cost nearly \$1.2 billion.

Second, as we suspected, environmental damage is not really part of the calculation.

• (1715)

In the end, the potential irreparable damage to the very fabric of our country, which is priceless, will not be worth it.

What the government is counting on can be easily explained: considering Canada's size, the government hopes that accidents will happen in the middle of nowhere, where environmental oversight has already been eliminated by budget cuts, and that the public will quickly forget contamination of the hinterland. Out of sight, out of mind.

Although this may be an ideological government, it certainly is not a sentimental one. Bill C-46 strengthens some of the powers of the National Energy Board to ensure that the transport of oil by pipeline meets certain standards and that the public is protected. However, the operator will still have a say and the bill leaves room for backroom arrangements. Ultimately, cabinet will decide whether there should be sanctions.

If the operator does not comply with the NEB orders, the board will not have the powers needed to take action, unless it is dealing with an abandoned pipeline. We will all agree that an empty pipeline is rather safe.

I would like to reassure those who thought that the Conservatives had suddenly discovered the merits of environmentalism. Bill C-46 is all about the economy. Accidents are expensive and it is unfair for the public to pay for the negligence of corporations. Naturally, we agree.

Because the “teeth” that Bill C-46 gives the National Energy Board are merely molars, if the government does not see fit to crack down on an operator, the only thing the board can do is chew on its reprimands.

The government began reviewing its liability regimes for oil and natural gas development last year. Bill C-46 is a first step that we find acceptable even though we would like the regulation to go much further. We want to protect the environment because we believe that the ecosystem is non-negotiable. Other countries do this and are more prosperous than we are.

The government refused to consider it and brought forward legislation that might not even serve the purpose if evidence of fault is lacking or if the government decides to act in favour of the operator.

Is it any surprise that public confidence is so low under the circumstances?

In addition, as we might have expected, this bill did not involve in-depth consultation with the members of Confederation or first

nations. This is yet another example of the omniscience we see so regularly in the Langevin Block.

I am fascinated by the Prime Minister's telescopic vision, his effortless ability to see and understand everything across the country. That sense of direction is amazing—superhuman, even. The only thing the Prime Minister needs to complete his image is a central Asian republic.

At the end of the day, what people want is strict, guaranteed regulations. People want pipelines to be extra safe—no loopholes, no risky measures—as well as responsible, environmentally sound and sustainable management.

What Canadians want is for us to act like adults, not teenagers.

I can therefore guarantee that the best environment minister Quebec has ever had will not accept any “ifs” and “maybes” when he considers approving pipelines once he becomes prime minister of Canada.

• (1720)

[*English*]

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am old enough to remember there was a radical wing of the New Democrat Party called, of all things, the Waffle, which is perhaps an appropriate name.

I am trying to understand this. When the members on the government side of the House fail to understand climate change, we criticize them for failing to understand science. However, when they talk about pipelines being safe, they suddenly embrace science and we get nervous about it.

At the same time, the NDP members talk about why we should believe scientists on climate change, but that we cannot trust scientists to build good pipelines. Why?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Mr. Speaker, I must admit that I did not fully understand my colleague's question.

Clearly, however, science should be at the core of any initiatives like this one. I do believe it is possible to have safe pipelines. I do not think that is what we are talking about here. One thing I do not believe is that this government will bring in any regulations that really make sense, or that it will listen to the scientists who are telling us that measures must be put in place to ensure that our pipelines are as safe as possible.

I sincerely believe that if the Conservatives are faced with the fact that the company has to pay more, and the company tries to convince them that, in the end, safety measures are not all that important, they will not necessarily pay much attention to the scientific opinion at that point.

I completely agree that we need to listen to scientists who can explain the safest ways to build pipelines and move oil. That seems obvious to me.

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent for her speech and especially her diligence in debating this bill.

Government Orders

I cannot help but respond to the rather bizarre question from the member for Trinity—Spadina. No one is challenging, except perhaps for the radical elements opposite, the science behind the safety of pipelines or their potential safety. However, setting that aside, we should not forget the interests promoting the pipelines and the fact that people could decide, in the end, to disregard rules, common sense and science. The Liberals provided one of the best examples, namely their purchase of used and defective submarines that have been very difficult to put into operation. In fact, following massive investments, the submarines were dangerous. That has nothing to do with science.

I would like my colleague to talk about the fact that no matter the scientific facts, the political decisions that may be made could well result in immeasurable danger.

• (1725)

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Beauport—Limoulu for his comments.

There is something that our government often forgets: as legislators, we are responsible for passing bills that are not simply drawn up to get rid of problems that might occur. As members of Parliament, we are responsible for protecting the public and protecting our society as best we can with the tools we have.

At present, problems with oil transportation have absolutely disastrous consequences. Should that prevent us from moving oil at all? Of course not. That is not realistic in our current society. However, as members of the House, can we pass the best bills possible to ensure the utmost safety when oil is transported? I believe that is our responsibility and that is really what we must do.

Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to discuss Bill C-46 on behalf of my fellow constituents in Châteauguay—Saint-Constant. This is a bill that deals with issues as important as energy resources and the protection of our environment.

Bill C-46 amends the rules governing oil companies' liability. That consists of establishing a principle under which the party responsible for an oil spill will pay up to \$1 billion for the damage caused. This bill is part of a broader government review of the liability rules that apply to various aspects of oil and gas development.

Canadians are aware of the potential risks of extracting and transporting oil, and they need to know that their government is going to oversee the industry properly and also protect our environment. Canadians do not have to make a choice between economic development and environmental protection. We need to take both aspects into consideration jointly.

When it comes to projects like northern gateway, Keystone XL or energy east, it is important to make judicious decisions that promote economic development and employment in Canada, while at the same time minimizing the risks to our environment. We need a new vision when it comes to the future of our energy resources, a vision that is guided by three very simple principles.

The first is sustainability, to ensure that polluters pay the bill for cleanups associated with a spill and the pollution caused, rather than passing the bill on to the next generations.

The second is partnership, to ensure that the First Nations, the provinces and local communities genuinely benefit from resource development and to create reliable and value-added jobs here in Canada.

The third is the long-term prosperity that comes from investing the proceeds of our natural resources in modern, ecological technologies, to keep Canada on the cutting edge of energy innovation and keep energy prices affordable for all Canadians.

We are disappointed that in spite of all our calls for urgent action, the Conservatives have taken so long to introduce this bill. In 2011, the Commissioner of the Environment pointed out that the National Energy Board had been unable to solve a number of known problems and ensure adequate maintenance of pipelines. The government has still not implemented an adequate monitoring and inspection system.

Last year, Bill C-22 was also introduced. It dealt with liability relating to offshore drilling and the possibility of spills in the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans. Because of this narrow vision, the government did not conduct consultations on the liability regime applicable to rail transportation. The Conservatives did not take that issue seriously until they had to limit the political fallout or consequences from the Lac-Mégantic tragedy.

The bill we are currently considering includes absolute liability for all pipelines regulated by the National Energy Board. In other words, the companies will be liable for the costs and damage caused by a pipeline spill, regardless of fault, up to a maximum of \$1 billion for high-capacity pipelines. However, in the case of fault or negligence, liability will be unlimited.

I welcome this measure. It is a good start, but that figure could be reached quickly, since the cleanup of some tragedies that have occurred in recent years has significantly exceeded the \$1 billion ceiling provided by this bill.

Bill C-46 also limits the time Canadians will have to claim compensation for long-term damage to their health or the environment caused by an accident. The claim must be made within three years of when the damage occurs or six years, at most, after an oil spill. This is debatable, since it is highly probable that some damage will be discovered well after the six years provided by this bill.

