



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 147 • NUMBER 196 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Monday, April 20, 2015

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, April 20, 2015

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

• (1100)

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to ask for unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing or Special Order or usual practice of the House, any recorded division deferred until the ordinary hour of daily adjournment later this day take place instead at the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders later this day.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

INTERN PROTECTION ACT

The House resumed from February 17 consideration of the motion that Bill C-636, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code (unpaid training), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to address the proposed amendments to the Canada Labour Code put forward by the hon. member.

We are here today to discuss protection for interns in the workplace. Let me start by saying that this government fully recognizes that safe, fair and productive workplaces are essential for creating jobs, growth and long-term prosperity. We have held true to

these priorities over the years. We have made sure that the employment of young Canadians has been a driving force behind new measures that we have introduced and behind our support for successful existing programs.

Clearly, we know how important it is to help young Canadians participate in the workforce. That is why economic action plan 2014 included \$40 million to support 3,000 paid internships between 2014 and 2016. The funding will be delivered through the NRC's industrial research assistance program, specifically its youth employment program through ESDC's youth employment strategy.

It is also why we provide a range of other programs to help young Canadians succeed. For example, our government invests over \$10 billion every year to support post-secondary education, including financial assistance through Canada student loans and grants, and programs for first nations and Inuit students.

I mentioned the youth employment strategy. In total, we invest over \$330 million each year to help youth develop work skills and receive real life experience that aligns with evolving realities of the current job market. We are committed to helping young Canadians age 15 to 30 get career information and the skills they need to get good jobs and to stay employed.

Eleven government departments, agencies, partners and communities deliver this initiative. It provides small and medium-size enterprises with the financial assistance they need to hire highly skilled post-secondary graduates. Internships allow post-secondary graduates to gain valuable on-the-job experience.

In 2012, the youth employment strategy helped to connect 60,000 Canadian youth with the work experience and skills training needed to succeed in the job market.

We also provide support dedicated to apprentices, such as the apprenticeship incentive and completion grants, and the new Canadian apprenticeship loan which we announced in January of this year.

Apprentices and designated Red Seal trades can apply for up to \$4,000 in interest-free loans per period of technical training. For many, this money could mean the difference between completing their training or not completing it at all. Apprentices can use it to pay for tuition, tools or equipment, or to help support their families while they complete their programs.

Private Members' Business

For thousands of young Canadians who choose a different path, paid and unpaid internships allow them to acquire on-the-job experience in many different fields, the experience they need to find jobs and the experience they need to participate actively in our economy. We want to ensure that they are protected in the workplace and that these legal protections are clearly spelled out. On behalf of these thousands of young people working hard to build their futures, I do not think it is too much to ask that we have clear rules to protect all workers, including interns. At the same time, we do not want to put measures in place that would discourage employers from offering short-term paid and unpaid internships to help young people get important job experience. We need employers to have skin in the game. We need to find this middle ground.

In our view, the bill before us goes too far. It discourages employers from offering legitimate and meaningful opportunities, and for this reason we will be opposing it.

One of the shortcomings of Bill C-636 is that it would only permit internships for secondary, post-secondary and vocational students who are doing internships as part of their degree or their diploma program. It would exclude other individuals, such as recent graduates, new Canadians and those transitioning to new careers who are not enrolled in specific education programs that would require them to have an internship.

We have to remember that internships in Canada represent many different things, from co-op work to field placements, to practicums, to school-to-work transition programs, all of which provide short-term workplace-based learning.

Any amendment to the Canada Labour Code should take into account the different ways that internships work in different parts of the country, in different sectors of the economy. Also, Bill C-636 would extend labour standard protections to all interns, except for minimum wage in some cases. Part III of the code covers issues such as paid overtime and paid holidays, which obviously would apply only to interns receiving wages but not to unpaid interns. We can see how this can be confusing when it comes to employers' obligations to interns and interns' expectations of employers in the workplace.

• (1105)

Also, the bill does not define key terms such as “training”, or provide legislative power to do so. This could have the unintended consequence, for example, of making it easier for employers to withhold pay from employees involved in some forms of workplace training.

I am sure we can all agree on one thing: internships, whether paid or unpaid, are of great value to the young people who are participating in them, to the employers who have the opportunity to have interns in the workplace and to the overall economy.