• (1730)

The bill gives the National Energy Board the authority to order reimbursement of any cleanup costs incurred by governments, communities or individuals. It also grants the National Energy Board the authority and resources to assume control of a response to any incident, in exceptional circumstances, if a company is unable or unwilling to do so. The NEB would also have new tools for recouping cleanup costs, which could go so far as charging the entire industry.

Government Orders

Unfortunately, the government left some leeway here with decisions that would be left in the hands of cabinet and the National Energy Board, an agency that, on occasion, has demonstrated a lack of credibility. Instead of establishing a responsible regime, with a strict framework, the government is leaving too much leeway for politically motivated decisions, cabinet decisions and backroom agreements that would obviously not be made public between operators and the NEB. Of course, we will question the government about these discretionary measures. It is important to hold the government accountable to Canadians. We are disappointed in the scope of the bill. I hope the Conservatives will be open to the amendments that will be proposed in committee.

Given the limited scope of the bill, we are concerned that polluters will not have to bear the full cost of the damage and that Canadians will end up footing the bill. If so, that casts doubt on the true scope of this bill. What happens if there is a problem establishing fault or negligence? Will Canadians have to pay in such cases? We are talking about possibly billions of dollars. That is a lot of money, and it is not up to Canadians to pay the bills for companies that may have been negligent in their operations. It is all well and good to introduce a bill that focuses on figuring out who is liable, but we also have to be proactive and do as much as possible to prevent oil spills. This bill does not do that.

We need better regulations and increased monitoring of pipelines. In addition, we need to rebuild the robust environmental assessment process that has been dismantled by the current government over the past few years. With the huge expansion in the production and transportation of crude oil, we need enhanced safety protection, regardless of the method of transportation. To that end, we need to increase mandatory inspections, implement adequate regulations, and enforce these standards. Public safety and environmental protection must be among our top priorities.

My colleagues and I firmly believe that Canada must take steps to ensure that we are developing and transporting our resources in a safe and secure way that serves the interests of all Canadians. To that end, all pipelines need to adhere to the highest possible safety and environmental standards consistent with the principles of sustainable development. To ensure that oil companies and pipeline operators adhere to the regulations, we need to put in place robust laws and establish credible environmental assessment mechanisms.

Furthermore, given that transportation affects the provinces, municipalities and communities, we must ensure that the government consults them and establishes partnerships with them. If everyone works together, Canadians can be assured that all of these projects will be implemented and will respect the principle of sustainable development and that the approval process will be as fair as possible, in order to strengthen the accountability of everyone involved. The provinces will continue to develop their natural resources. The issue is knowing how to develop those resources sustainably, while protecting the environment and creating value-added jobs in Canada.

• (1735)

In closing, we will support this bill at second reading, and we ask the government to remain open to the amendments we plan to propose in committee.

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his presentation. At the end of his speech, he said that his party will be supporting the bill. He certainly explained the importance of having tough measures to ensure that pipelines are safe.

At the same time, he mentioned that his party would be proposing amendments. Could he be a little more specific about his concerns and tell us what kind of amendments his party plans to propose to improve the bill?

Mr. Sylvain Chicoine: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. In my speech, I mentioned a few things that are of concern to us.

First of all, there is the limited liability of \$1 billion. That is probably not enough given that there are several aging pipelines running through our communities. In the event of a pipeline break, the damage could far exceed \$1 billion. That is a concern for this side of the House. If the damage is well beyond that amount—and damage caused by past environmental disasters has topped \$2 billion—Canadians would be on the hook. That makes no sense. Thus, our first concern is the \$1 billion liability limit.

Second, the National Energy Board should make inspections mandatory. This bill does not deal with inspections of aging pipelines. Thus, we have serious concerns about the lack of oversight of aging pipelines. We should be more concerned about that.

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I ask my colleague my question, I have to mention something that I just learned from the Radio-Canada website. Unfortunately, the riding office of our colleague, the hon. member for Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, was also sent a letter containing a suspicious substance. My thoughts are with the staff of the hon. member for Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière. I hope the police will once again find that the substance was not dangerous. This is an absolutely sickening situation.

My colleague from Châteauguay—Saint-Constant was talking about public trust in the process, beyond the law and the structures put in place, and the political will that has to be shown in order to earn the public's trust. It is nice to have encouraged the development of pipeline transportation, which is an indisputably safe method, but beyond that, the public has to trust the legislator and the executive power and trust that it will be fair and serious in implementing the law. I would like to know what my colleague from Châteauguay—Saint-Constant thinks of how much the Conservative government can be trusted in this.

Government Orders

• (1740)

Mr. Sylvain Chicoine: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou for his question. He raised a very important point about environmental assessments, a process that the current government has completely gutted. The National Energy Board had a comprehensive and well-defined framework for assessing new pipeline projects across Canada, and there are many of them.

The government, thinking it would help the oil companies, did away with the whole environmental assessment process and did such a thorough job that Canadians' confidence is at an all-time low with respect to environmental assessments of these types of projects. We have to wonder what the government has to hide. As this process eroded more and more, Canadians lost more and more confidence. That is the result of the Conservatives' policies. The government thought it was helping the oil companies but I think its decision to do away with the environmental assessment process is hurting the companies instead of helping them.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I got into politics I was one of the founding members of the Conseil de bassins versants de la région de Vaudreuil-Soulanges. This organization was responsible for coming up with a master plan for water in my region.

For anyone who is not familiar with the concept of watersheds, this term refers to the entire area drained by a main stream and its tributaries. It is delineated by its upstream and downstream boundaries. All waterways are connected to one major waterway.

I mentioned watersheds because the watershed area is responsible for the quality of our water, which depends on the health of a watershed. Water is the most important resource.

That is one reason why I decided to run in the 2011 election and to join Jack Layton's team on the NDP, a progressive party that supports the right to live in a healthy and sustainable environment.
[English]

That is because seven generations from now our successes will be measured not in terms of GDP, economic growth, oil consumed or produced, or the consumption of a nation; no, our successes will be measured in terms of how well we have done in terms of keeping the ecological balance.

Our resources must be developed sustainably. A polluter-pay model needs to be put in place. We need to move away from our over-reliance on fossil fuels. The NDP vision is that economic growth and job creation go hand in hand with social and environmental sustainability

[Translation]

My riding is downstream from here on the Ottawa River. Here, upstream, the government is making decisions that are troubling the people in my region. They are concerned and rightly so. My region is the country's transportation hub. The Canadian National Railway, the Canadian Pacific Railway, Enbridge's line 9 and the TransCanada pipeline all pass through Vaudreuil-Soulanges.

For 16 years, line 9B did not meet safety standards. This problem was ignored by a Liberal MP and a Bloc MP. It was only when the people of my riding elected an NDP member that they discovered

that there was a problem with line 9B. I raised this problem at the Standing Committee on Natural Resources after reading an article on the subject.

Canadians want better inspections, appropriate regulations and enforced standards. Public safety and environmental protection must be priorities for any government. The Conservatives are lagging behind. The Liberals had 13 years to solve the problem, but they did nothing. The risks are too great.

• (1745)

[English]

Liberals and Conservatives, for instance, now support the Keystone XL project.

I talked with David Suzuki in 2011 and I told him that Canadians worry a lot about pipelines. I asked him what the biggest thing that Canadians should worry about is. He said that we often worry about these big spills we see or about trains derailing. He said that the major problem with pipelines is pinhole leaks. One of the Conservative members mentioned the technology. Certainly there have been advances in technology, but 2% of those pinhole leaks still are not detectable by the instruments that are in Keystone. This means that because of the corrosion in a pipeline and a pinhole leak, oil could leak out without being detected for days or months. It could contaminate the water table, and we would not know it because we would not be able to detect it.

The other question we have to ask is this. Yes, with new pipeline construction we are looking at this new engineering to detect pinhole leaks. What about all the other pipeline infrastructure? Are we saying that we will implement the same safety instruments through all the pipelines across North America? It is a good question to ask, because if one pipeline implements it, should we not implement it in all pipelines? Should we not update all the infrastructure? These are questions I have and that the citizens I represent have.

Energy policy in this country for years has been managed by successive Liberal and Conservative administrations. They have lit so many fires it will be hard to put them all out, all these problems, all this negligence that has gone on over the years. Just opening the paper in a given week we can find five different energy projects that might be going on that have problems that are not being addressed.

Let us look at the seismic testing in the Clyde River. There are problems with the narwhals. The company exploring for oil wants to use seismic testing, which is basically making explosions in the water in habitat where narwhals are. This is going to court in Toronto. The mayor of Clyde River has an injunction against the testing.

We see this again and again.

[Translation]

We also saw this with the St. Lawrence belugas. It is the same thing.

Several fires have been ignited. It is up to us to identify all of the problems and propose solutions.

Government Orders

[English]

There has to be greater consultation with communities and with first nations.

First nations activist Chickadee Richard, from Winnipeg, says,

As indigenous people, we still use the lands. We still gather; we still hunt; we still use the forests and the waters. So, what this pipeline would do to us, we may never recover. It's in a crisis mode right now and we all have a responsibility to future generations.

She is a part of a greater coalition in Winnipeg hoping to broaden the scope of National Energy Board consultations. Another member of this coalition, Mary Robinson, of the Council of Canadians, Winnipeg chapter says, "Without...listening to people's voices, any review of the pipeline will be incomplete and illegitimate".

These are voices of one part of Canada. I bring them up because I hear the same things in my region, and I have heard the same things from other members in this House. Citizens in their ridings have the same preoccupation. These things keep coming up, and we have to address these problems.

Although I am happy to see that there is a bill addressing this, I do not think it goes far enough, and I do not think it answers all the questions and worries citizens might have in my riding and in other ridings.

There is no doubt that we have a wealth of natural resources in this country, and I would not be one to say that we should not use those resources. They are there to be used. We are really blessed with them. They are a blessing to this country, but we have to approach the exploration and the development of these resources in a different way. We have had 40 or 50 years of irresponsible management of these resources by successive Liberal and Conservative administrations.

• (1750)

[Translation]

The NDP's vision is based on three principles. The first is sustainability. We want to ensure that a polluter pays model is in place so that polluters pay for any spills and for the resulting pollution instead of leaving those costs to future generations.

The second is partnership. We want to ensure that our communities, provinces and first nations all benefit from resource development and that we create value-added jobs for the middle class here in Canada.

The third is long-term prosperity, not short-term prosperity that would create jobs tomorrow that will be lost after two weeks. We are seeking to build long-term prosperity by investing and relying on modern technology in order to strike a balance between the economy and the environment.

[English]

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague for his speech. In as gracious a form as I can, I would say that I am a little disappointed in the tone. I do not think that is the kind of negativity I am accustomed to hearing from him.

This is a bill that is fairly important, and I understand the NDP will be supporting it. It is not perfect. It is as imperfect as any bill I have seen here in ten and a half years. It is capable of being improved, strengthened, and amended. For a moment, I thought maybe the member was debating Bill C-51.

I know the NDP is raising some important concerns about the liability limit of \$1 billion. Lac-Mégantic has hurtled to a cost of \$600 million, the Gulf of Mexico spill has pushed \$40 billion, and *Exxon Valdez* is in the tens of billions and still has not been completely cleaned up. There are some important points there. However, perhaps the member could cut to the chase and instead of being overtly political or partisan, he could tell us what two points he would specifically like to see improved in the bill.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I served together on the natural resources committee, and I always found him to be a very reasonable member on that committee with very good proposals.

I have to say that we have to live by the record we create. I will start with that. We cannot make poor decisions and then attempt to say they do not belong to us. Unfortunately, for years the Liberals rubber-stamped these projects as well. Another member pointed out that during the Liberals' tenure, they did not take the people living around a pipeline into consideration and only protected the pipeline itself in legislation. There were great problems with that approach.

To answer the member's question, I will give him one point. The idea of who is responsible in terms of pollution, whether it is through an operator error or otherwise, has to be clarified in this bill, because we often see a shared guilt with respect to accidents and we have to clearly address the point that in those kinds of cases, the operators cannot just pass the buck and say that it was not their fault. We have to be a lot more clear on that aspect.

• (1755)

[Translation]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what the NDP is asking for is not very complicated.

We want social accessibility and environmental protections to be respected when major pipeline or economic projects are proposed. We want the government to show a little more respect for Canadians, as Mr. Suzuki does; he pours his heart and soul into the fight to ensure that we can leave future generations with a great place to live.

The bill talks about a \$1 billion cap when fault or negligence cannot be proven. This means that taxpayers will once again have to bear any cleanup costs that exceed \$1 billion, when fault or negligence cannot be proven. How can fault or negligence be proven in situations like Lac-Mégantic? Who will pay for that?

Government Orders

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly why we are worried. In the event of a spill, in 99% of cases, the proponent is not the only one responsible. The responsibility is shared. These statistics are very troubling, because this means that a company will do everything it can to avoid responsibility for a spill. It will try to pass the bill onto taxpayers. My constituents are very worried about this. We need to amend the bill to address this issue.

[English]

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House and speak on behalf of the constituents in Newton—North Delta. After spending a week in our ridings, we hear so much from our constituents. From my constituents I hear a great deal of concern with what is happening with our resource development.

Before I get into that, I want to acknowledge the work done by Kultarjit S. Thiara, the president of the Surrey-Newton Rotary Club. I was so impressed when the community raised \$50,000 to build a school in the Philippines over this weekend. When we are in our ridings, it gives us so much pleasure when we go to events and people, despite all the economic challenges and being worried about their jobs, donate so generously and when local leaders are willing to play a part in making a difference around the world. I went to about 20 other events, but I will keep those for another time.

I am going to be supporting the bill at second reading so that we can send it to committee.

The bill is not perfect by any means. As a teacher, I like to give some credit when good work is done, and I believe this bill is a baby step in the right direction. I believe the regulations we have right now are just not adequate, but Bill C-46 does take a long-overdue first step toward a true polluter pay regime for pipelines in Canada. I say it is only a baby step because we know it does not go all the way. It is like going to the ocean to dip one's toes in it and then just waiting there. There is a lot more work to be done on the bill, and I can assure everyone that we will be doing the hard lifting at committee stage.

We are also very proud that our NDP leader has been a champion of polluter pay and has very practical plans to grow the economy while protecting the environment. There are those who will tell us we have to choose between the two, that it is either the environment or jobs. When I speak to the smart young people in my riding, I find that they know that is not a choice. In order to have jobs and development, we need to also make sure that we are protecting our planet and developing our resources in a sustainable way.

Over and over again, we have seen the government putting the interests of big oil companies ahead of the interests of hard-working Canadians who are struggling to make ends meet. Our middle class is feeling squeezed, and we are hearing through different studies that the quality of jobs and therefore the quality of life are being impacted.

Something else I hear in my riding is that hard-working middle-class people trust the NDP to be able to fix some of these challenges, because they know that over the decades of mismanagement and rubber-stamping by the Liberal Party and now the Conservatives' love-in with big oil companies, they have been squeezed out. Their

children's future has been left out. There has not been due consideration.

We are one of the wealthiest countries in the world. We are truly blessed with not only amazing geography from coast to coast to coast but also with the richness of our resources. Once again, we absolutely have to get out of this mentality of rip-and-ship. I watch that in my province, where we see logs leaving the country on trucks, which is environmentally not that great, and then coming back as two-by-fours, which we then buy. In resource development, no matter which area we are looking at, we really need to take a look at those value-added jobs.

● (1800)

Once again, we need to start developing decent paying jobs for our kids and our middle class right here in Canada. I can tell members that the leader of the NDP has a very practical plan to add value to our natural resources, get away from the rip-and-ship mentality, and support family-sustaining jobs right here at home.