We certainly appreciate the intent behind Bill C-636, however, we believe this is not the right bill to achieve our collective goals of protecting interns. We believe that a more comprehensive approach will be needed.

On this side of the House we want to ensure that young Canadians continue to have access to on-the-job training through internships. We do not want to take away any opportunity for our young people to hone their skills and broaden their experience in the

workplace. In fact, I am sure that many of us know young constituents who are getting the much needed on-the-job training through an internship with a local business. Interns, both paid and unpaid, deserve occupational health and safety protections and appropriate labour standards.

I must ask my fellow members to keep in mind that interns are not always students. There are other groups who benefit immensely from these opportunities. For example, interns can include people returning to the labour market after a period of absence, recent immigrants who seek to gain essential Canadian workplace experience which they may not have received in their previous country. New Canadians, recent graduates and others considering a career change who are not enrolled in specific educational programs should not be left out of the game, but Bill C-636 would prevent employers from offering legitimate, meaningful learning experience to some of these people.

These are only a few of the things we need to consider in deciding how best to support interns in the workplace. With this in mind, earlier this year, we held consultations with stakeholders across the country to better understand how we could help interns get the most out of their placements. What my colleague, the former parliamentary secretary heard when she conducted these consultations very ably, was information that will help inform the legislation we intend to introduce, legislation that will better protect interns in the federal jurisdiction and clarify workplace rights and responsibilities for interns, employers and institutions.

We have made it a priority to provide Canadians with the workplace experience and skills they need to find jobs in high-demand fields and succeed in the job market. Bill C-636 simply does not meet this challenge.

For the reasons I have outlined, I would urge my colleagues to oppose the bill.

• (1110)

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me start by thanking the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles for bringing forward Bill C-636. I think everyone can agree that the goals of the bill are important and well-intentioned. It is not a partisan issue. It should be something that we want to get right. All legislators should want to get this particular issue right, so I am happy to stand to speak to it today.

The bill highlights a legitimate issue that up to now has not been considered through the normal tripartite process to amend the Canada Labour Code.

Private Members' Business

We are confronted with a situation where we know that unpaid interns have been exploited and we know that the protections under the Canada Labour Code are ambiguous at best. We also know that the number of unpaid interns appears to be on the rise, with no real regulations, especially in the federal sector, to ensure that interns are truly being provided with a valuable learning experience to improve their employable skills and that they are not just a way for employers to replace paid employees to improve their bottom line.

After having consulted with many stakeholders in the federal jurisdiction, I believe there is a consensus about the goals of the bill, but I have some concerns as to the best means to achieve those goals in a fair and balanced way that would minimize the unintended consequences.

Given that the stakeholders agree on the intent of the bill, I feel it deserves to go to committee where we can hear from all stakeholders on how best to realize the goals that the bill sets to achieve.

When we talk about internships, it means many things to many people. Depending upon the jurisdiction one is in, an unpaid intern may or may not have basic labour standards protections. I think everyone would agree that an unpaid intern should be protected from an unsafe work environment or be afforded rights to rest and hours of work rules, to be covered under the employer's sexual harassment policy that is required under the Canada Labour Code.

These are common labour standards that are clear for paid employees, but for unpaid interns are very unclear. When we have weak or unclear laws that are the only protection for vulnerable groups of people, we have fertile ground for exploitation.

We know that the number of unpaid internships appears to have increased over the last decade, and especially since the recession. I say "appears" because we do not have that hard data.

My colleague, the member for Kings—Hants, has done a great job on this file. He was one of the first people to talk about unpaid interns and the need for accurate statistics, and the establishment of clear standards that would safeguard legitimate opportunities while protecting unpaid interns against exploitation.

Timely, accurate, and relevant labour market information is fundamental to good public policy, and people have been calling upon the government to track unpaid internships for several years now. During the finance committee's study on youth employment, a number of groups advocated exactly for this.

As Claire Seaborn, president of the Canadian Intern Association, and a strong advocate for better internship laws, said, "You can't fix a problem if you don't know what the problem is".

However, we all know the current government's aversion to collecting data for evidence-based policy, preferring instead to use policy-based evidence. This perhaps explains why it has done nothing to improve data collection or strengthen intern protections.

We know that today's job market for youth is very weak. In fact, we have lost 150,000 youth jobs since before the recession, and the youth unemployment rate is almost double the national average. This has led to more youth becoming desperate for work and feeling pressured to accept unpaid internships to get work experience.