Let us look at what is in the bill. Often what we hear about when my colleagues across the way explain the bill is not what is actually buried in it.

There is an element of polluter pay, but what disturbs me about the bill is that it would vest all kinds of powers to the National Energy Board and the cabinet to make some of these decisions. I think that is the kind of policy-making that leads to confusion. We need to have very clear guidelines, and it should not be left up to the cabinet or cabinet ministers to decide which way it would go, and which parts would be implemented and which would not. It is very disturbing for us in the NDP.

I live in one of the most beautiful provinces. I am sure that every MP says that, and they would be absolutely right. However, we all know of British Columbia's pristine lakes and coastline. Its coastline not only provides an incredible amount of great seafood for local consumption, it is sold overseas, and it is also a great tourist attraction. We bring in billions of dollars through tourism, and we are very worried about the impact of an oil spill, be it from a pipeline or a tankard on our pristine coastline.

I have to give credit to one of the hardest-working members of Parliament in the House, the member of Parliament for Skeena—Bulkley Valley. He is our finance critic right now, but his passion and campaign to save our coast is truly inspirational. I have watched the audience, whether they are 90-year-olds or 14-year-olds, be absolutely inspired when he speaks from his heart about the importance of protecting our waterways, our beautiful coastline, and the kind of lifestyle we have out in B.C.

Government Orders

There is a linkage to this because as members know the northern gateway pipeline is a project that is going to be crossing over many of our key rivers. It will be going through some of our most pristine lakes, through vast territory, and will end up in the ocean through some very dangerous territory. Therefore, we are very worried. However, the linkage here is that the northern gateway is an Enbridge pipeline.

I will pause here for a moment to share with members what happened at the Kalamazoo River, in Michigan. On July 26, 2010, there was an oil spill, and 843,444 U.S. gallons of crude oil came out of a 30-inch pipeline into a prime wetland. That pipeline was owned by Enbridge. The cleanup for that spill alone, not taking account other damages or loss of non-use which has to be considered, came to \$1.2 billion. However, here we would be setting a target of up to \$1 billion. We can see that is inadequate, but it is without taking into consideration the non-use and all of that.

Therefore, we are very worried about any kind of leakage, whether from a pipeline or tankard into our ocean. We are absolutely committed to polluter pay, and we have to start making realistic legislation that considers the real cost of the cleanup and not leave it up to cabinet ministers or other bodies to do this at their discretion.

• (1805)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are many other aspects to the legislation. The part that is rather positive are the improvements to the National Energy Board, where it would have more of a vested interest and to a certain degree a mandate to assist in protecting Canada's environment. There are a series of amendments that would empower the National Energy Board to do more.

I believe everyone within the chamber is going to be voting in favour of the bill going to committee. Does the member advocate for any amendments to potentially to give National Energy Board greater responsibilities to protect our environment?

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: Mr. Speaker, I will be voting for the bill at second reading so it can go to committee stage.

One of the major concerns I have with the bill is the discretionary power that would be handed over to either the National Energy Board or cabinet. We will bring in amendments along those lines.

The other concern I have is that even though this is a baby step toward polluter pays, the step is not large enough to cover the full cost. I am still worried about the huge cost the public would end up paying, while the profits would be reaped by the big oil companies.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Newton—North Delta for her very interesting speech.

Pipeline companies are asking for authorization to do things that can be extremely worrisome. For example, energy east wants to cross the St. Lawrence. Never before has an enormous heavy bitumen pipeline crossed a waterway as large and as dense as the St. Lawrence. The transshipment point for the northern gateway pipeline project, which was approved by the National Energy

Board, has been challenged by several experts. They say that this is a dangerous place to navigate enormous oil tankers.

The proponents want to transport a million barrels of oil a day across the St. Lawrence and select a transshipment point that was severely criticized by marine safety experts because it opens the door to the possibility of major accidents. A billion-dollar liability is not enough because the damage caused by a catastrophe of that nature would cost much more.

Can my colleague comment on that aspect of the problem?

• (1810)

[*English*]

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hard-working colleague. He does an incredible job in his riding and he represents his constituents with a great deal of passion in the House.

He has raised a really good question, and we need to be really clear about it. The bill only covers those pipeline spills or accidents that happen if the barrels of oil per day are over 250,000. If they are less, this does not apply. That is of a great deal of concern. Also, looking at history and what we know about the cost of cleanup, \$1 billion are totally under the amount that is needed.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the opposition appears to have changed its tune. It would seem that an epiphany has occurred. It now believes what we have been saying all along, that Canada is a country blessed with natural resources and that we can grow the economy, while protecting the environment.

Bill C-46 builds on previous actions taken by our government to prevent incidents. These actions include increasing the number of annual pipeline inspections and audits conducted by the National Energy Board, as well as strengthening the board's enforcement capabilities by giving it the authority to fine pipeline operators for smaller incidents, all of which the NDP voted against.

Could the member explain why the New Democrats voted against those very important measures?

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: Mr. Speaker, ever since I have been in the House, I have seen the government take away more and more of the regulations around the protection of the environment. When the government cleans up the red tape, or fast tracks, it does not pay attention to the details.

We have not had an epiphany. Even when I was teaching in the classroom, I talked about our country's wealth. We are not against development. We want sustainable development and we want development that protects our environment and leaves our children with a planet. We do not want the kind of development that endangers our sustainability and ensures our children are left with a very damaged Canada.

Government Orders

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear that the opposition has had an epiphany.

In one of my questions earlier, I mentioned my respect and regard for engineers in Canada. I grew up in the home of a chemical engineer, who has done an enormous amount of industrial work across Canada. Waste water was a specialty of my father's. I also have a son-in-law who is very concerned about the environment and providing energy for Africa. He has a doctorate in electrical engineering, and he is currently in Ghana building solar fields to provide electrical energy for a country that is so desperately in need. I have never met people who are more concerned about the environment than the engineers of Canada.

When I was looking at some of the websites and learning a bit about what our engineers were doing in Canada to preserve the environment, I looked at the Schulich School of Engineering. It is active in research that crosses all departments in the engineering school, including civil, chemical, mechanical, geomatics, and electrical engineering, and it collaborates with all departments of geoscience and biological sciences. It says that it is a leader in pipeline integrity, maintenance and management.

One of the things we do know is that there are occasionally some difficulties with the pipelines, but those problems are miniscule in comparison with the problems with the pump stations. We know the engineers are exceedingly diligent in the work they do to keep the pump stations active and working properly. That is their job.

One of the NDP members talked about sustainable jobs in our economy. The Pipe Line Contractors Association of Canada is made up of people who have very reliable and well-respected companies in Canada. They are prominent people in our society who work hard to ensure the integrity of those pipelines. They talk about some of the job opportunities. They are looking at skilled occupations and trades, and jobs in the transportation industry, logistics, equipment operating, management, and supply testing and inspection.

If we take a look at the opportunities that the Energy East pipeline would provide in the development phase alone, we are talking about more than 8,300 full-time direct jobs and 5,300 indirect jobs. In the operational phase, there would be 900 full-time direct jobs and thousands of indirect jobs. It will look at local hiring for the most part.

We need pipelines. We need to ensure that the people who have the demand for energy in their homes, automobiles and businesses across the country have the fuel they need to keep them going. This is an economic driver for Canada.

We said earlier that we were blessed with enormous resources. Our country has been blessed with resources beyond comparison. Those resources are there to be the economic driver for our country.

The bill would bring safety and security to our pipeline management. In the process, it would create jobs for Canadians, jobs for our young people and jobs for our engineers. That is good news for every one of us.

•(1815)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): 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 Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Call in the members.