●(1115)

As the number of unpaid internships has grown, with no rules in place and unclear protections, so too has the anecdotal evidence of exploitation by employers. That is why Bill C-636 is needed to ensure basic workplace protections in the Canada Labour Code, with those protections being clearly extended to unpaid interns. In addition, rules on what information the employer must provide to the intern on the internship would help to clarify the relationship for both parties.

Although I agree with the intent of the bill, I do have concerns regarding the process we are using to propose an amendment to the Canada Labour Code. Labour laws are complex, and ones that work well are based on a delicate balance between the interests of the employees and the employers. They are developed through an informed, fair, and thorough consultative tripartite process that seeks, in part, to minimize any unintended consequences. The Liberals believe in the established tripartite process between labour, management, and government, which has served our federal sector well for amending the Canada Labour Code.

The private members' bill process is a poor means to make laws concerning such a complex system. That being said, the need to ensure basic labour standard protections for vulnerable youth participating in unpaid internships is something that everyone I have consulted with appears to agree on; for example, protections against unsafe work environments, unreasonable work hours, or sexual harassment.

I have consulted with many stakeholders, including employer and labour groups, respected labour law experts, and intern and student representatives. The problem is not that they do not believe unpaid interns should have Labour Code protections, but rather how best to provide these protections to ensure there are no unintended consequences in other aspects of the Labour Code that apply to the workplace.

Labour laws are complex, and when parliamentarians seek to amend them, it should be done with great care and through an established process that allows thorough review and consultation. I have concerns about amending the Canada Labour Code through this private member's bill which is outside of the established tripartite process. That being said, we are confronted as parliamentarians with the fact that we have ambiguous laws concerning unpaid interns and evidence that exploitation is taking place. It is incumbent that we move, as legislators.

Private Members' Business

We also have a government that has not yet taken any appropriate action. My colleague has said that legislation is coming forward and that the parliamentary secretary undertook an ambitious study across the country. When the government undertakes its own studies with witnesses that the government wants to hear from, obviously it is not going to get the quality of work that should be done in the committees of this House. That is where the work should be getting done. However, under the current government, we have seen that committees have been neutered. An issue as important as unpaid interns, giving opportunities to the young people in this country to gain valuable work experience, is work that this House should be seized with. Instead, we are seeing the Conservatives once again skirting this issue.

To summarize, we believe that any change in the Canada Labour Code should be done through a tripartite process. We have seen the government undertake private members' legislation, Bill C-377 and Bill C-525, to amend the Labour Code. We did not agree with them or support them.

With the Conservatives' lack of action on unpaid interns, at least we should be looking at the situation. That is why we will be encouraging our members in the House to support Bill C-636, to get to the root of it and hopefully help young Canadians who are looking for very valuable job experience.

• (1120)

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their enthusiasm in support of this important bill from our colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles. I would like to thank her for all of her work with respect to seeking protection for interns. I especially want to thank her for coming to my riding of Parkdale—High Park and participating in a round table on the issue of internships. She was very diligent and spent quite a bit of time meeting with folks in our community who are very supportive of Bill C-636, the bill we are debating today. We met with students from the Canadian Federation of Students, the Canadian Intern Association, the University of Toronto, and with unpaid interns who certainly would be affected by this bill. What we heard is that—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. The Chair has recognized the hon. member for Parkdale—High Park. We know that in the House if members are close they can go about quiet conversations, usually without much disruption. However, when that goes out to 15 metres or 20 metres that can be a whole different matter. Therefore, I would ask members to confine their conversations to the quiet mode, and, if not, perhaps they can go out into the lobby.

The hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, I certainly do not want to deter my colleagues in their enthusiasm for my presentation, which is, of course, always welcome.

As I was saying, there was a very interesting round table in Parkdale—High Park that the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles participated in. She gained a great deal of support from intern organizations and from youth and students in our community. They were very enthusiastic about Bill C-636. They talked about how the average level of student debt is about \$28,000 on graduation. That is

a huge burden for young people to be saddled with when they are just starting out in their working lives.

We know that persistently high youth unemployment in Canada, due to the lacklustre economic performance of our economy and the lack of clear policies and initiatives from the federal government, has been a serious burden and a challenge for young people in our society today. Many, in fact, are quite excited about and happy to take on internship programs and feel that they will help them get important experience as they begin their working lives, but they need some basic protections. They need some clear rules, and that is what Bill C-636 is all about.

I was very glad to hear my colleague across the aisle agree with the NDP that there should be a growing number of paid internships. We think that this is an important step forward, and we are glad to see that government members agree with us about the need for paid internships. However, we are very disappointed that they do not support an effective measure, which this bill is, to protect interns and set clear rules for them.

What are we talking about here? We are talking about basic protections in the workplace such as protection from sexual harassment and protection related to health and safety. We know that young workers are especially vulnerable to workplace accidents. They have a higher accident rate. Interns and young people just starting out are not even covered by basic health and safety legislation, and that needs to change.

They need reasonable hours of work. It is easy for young people who are hungry to get into the workforce to be exploited. What they need are clear hours of work, rest days, and recognition of statutory holidays.

We also need clear rules, which this bill lays out. The internship should be beneficial to the intern and not just to the employer. It needs to be educational and linked to the intern's program of study. The employer needs to inform the intern about the hours of work, the kinds of work he or she will be undertaking, and whether or not the intern will be paid. There should be record keeping of the hours they are working.

The reality is that because of the lack of federal rules, there has been exploitation of young workers. Often entry-level jobs, which in the past were paid, are being replaced by paid internships. The reality is that interns deserve the protections anyone would expect if they were paid, which many people are not.

Let me give a couple of examples. Last year, Bell Mobility was forced to close down an internship program after public scrutiny exposed that it had hosted more than 280 unpaid interns and had forced them to work overtime. These interns were essentially performing the work of paid employees and probably should have been paid. In fact, some of the interns are seeking back wages.

Another example that came to light is the terrible tragedy of a young man named Andy Ferguson, who, in 2011, as an unpaid intern at an Edmonton radio station, had been working long, back-to-back shifts. When he went home one night, he fell asleep at the wheel and was killed in a traffic accident.

Private Members' Business

• (1125)

The federal labour program investigation determined that he was not an employee and therefore not covered by the Canada Labour Code. That must change. We need to make sure that young people have basic workplace protections.

In March of last year, 2014, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance produced a report on youth employment in Canada. I was pleased to participate in that report. Recommendation no. 9 states:

That the federal government...work with the provinces and territories to ensure the appropriate protections under relevant labour codes.

That is an important recommendation. That would include the Canada Labour Code.

The Canada Labour Code provides basic protections on things like hours of work, the right to refuse dangerous work, and freedom from sexual harassment in the workplace, but as of right now, these protections do not apply to unpaid interns.

Unlike many provinces, the federal government has no rules governing the use of unpaid internships to ensure that young Canadians are not exploited. This must change.

What New Democrats want is adequate protection for all workers, whether they are interns or paid workers. We want to limit the use of unpaid internships to those that are educational and of benefit to the interns so that they get something out of them and they really are a stepping stone to a career. We want active enforcement of updated labour laws, and we want Statistics Canada to track the use of unpaid internships. What we do not know about and are not measuring we cannot take action on.

This is a basic issue of intergenerational equity. As people who have already been active in the workforce, who have established their careers and track records, we need to make sure that the next generation of young people has the same opportunities and can use their educations, gain that foothold in the workplace, and get the kind of experience they need to have successful careers.

I would urge my colleagues across the aisle to reconsider their negativity on this issue of internships and to support Bill C-636. Let us do the job young people would expect us to do as their parliamentarians.

• (1130)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak on this important issue.

Safe, fair, and productive workplaces are essential for creating jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity. To that end, paid and unpaid internships allow students, recent graduates, new Canadians, and those transitioning to new careers to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to find good jobs.

Whether paid or unpaid, internships are seen as an important way to improve employment prospects and outcomes. In fact, in November 2014, an Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada survey found that four out of five employers think that "...

internship students add value to their company as a source of new talent and as future employees with workplace skills".

The issue of unpaid internships is an important one, and I would like to address some of the concerns raised by the hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles in her private member's bill, Bill C-636.

To begin, I would like to say that we certainly agree with the bill's intent. Protecting interns in the federal jurisdiction is a worthy objective, but the bill does raise concerns.