•(1855)

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

(Division No. 343)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Welland)
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Anders
Anderson	Andrews
Angus	Armstrong
Aspin	Atamanenko
Ayala	Barlow
Bateman	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett
Benoit	Benskin
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blanchette-Lamothe
Blaney	Block
Boivin	Boughen
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brisson	Brousseau
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Butt	Byrne
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Caron	Carrie
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisu	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Cleary
Clement	Comartin
Côté	Crockatt
Cullen	Cuzner
Daniel	Davidson
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Day
Dechert	Devolin

Dewar
 Dionne Labelle
 Dreeshen
 Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
 Dykstra
 Eyking
 Fantino
 Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
 Fletcher
 Fortin
 Galipeau
 Garneau
 Genest
 Glover
 Goguen
 Goodale
 Gosal
 Grewal
 Harper
 Harris (St. John's East)
 Hayes
 Hoback
 Hsu
 Hyer
 Julian
 Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
 Kent
 Komarnicki
 Lake
 Lapointe
 Lauzon
 LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
 Lemieux
 Leung
 Lizon
 Lukiwski
 MacAulay
 MacKenzie
 Mai
 Masse
 May
 McCallum
 McGuinty
 McLeod
 Michaud
 Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
 Moore (Fundy Royal)
 Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
 Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
 Nash
 Nicholson
 Nunez-Melo
 O'Neill Gordon
 O'Toole
 Papillon
 Payne
 Perkins
 Pilon
 Preston
 Raitt
 Rankin
 Raynault
 Reid
 Rickford
 Saganash
 Saxton
 Schellenberger
 Seeback
 Sgro
 Shipley
 Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
 Sims (Newton—North Delta)
 Sitsabaiesan
 Sopuck
 Stanton
 Stewart
 Strahl
 Tilson
 Toone
 Trost
 Truppe
 Uppal
 Valerioté
 Van Loan

Dion
 Donnelly
 Dubourg
 Dusseault
 Eglinski
 Falk
 Fast
 Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Foote
 Freeland
 Gallant
 Garrison
 Giguère
 Godin
 Goldring
 Goodyear
 Gourde
 Groguhé
 Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
 Hawn
 Hillyer
 Holder
 Hughes
 James
 Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 Kerr
 Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 Lamoureux
 Latendresse
 Lebel
 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
 Leslie
 Liu
 Lobb
 Lunney
 MacKay (Central Nova)
 Maguire
 Marston
 Mathyssen
 Mayes
 McColeman
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
 Menegakis
 Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
 Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
 Murray
 Nicholls
 Norlock
 Oliver
 Opitz
 Pacetti
 Paradis
 Péclet
 Perreault
 Poilievre
 Rafferty
 Rajotte
 Ravignat
 Regan
 Richards
 Rousseau
 Sandhu
 Scarpaleggia
 Scott
 Sellah
 Shea
 Shory
 Smith
 Sorenson
 St-Denis
 Stoffer
 Sweet
 Toet
 Tremblay
 Trottier
 Turmel
 Valcourt
 Van Kesteren
 Vaughan

Wallace
 Warkentin
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
 Weston (Saint John)
 Wilks
 Wong
 Yelich
 Young (Vancouver South)
 Zimmer — 251

Warawa
 Watson
 Williamson
 Woodworth
 Young (Oakville)
 Yurdiga

Government Orders

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

RESPECT FOR COMMUNITIES ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-2, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at report stage of Bill C-2.

The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 2 to 8.

● (1900)

[*English*]

(The House divided on Motion No.1, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 344*)

YEAS

Members

Adams
 Andrews
 Atamanenko
 Bélangier
 Bennett
 Blanchette-Lamothe
 Boutin-Sweet
 Brison
 Byrne
 Casey
 Charlton
 Choquette
 Cleary
 Côté
 Cuzner
 Day
 Dion
 Donnelly
 Dusseault
 Foote
 Freeland
 Garrison
 Giguère
 Goodale
 Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
 Hsu
 Hyer
 Lamoureux
 Latendresse
 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
 Liu

Allen (Welland)
 Angus
 Ayala
 Bellavance
 Benskin
 Boivin
 Brahmi
 Brosseau
 Caron
 Cash
 Chicoine
 Christopherson
 Comartin
 Cullen
 Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
 Dewar
 Dionne Labelle
 Dubourg
 Eyking
 Fortin
 Garneau
 Genest
 Godin
 Groguhé
 Harris (St. John's East)
 Hughes
 Julian
 Lapointe
 LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
 Leslie
 MacAulay

Government Orders

Mai	Marston
Masse	Mathysen
May	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Murray
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Péclet
Perreault	Pilon
Rafferty	Rankin
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Rousseau
Saganash	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Toone	Tremblay
Turmel	Valeriote
Vaughan— 107	

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Aspin	Barlow
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Egliniski	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Glover
Goguen	Goldring
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Hawn
Hayes	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Perkins	Poillievre
Preston	Raitt
Rajotte	Reid
Richards	Rickford

Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shiple	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Trost	Trottier
Truppe	Uppal
Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks
Williamson	Wong
Woodworth	Yelich
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 144

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 1 defeated. I therefore declare Motions Nos. 2 to 8 defeated.

● (1905)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (for the Minister of Health) moved that the bill be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: All those in favour 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 have risen:

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you will find consent to apply the vote from the last motion to the current motion, with the Conservative members voting yea.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nycole Turmel: Mr. Speaker, we agree, and the NDP will vote no.

[*English*]

Ms. Judy Foote: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals agree to apply the vote and will vote no.

Mr. Scott Andrews: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply the vote and will be voting no.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bellavance: Mr. Speaker, I will vote no.

Mr. Jean-François Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply the vote and will vote no.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Green Party also agrees to apply the vote and will vote no.

Adjournment Proceedings

Ms. Manon Perreault: Mr. Speaker, I will vote no.

[English]

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

(Division No. 345)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Aspin	Barlow
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Eglinski	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Glover
Goguen	Goldring
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Hawn
Hayes	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Perkins	Poilievre
Preston	Raït
Rajotte	Reid
Richards	Rickford
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Trost	Trottier
Truppe	Uppal
Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks

Williamson	Wong
Woodworth	Yelich
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Yurdiga	Zimmer — 144

NAYS

Members

Adams	Allen (Welland)
Andrews	Angus
Atamanenko	Ayala
Bélangier	Bellavance
Bennett	Benskin
Albas	Boivin
Blanchette-Lamothe	Brahmi
Boutin-Sweet	Brosseau
Brison	Caron
Byrne	Cash
Casey	Chicoine
Charlton	Christopherson
Choquette	Comartin
Cleary	Cullen
Côté	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Cuzner	Dewar
Day	Dionne Labelle
Dion	Dubourg
Donnelly	Eyking
Dusseault	Fortin
Foote	Garneau
Freeland	Genest
Garrison	Godin
Giguère	Groggùhè
Goodale	Harris (St. John's East)
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Hughes
Hsu	Julian
Hyer	Lapointe
Lamoureux	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Latendresse	Leslie
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	MacAulay
Liu	Marston
Mai	Mathysen
Masse	McCallum
May	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McGuinty	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Michaud	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Murray
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Nicholls
Nash	Pacetti
Nunez-Melo	Péclet
Papillon	Pilon
Perreault	Rankin
Rafferty	Raynault
Ravignat	Rousseau
Regan	Sandhu
Saganash	Scott
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Toone	Tremblay
Turnel	Valerioté
Vaughan — 107	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

Adjournment Proceedings

[Translation]

HEALTH

Ms. Manon Perreault (Montcalm, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, the thalidomide victims were stupefied to learn that the government was going to offer only half the anticipated lump sum as compensation.

Following talks between the Thalidomide Victims Association and the office of the Minister of Health, everyone seemed to agree that the lump sum of \$250,000 was fair.