In my previous role as the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Labour, I had the opportunity to go across the country. I consulted broadly with student groups and unions from coast to coast to coast. That added a lens to this conversation that I think is very important. Certainly it had the support of the government in terms of that process. However, there are some issues that truly are not dealt with in the bill that are of significant concern.

Every year, thousands of people, whether students, recent graduates, new Canadians, or people looking to make a career change, pursue internships to acquire the experience they need to find good jobs. I think we have recognized the issue around the actual data. There are some gaps, but there is currently an estimate of between 100,000 and 300,000 interns.

Internships can be a good transition from school to work, but we need to be alert to their unintended consequences. Again, as I mentioned, the bill is well intentioned, but it has serious weaknesses that really make it unrealistic in terms of us supporting it.

For example, the bill as written would allow employers to offer unpaid training but only if the training had been previously approved as part of a secondary, post-secondary, or vocational degree or diploma program. As I went across the country, I heard from many people who were not in that situation but had spent a month or a couple of weeks as interns, and it was their pathway into employment. To arbitrarily cut off those new Canadians and people looking at making a transition from those opportunities truly does not make much sense. This means that unpaid internships would not be available to individuals who were not enrolled in educational training programs, which could have a significant and negative impact.

In addition, the bill would extend labour standard protections to all interns, except for minimum wage, in some cases. What we heard from employers is that this does not make sense, because what they are talking about is unpaid overtime, holiday pay, and paid annual vacations. There are a lot of wage-related provisions that would be impossible for employers to apply to a person not receiving a wage. Again, it is reflective of some concerns in terms of the structure of the bill.

Private Members' Business

Also, the bill does not actually explain what it means by training, and it would not give the government any regulatory authority to do so. I think that is a critically important piece: what is training, and how would we create regulations around it? Therefore, the term training is ambiguous and open to interpretation and could lead to unintended consequences. For example, there could be a loophole that would allow unscrupulous employers to stop paying regular employees who are undergoing work-related training of a similar nature.

Again, it is the government's responsibility to support safe, fair, and productive workplaces. We support our interns, both paid and unpaid, who participate in short-term workplace-related learning experiences that can help transition them to employment. The employer has a fundamental responsibility to provide a healthy and safe workplace.

● (1135)

According to the Canada Labour Code, employers are obliged to inform anyone granted access to a workplace of any known or foreseeable hazards, and provide them with the necessary protective equipment and train them how to use it. As parliamentarians, if we go into a mill in our riding, we are all aware that we have an introduction to safety equipment. Even for casual visitors to some of these work sites, employers have important obligations to anyone who enters their work site.

If an intern contacts the labour program to file complaints, the labour program takes the necessary steps to ensure that the health and safety of everyone in the workplace is protected. Currently, standards under the Canada Labour Code apply if it is established that an employment relationship exists. If an employment relationship exists, the individual, including an intern, is entitled to full labour standard protections.

For example, unpaid interns can contact the Labour Department to file a complaint alleging that an employment relationship exists and that they are owed wages, including wages for any overtime worked.

Our government is committed to doing more to help those who are traditionally under-represented in the workforce, such as youth, to get the job training they require. We are delivering on that promise.

Economic action plan 2014 included \$40 million to support 3,000 paid internships between 2014 and 2016. In the riding I represent there has been a number of interns supported in that way. I also know there are many programs out there. Many of us probably have daughters or sons of colleagues and friends who are supported through some of the work placements that are arranged through the universities. Therefore, there is a good number of very important opportunities.

Every year our government invests over \$10 billion to support post-secondary education, including financial assistance through Canada student loans and grants, and programs for first nations and Inuit students. We invest over \$330 million in the youth employment strategy each year to help youth develop work skills and receive real life work experience that are aligned with the evolving realities of the job market.

Locally, I met with a group of young adults who were in that program, the youth employment strategy, and they were saying yes, because they were finding enormous benefits in not only what they were learning, but the actual practical support they were getting in workplaces.

We provide support dedicated to apprentices, like the apprenticeship incentive and completion grants, and the new Canada apprentice loan we announced in January 2015.

Internships also play an important role. They are a good way to provide important short-term workplace-based learning experiences and support successful transitions from school to work, or, as we mentioned earlier, transition from career to career, which still has some serious flaws in recognizing a more wide importance of the internship concept.

As we have talked about, I held consultations across the country with stakeholders to ensure that we understood the environment in which interns were working. What we heard will help us with the policies that take into consideration all of the necessary factors to protect interns in federal jurisdictions.

We need to ensure that rights and responsibilities related to interns are appropriate and that they are clear and understood by employers, educational institutions and interns.

To this end, we have the intention of moving forward to address concerns and protect the interests of unpaid interns in a meaningful way.

We believe Bill C-636 would go too far and would discourage employers from offering legitimate, meaningful unpaid internships that would meet the diverse learning needs of interns.

For this reason and others I have outlined today, we cannot support the bill. We urge our fellow members to vote against it, although I do want to commend our colleague across the floor for the conversation she has engaged in with the bill, because the intentions are admirable.

● (1140)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to support Bill C-636, which was introduced by my colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles. As the youth critic, I have worked on this issue a lot over the past few years with her and with the member for Davenport, who is doing amazing work on this issue, such as in the case of the family of Andy Ferguson, a victim of the terrible working conditions that interns endure.

We need to take a step back. It is interesting to see that the government will not be supporting this bill despite the fact that it is in line with one of the recommendations in a report adopted by the Standing Committee on Finance. The report recommended updating working conditions for interns in federally regulated companies.

Private Members' Business

I would like to provide a bit of background. Last year, the Standing Committee on Finance met about 10 times to study youth unemployment. One of the meetings focused almost entirely on unpaid internships. Throughout the study, and during that meeting in particular, witnesses unanimously stated that things have to change. They recognized that under the right circumstances, unpaid internships can benefit young people starting their careers or in the middle of their studies who want to know more about a certain kind of workplace. However, everyone in the committee agreed that things have to change. Interns are not protected by the same laws as every other worker under the Canada Labour Code. That is a huge problem, especially in an economic climate where the youth unemployment rate is twice the national average and youth underemployment is becoming more widespread.

[English]

Youth unemployment is obviously very concerning to us, but youth underemployment, where young people are overqualified for the jobs they have, is more and more of a problem. A Statistics Canada report that came out at the same time as the study we were doing at the finance committee said that it was at levels that had never been seen before in Canada. This is really concerning. These internships are unfortunately proliferating more and more.

One of the examples that many witnesses brought forward during the study was that young people working internships should be an opportunity for them to get a foot in the door, but instead it was turning into an opportunity for certain companies to use young people as coffee runners and photo copiers, which we do not want to see. These internships need to be an opportunity for young people to get the experience necessary to help them in their pursuit for meaningful jobs later on.

• (1145)

[Translation]

Jobs are important and experience is valuable. Once again, this has to do with the issue of youth unemployment. Just look at TD Bank's 2013 annual report, which indicates that young people who are unemployed or working in jobs they are overqualified for have a very hard time making up for that lost income in subsequent years. This is known as wage scarring. I do not know the French equivalent; perhaps it is "cicatrisation des revenus". This is a very serious problem. When young people are unemployed or working in jobs that are below their skill level, they lose income, which they have to try to make up for later. In other words, the consequences of unemployment and underemployment are felt for many years.

These situations create a vicious circle. Just look at what is happening in our communities: new businesses are opening, entrepreneurs are starting up businesses, schools are being created to provide jobs for teachers. This is true in my community, as it is in all communities. All of these things determine whether young families will come and settle in a community. Young people will have a hard time starting a family or buying a house if there are no jobs to give family members the tools needed to be consumers and active participants in the economy.

That creates a vicious circle, which has to start somewhere. Even though we are talking about a circle, there is still a starting point, and

in this case, it is young people who work in unpaid internships. It is very important to point that out.

I find it interesting that some Conservative members are saying that the bill goes too far, when quite the opposite is true. Student groups and intern advocacy groups are saying that unpaid internships should basically be abolished. We compromised by recognizing the role that unpaid internships play in society, but we want there to be some protection.

It is therefore interesting to hear members say that we are going too far when we are prepared to recognize that unpaid internships do indeed have a role to play, as long as there is some kind of compensation in the form of a learning experience. That goes hand in hand with worker protection, which is something that these interns do not have right now.

[English]

When we look at the question of going too far and what has been said by the government, I go back to the report that came out of the finance committee. This is a report on which all committee members agreed. One of the recommendations specifically said that something needed to change. The government members agreed to this.