Given the urgency of the needs and the age of the victims, the parties had to agree on a realistic sum that represented an acceptable strict minimum. It is ill-advised to cut this sum and thereby reopen and set back the negotiations.

It goes without saying that we are grateful to the government and the office of the Minister of Health for the efforts made and the steps taken to reach an agreement in this case, but we need to move forward.

Unfortunately, at this stage, some victims feel like this is a step backward. The government's current offer of \$125,000 is clearly an affront to the settlement process initiated by the parties.

Canada has a moral obligation to take action, and last Friday's offer is an unacceptable setback for victims. This amount of money is insufficient and not in keeping with the reality these survivors face and the serious mistake the Canadian authorities made at the time. For the moment we are not clear on what comes next, but we do know that there is a huge difference between the original requests examined by officials at Health Canada and the offer the minister made on Friday.

These brave individuals have endured tough physical, mental and emotional battles. We must not make their already difficult lives even more difficult. Victims are telling us that the government is needlessly making the process longer to benefit itself. That is a very sad commentary. We must not break the bond of trust.

At this stage in the process, we encourage the parties to return to the negotiating table and we officially call on the government to clarify the offer it made and explain how the payments will be made after the lump sum is paid. We also call on the government to show some compassion on this issue. This is not the time for strategic calculations.

We need to be careful not to break the bond of trust between the government and the people in charge of the task force representing the victims in this case. Let us not forget that to them, this is the fight of their lives and the government is in the unfortunate position of being an adversary.

Members of the task force defending the victims' rights are prepared to sit down with government officials for as long as it takes to come to an agreement, but the more time that goes by, the more victims will die before the first cheque is issued.

I think that there has to be a meeting between the minister and the executive director of the Thalidomide Victims Association, Ms. Benegbi. Detailed explanations are needed to move forward. I also

believe that the key parties need to have a frank discussion and that negotiations need to be reopened.

A positive resolution is still possible, and I believe this slight setback is temporary. The harm suffered by the thalidomide victims goes beyond comprehension and the government has to do everything in its power to mitigate the suffering of these people. The solution is within reach. I am sure that both sides are reasonable people who will be able to overcome their differences in the name of dignity and justice.

Let us put ourselves on the right side of history and stop making cold and inhumane calculations once and for all. I am asking the minister to clarify her offer and stop presenting half-measures that give the impression of bad faith and inappropriate strategies.

● (1910)

[English]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the tragic use of thalidomide in the early 1960s had a terrible impact on the mothers, children, and families involved. These Canadians had to endure hardships that no one should have to go through. Indeed, in the House there are many of us who were born in Canada in the 1960s, and it could easily have been any one of us.

I can only admire the courage and determination of the survivors, who have had to overcome such serious injuries to enjoy the basics of life that the rest of us take for granted. That is why I want to start by acknowledging the real changes governments have made to the drug safety system to prevent similar tragedies from occurring again. These events sparked major changes in Canada's approach to drug approval and surveillance and triggered a complete overhaul of Canada's regulatory system for drugs.

I am very proud that our government has continued efforts to strengthen the regulatory oversight of drug products in Canada. Although many steps had been taken previously to enhance our drug safety system as a result of the thalidomide events, we all recognized that Health Canada needed better tools to protect patients from drugs that were found to be unsafe once they were on the market. Over the years, we have acted decisively to improve our drug safety system in Canada.

Most recently, Vanessa's Law received all-party support and royal assent on November 6, 2014. This new legislation provides Health Canada with new tools to identify potential safety risks and with stronger powers to act quickly and effectively when drug problems are identified. The oversight of Canada's drug regulatory system is continuously evolving, and this is a significant step in helping to prevent such tragedies from ever happening again.

We will continue to strengthen and improve our drug safety system so that a tragedy like this never happens again. In addition to preventing these tragedies going forward, Canadians should know that we remain committed to supporting the survivors of thalidomide and to ensuring that they can live with dignity throughout their lives. This is really the heart of what I know the members opposite would like to hear today.

Adjournment Proceedings

The Minister of Health is meeting, as we speak, with the Thalidomide Victims Association, as she has done previously, when needed, to discuss their issues. In fact, today's meeting builds on a call the minister made just last Friday to thank the executive director of the association for her tireless efforts and to inform her of the new financial assistance to be provided by the government.

The financial assistance package includes up to \$180 million for the fewer than 100 survivors, and it will include three elements. There will be an immediate tax-free lump sum payment of \$125,000 to each survivor to help cover urgent needs. There will also be a commitment of up to \$168 million for ongoing assistance for survivors. This financial support will be delivered by a third party throughout their lifetime. Included in this financial commitment will be a medical assistance fund for extraordinary costs.

This significant new financial assistance will be administered as efficiently as possible to ensure that we provide for the needs of every last survivor. However, we have to acknowledge that no regret or sympathy and no amount of financial support can ever undo what happened. The impact on the survivors' lives has been profound, and that is why I think the most important thing today is that our government has recognized their needs and is taking real action to address them.

We have been working hard with the survivors association throughout this process, and we will continue to ensure that they can live their lives with dignity.

• (1915)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Manon Perreault: Mr. Speaker, we must realize that following last week's rather disappointing offer by the government, thalidomide victims who call their riding office are afraid that the compensation offered may be put off indefinitely.

Following the government's apparent accommodation and the steps taken so far, the victims had hoped to receive compensation as quickly as possible. The offer of a lump-sum payment of \$125,000 gives the impression that the government does not want to settle and that it hopes to buy time in order to put off cutting the cheques.

The lack of transparency of the terms of the agreement will have to be corrected and clarifications must be made. At this time, the uncertainty is very high and we hope to obtain detailed explanations about the financial aspects of the agreement, as well as the underlying justification for the amount of \$125,000, which seems to have been chosen arbitrarily.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health reassure thalidomide victims in the Montcalm riding and across Canada, and confirm her personal commitment and her intention to quickly resolve this matter?

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. member of the significance of the new assistance that will be provided. The package includes up to \$180 million for the fewer than one hundred survivors, and has three elements. There is an immediate tax-free lump sum payment of \$125,000 to each survivor to help cover urgent needs, and a commitment of up to \$168 million for ongoing assistance to survivors. This support will be delivered by

a third party throughout the course of their lifetime. As well, included in this financial commitment will be a medical assistance fund for extraordinary costs.

However, once again, we cannot forget that no regret or sympathy, and no amount of financial support, can ever undo what happened. The impact on the survivors' lives has been profound, and we recognize their courage and determination.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, the gap between the rich and poor in Canada continues to grow at an alarming rate. At least three million Canadians currently live in poverty, or about one in ten. We are the tenth worst in the OECD.

Poverty is a problem that affects all Canadians, not just the poor. The financial burden of poverty in Canada is estimated to cost the government between \$72 billion and \$86 billion per year.

CO₂ emissions, like poverty levels, have also been rising for years in Canada. The Conservatives have not taken any serious action to reverse either of these trends. Climate change is an incredibly serious issue. We need to start making a plan to reduce both carbon emissions and poverty. Like poverty, climate change is a moral issue, but it is also an economic one. Canada is now paying billions of dollars annually due to forest fires, floods, and other effects of climate change.

They are both moral issues, with huge economic impacts as well for Canadians. As different as the two issues may appear to be, they can be addressed by the same policy: carbon fee and dividend. This is a carbon pricing system that will address carbon emissions without adding one penny of tax. It is not a tax; it is a revenue-neutral system in which the government gets zero money.

Instead, every Canadian will receive an equal share of all the carbon fees. Coal mines and oil and gas wells will pay a fee at the source based on the potential to release CO₂. The revenue generated from these payments will be paid directly to consumers on an equal per capita basis. Lower-income and middle-class Canadians will make money on carbon fee and dividend. Carbon dividends will use the marketplace to simultaneously tackle both climate change and income gaps.

The Conservatives say that they believe in the marketplace. All political parties should be in favour of a carbon fee and dividend because it uses free markets and addresses rising levels of both carbon emissions and poverty, all without implementing any tax system or any money going to the government.

Adjournment Proceedings

Presently the Conservatives have no policy to address climate change. The Liberals plan to make it someone else's problem by passing the buck to the provinces. The NDP is stuck on cap and trade: expensive, bureaucratic, and ineffective.

Chris Ragan's Ecofiscal Commission was recently set up to decide upon ecofiscal solutions for Canadians. The commission was made up of prominent Liberals, including Paul Martin, and prominent Conservatives like Preston Manning. They decided that it was time to price carbon.

Carbon fee and dividend is a smart and effective policy that will decrease Canadian carbon emissions and reduce the divide between rich and poor, all without taxing Canadians or slowing economic growth.

When will our three main parties start seriously considering carbon fee and dividend?

• (1920)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question.

The Government of Canada has been very clear that it does not intend to address greenhouse gas emissions through a carbon tax.

Our government's record is clear. We have taken decisive action on the environment while protecting our economy. We have already begun to implement our sector-by-sector approach, starting with two of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in this country: the transportation and electricity sectors.

[Translation]

Last year, the government also announced new regulations in order to limit the increase in hydrofluorocarbons and to further reduce emissions in the transportation sector.

In the transportation sector, Canada worked with the United States to develop GHG emission standards for new passenger vehicles and new light trucks. We are doing the same thing for heavy-duty vehicles.

Building on existing regulations for light-duty vehicles, we released regulations that will lead to the progressive implementation of increasingly stricter standards that are harmonized with U.S. standards for model years 2017 through 2025. With these regulations, 2025 model vehicles will consume up to 50% less fuel and produce 50% less greenhouse gases than 2008 model vehicles.

• (1925)

[English]

In the electricity sector, Canada boasts one of the cleanest electricity systems in the world, with more than three-quarters of our electricity supply emitting no greenhouse gases. We have taken further steps to make it even cleaner. In fact, Canada became the first major coal user to ban the construction of traditional coal-fired electricity generation units.

In addition to contributing to Canada's climate change objectives, this measure will help improve air quality for Canadians.

On April 11, 2014, Environment Canada released the national inventory report to provide Canadians with a coherent picture of emission levels across the country. The report indicated that between 2005 and 2012, the economy grew by 10.6%, while Canadian greenhouse gas emissions decreased by 5.1% over the same period. Our per capita emissions are now at their lowest level since tracking began in 1990. Those are real results.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Mr. Speaker, regulations are a tax and they require growing huge bureaucracy. Carbon fee and dividend is not a tax. Carbon fee and dividend will help solve our dangerously high emission rates while also closing the ever-growing gap between the rich and poor in Canada.

The minister's response only demonstrates what Canadians who are paying attention already know: the Conservatives refuse to adopt an evidence-based policy for reducing carbon emissions. Instead, they are going to continue putting forward bad policy that conforms to their ideologies and their agenda. They continue to push aside any ideas that run contrary to those ideologies and agenda.

Members of the House have an obligation to work across party lines and to put forward policies that will benefit all Canadians. Carbon fee and dividend is such a policy.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North is aware, the environment is a shared jurisdiction between the provinces and the federal government. We have always been clear that all levels of government and industry have a role to play in addressing climate change, as do all Canadians. Provinces and territories are implementing programs and measures that will contribute to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

[Translation]

QUEBEC BRIDGE

Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure for me to rise in the House to talk about issues that matter to Quebec City. Today it is a pleasure for me to talk about an issue that is of great importance to Quebec City: the Quebec Bridge.

The Conservative government promised \$75 million for a new paint job, but that offer is conditional on CN's participation. The Conservatives are really playing games with the Quebec Bridge. They say they have money and are ready to take action, but then they pass the puck to CN. If CN does not make a move, the government will not spend anything. In other words, the Conservatives will not do anything with the Quebec Bridge. They announced funding, but then they passed the puck to CN and said they would wait. They will continue to sit on their hands as they have done for many years now, waiting for the issue to sort itself out. That is absolutely deplorable.

Sixty percent of the surface of the Quebec Bridge is rusted, and the corrosion could eventually affect its structural integrity. This bridge is a symbol of Quebec City. It is a symbol and the city is proud of this bridge. It is an internationally recognized landmark. I hope that the Conservative government will take responsibility if the Quebec Bridge falls into the water because no one took care of its structural integrity.

It will not be solely responsible since this is a mistake that dates back to the time when the Quebec Bridge was handed over to CN, which was privatized in 1995. Basically, in 1995, a previous Liberal government decided to sell the bridge. It sold the bridge to CN for one dollar. Once again, this is nothing new, since it is a way for the federal government to shirk its responsibilities and to tell the municipalities and provinces to take care of their own business because it does not care. The bridge was even sent to the private sector, which means that year after year, even after this case went to court, this issue drags on and nothing has been fixed. In the meantime, the Quebec Bridge is covered in rust. The bridge has lost its original charm.

It is time for the Conservatives to take action and assume their responsibilities. It is time for the Canadian government to admit that it is responsible for this mess, that it should pay for this and come up with a long-term solution, because the bridge will need to be painted again and again. There is a game plan for painting every other bridge in the world from one end to the other to ensure that it does not rust. The Quebec Bridge, however, is a flagrant example of the Conservatives' failure to act and their laissez-faire attitude. They allow infrastructure as important as the Quebec Bridge to deteriorate. It is completely unacceptable.

I must admit that this is not the first time we have seen the Conservatives abandon an issue that is extremely important to Quebecers. Look at the Quebec City Armoury. It took nearly six years before the first tendering process to rebuild it was launched after it burned down in 2008. The tendering process was just recently announced. The government just said that perhaps it should be rebuilt. The way this government treats issues that are extremely important in Quebec City is absolutely appalling.

Quebec City is still waiting. Quebec City wants to host about 40 tall ships in 2017 as part of the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation. The city proposed the project in May of 2013, and two years later, we are still waiting. We want answers.

• (1930)

[English]

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if I understood correctly through the translator, the member opposite said that those responsible for the bridge should pay for it. CN is responsible for the bridge.

Adjournment Proceedings

Notwithstanding that, the government has announced that it would play a significant partnership role in seeing the Quebec Bridge repainted, as did the City of Lévis, Quebec City, and the provincial government.

We have certainly stepped up to the plate. It is time for CN to do so.

[Translation]

Ms. Annick Papillon: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, with this Conservative government we will never see the \$75 million it promised for the Quebec Bridge. It is waiting for CN to do something and CN will not budge. We know that. Everyone knows that.

We know that we need an NDP government if we want to see some action. The Conservatives are definitely not going to be the ones to do anything. They are like Scrooge and do not put money where it should go, like the Quebec Bridge, which is really important. It is Quebec City's emblem.

What are you going to do? Are you going to again wait six years, like you did with the armoury? Are you going to wait longer? Quite frankly, that makes no sense. You must act now, you must assume your responsibilities and not leave Quebec City with such a problem.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I would remind members to direct their comments to the Chair rather than directly to their colleagues.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Mr. Speaker, there is a bridge between the city of Windsor and the city of Detroit that is called the Ambassador Bridge. It is privately owned, and when it needs repainting, it is the owner who is responsible to paint the bridge. In this circumstance, there is nothing different about the Quebec Bridge in that regard. CN owns that bridge and is responsible for painting that bridge.

However, notwithstanding that, the federal government, the provincial government, and their municipal partners have stepped up anyway to provide a partnership model to cover half of the expected cost of that repainting job, according to CN's preliminary estimates. We expect CN, which owns the bridge, to step forward and become part of that partnership to make sure that job gets done.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:34 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Monday, March 9, 2015

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Canadian Air Transport Security Authority

Mr. Dusseault	11819
Motion	11819
Mr. Watson	11821
Mr. McGuinty	11821
Mr. Watson	11821
Amendment	11822
Mr. Dusseault	11822
Mr. McGuinty	11823
Mr. Rousseau	11824
Mr. Opitz	11825
Ms. Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	11826

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Pipeline Safety Act

Bill C-46. Second reading	11827
Mr. Sandhu	11827
Mrs. Block	11828
Mr. Masse	11828
Ms. May	11828
Mrs. Block	11828
Ms. May	11830
Ms. Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	11830
Mr. Donnelly	11830
Mr. Masse	11830
Mr. Lamoureux	11831
Mr. Scott	11831
Ms. May	11832
Ms. Crockatt	11832
Mrs. Day	11833
Mr. Lamoureux	11834
Mr. Lamoureux	11834
Ms. Crockatt	11835
Mr. Scott	11835
Mr. Pilon	11836
Mr. Scott	11837
Mr. Choquette	11837
Ms. Ayala	11837
Mrs. Day	11837
Mr. McGuinty	11839
Mr. Pilon	11839
Mr. Angus	11839
Ms. May	11839
Mr. Scott	11841

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Ivan Messmer

Mr. Albas	11841
-----------	-------

2015 Telus Cup

Mr. Lapointe	11841
--------------	-------

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Carleton-York

Mr. Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	11842
-------------------------------	-------

International Women's Day

Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North)	11842
------------------------------	-------

International Women's Day

Mrs. Truppe	11842
-------------	-------

CBC/Radio-Canada

Mr. Scott	11842
-----------	-------

UN Special Envoy on Ebola

Mr. Allison	11843
-------------	-------

Organ Donation

Mr. Albrecht	11843
--------------	-------

Espanola Autism Acceptance Event

Mrs. Hughes	11843
-------------	-------

Gwich'in Internship Pilot Project

Mr. Leef	11843
----------	-------

University of Toronto Teaching Assistants

Mr. Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	11844
------------------------------------	-------

Taxation

Mr. Butt	11844
----------	-------

Andrew Doiron

Mr. LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	11844
--------------------------	-------

Andrew Doiron

Mr. Gourde	11844
------------	-------

Andrew Doiron

Mr. Allen (Welland)	11844
---------------------	-------

Andrew Doiron

Mr. Goguen	11845
------------	-------

ORAL QUESTIONS

National Defence

Ms. Leslie	11845
Mr. Kenney	11845
Ms. Leslie	11845
Mr. Kenney	11845
Ms. Leslie	11845
Mr. Kenney	11845

Rail Transportation

Mrs. Hughes	11846
Ms. Raitt	11846
Mrs. Hughes	11846
Ms. Raitt	11846

Employment

Mr. Garneau	11846
Mr. Poilievre	11846
Mr. Brison	11846
Mr. Poilievre	11846

Mr. Brison	11846
Mr. Poilievre	11847
Ethics	
Ms. Péclet	11847
Mr. Calandra	11847
Mr. Angus	11847
Mr. Calandra	11847
Mr. Angus	11847
Mr. Calandra	11847
Employment	
Ms. Sims	11847
Mr. Poilievre	11848
Mrs. Groguhé	11848
Mr. Poilievre	11848
Mr. Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	11848
Mr. Rickford	11848
Ms. Mathysen	11848
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	11848
Ms. Nash	11848
Mr. Poilievre	11848
Ms. Nash	11848
Mr. Poilievre	11849
Aboriginal Affairs	
Ms. Bennett	11849
Mrs. Truppe	11849
Employment	
Mr. McCallum	11849
Mr. Poilievre	11849
Citizenship and Immigration	
Mr. McCallum	11849
Mr. Poilievre	11849
National Defence	
Mr. Harris (St. John's East)	11849
Mr. Kenney	11849
Ms. Michaud	11849
Mr. Kenney	11850
Public Safety	
Ms. Boivin	11850
Ms. James	11850
Mr. Garrison	11850
Ms. James	11850
National Defence	
Mrs. Ambler	11850
Mr. Kenney	11850
Agriculture	
Mr. Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	11850
Mr. Keddy	11850
Ms. Brosseau	11851
Mr. Keddy	11851
Health	
Ms. Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	11851
Mrs. McLeod	11851
Mr. Rankin	11851
Mrs. McLeod	11851

Infrastructure	
Mr. Vaughan	11851
Mr. Lebel	11851
CBC/Radio-Canada	
Mr. Dion	11852
Mrs. Glover	11852
Regional Economic Development	
Mr. Lapointe	11852
Mr. Lebel	11852
Mr. Choquette	11852
Mr. Lebel	11852
Citizenship and Immigration	
Mr. Carmichael	11852
Mr. Alexander	11852
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Dubourg	11853
Mr. Nicholson	11853
Citizenship and Immigration	
Mr. Genest	11853
Mr. Alexander	11853
Veterans Affairs	
Mr. Chisu	11853
Mr. O'Toole	11853
National Defence	
Mr. Hyer	11853
Mr. O'Toole	11853
CBC/Radio-Canada	
Mr. Fortin	11853
Mrs. Glover	11854
Rail Transportation	
Mr. Bellavance	11854
Ms. Raitt	11854
Employment Insurance	
Mr. Andrews	11854
Mr. Poilievre	11854

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Government Response to Petitions	
Mr. Lukiwski	11854
Petitions	
Agriculture	
Mrs. Davidson	11854
Housing	
Mr. Stewart	11854
Agriculture	
Mr. Lamoureux	11855
Sex Selection	
Mr. Shipley	11855
Impaired Driving	
Mr. Shipley	11855
St. Lawrence Belugas	
Ms. LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	11855

Rail Transportation	
Mr. Hyer	11855
Impaired Driving	
Mr. Rajotte	11855
Genetically Modified Organisms	
Ms. May	11855
Endangered Species	
Ms. May	11855
Agriculture	
Mr. Aspin	11855
Questions Passed as Orders for Returns	
Mr. Lukiwski	11856
Points of Order	
Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security	
Mr. Van Loan	11856
Mr. Julian	11857

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Pipeline Safety Act	
Bill C-46. Second reading	11857
Mr. Hyer	11857
Ms. May	11857
Mr. Côté	11858
Mr. Scott	11858
Mr. Lamoureux	11859
Mrs. Day	11860
Mr. Angus	11860
Mr. Lamoureux	11861
Mr. Nicholls	11862
Mr. Côté	11862
Mr. Lamoureux	11863
Mr. Choquette	11863
Mr. Vaughan	11864
Mrs. Day	11865
Mr. Lamoureux	11865
Ms. Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	11866
Mr. Lamoureux	11867
Mr. Choquette	11867

Ms. Ayala	11868
Ms. Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	11869
Mr. Lamoureux	11869
Mr. Lapointe	11870
Mr. Côté	11871
Mr. Lamoureux	11871
Ms. Latendresse	11872
Mr. Vaughan	11873
Mr. Côté	11873
Mr. Chicoine	11874
Mr. Garneau	11875
Mr. Côté	11875
Mr. Nicholls	11876
Mr. McGuinty	11877
Mrs. Day	11877
Ms. Sims	11878
Mr. Lamoureux	11879
Mr. Lapointe	11879
Mrs. Block	11879
Ms. Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	11880
Motion agreed to	11881
(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee) ..	11881

Respect for Communities Act

Bill C-2. Report stage	11881
Motions Nos. 1 to 8 negatived	11882
Mr. Van Loan (for the Minister of Health)	11882
Motion for concurrence	11882
Motion agreed to	11883

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Health	
Ms. Perreault	11884
Mrs. McLeod	11884
The Environment	
Mr. Hyer	11885
Mr. Carrie	11886
Quebec Bridge	
Ms. Papillon	11886
Mr. Watson	11887

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>