In a 10-minute speech it is difficult to go back over all not only the witness testimony, but what some government members had to say. Many Conservative members of Parliament on that committee said that this concerned them. It concerned them when they thought of their kids or grandkids.

We know the willingness is there. It is unfortunate that we hear all these nice things, like the Conservative members congratulating my colleague for bringing this bill forward, that they know it is an issue, but that they will vote against it. This just does not make sense, particularly in the context, as I have said several times in my speech, where we have been willing to reach across the aisle and take a few steps backwards, not going as far as some folks might think we need to go, and a willingness to say that we should get this first good step done and at least get the minimum protections for people who work in this environment of unpaid internships, where they do not have those basic protections to which all workers are entitled.

I go back to the example of tragic story of Andy Ferguson, a 22-year-old who died because he was taken advantage of in the context of his workplace.

Some members might ask why these folks do not say no, and that is the danger. That is why so many members are talking about the youth unemployment and underemployment, because in this desperate context that exists, where young people want to get that work and want to get that foot in the door, they are willing to do whatever it takes.

It is all to their credit, but that is where the door opens to abuse. That is why we as legislators have to take that responsibility in hand to ensure this abuse does not happen, that young people are not taken advantage of when they do whatever it takes to eventually get, not even in the context of an internship but using it as a tool, a good paying job in the economic times in which we live.

Private Members' Business

• (1150)

[*Translation*]

This clearly shows that when members talk about youth unemployment, it is directly related to unpaid internships and the work environment because young people will not say no. They will take whatever they can get, and as I said, it is all to their credit. They are prepared to work and do what it takes to get a good job and at least get a start on their careers.

I am repeating myself, but as legislators, we have the fundamental responsibility of ensuring their basic safety and protection. After all, that is the primary mandate of any government.

The Conservative members made this recommendation at the Standing Committee on Finance, where they worked with us to make a change.

Why then are they not supporting my colleague's bill? It would be a step in the right direction in that it would at least provide some protection for our young people, the next generation, who just want to work and get good experience so that they can fully contribute to our economy. I think that is extremely important.

I am very pleased to support my colleague's bill. There is still a bit of time left before the vote. I hope that the Conservative members will remember what they said at the Standing Committee on Finance and that they will see the light.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Since no other members wish to speak, I now invite the hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles for her right of reply. The hon. member has five minutes.

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to today's debate on my Bill C-636, which would apply the same employment protection standards to unpaid interns that salaried employees get and establish clear rules and conditions governing unpaid internships.

In an article published in *Le Soleil* on June 18, 2014, entitled "Prévenir le *cheap labor*", Brigitte Breton wrote:

Ottawa had to tighten the rules for its temporary foreign worker program because employers were misusing it to the detriment of local workers. It now has to be vigilant about unpaid interns by becoming aware of the role they play in businesses and protecting them from abuse.

I can tell the House that Canadians who commented on my private member's bill shared that same sentiment.

I invite my colleagues from all parties to vote in favour of this bill. In my five-minute right of reply, I will respond to some of the arguments that were made during the debate.

First of all, according to the Conservatives, the bill will prevent employers from hiring unpaid interns who are new Canadians and those transitioning to new careers, thus taking away a stepping stone to a new job. Essentially, this is the argument behind the idea that there should be no limits on the use of unpaid internships and that they should not necessarily have an educational value. I disagree. Employees, whether they are new Canadians or people transitioning to a new career, must most definitely be paid if they are doing work that benefits an employer. Entry-level jobs must not become unpaid internships. I completely disagree with my colleague from Cumber-

land—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, who says that immigrants should not be paid for the work they do.

The Conservative members raised another concern, namely that the bill does not include a definition of training. However, there is already a common law definition of training in the Canada Labour Code, which already refers to training outside of internships. On the face of it, I would not oppose a clarification of what constitutes unpaid training, and we could study this if the bill is sent to committee.

The Conservatives also claim that the bill would make it easier for employers to stop paying some salaried employees. That is absolutely not true. The bill will in no way increase the use of unpaid internships. On the contrary, it will limit the use of unpaid internships as a replacement for paid work.

Lastly, I want to say that I was so grateful to hear that the Liberal Party will support my private member's bill. Although some Liberal members expressed concerns that this bill could prevent non-profits from hiring unpaid interns, this bill will in no way affect volunteer work. The only sectors that will be affected by my private member's bill will be sectors under federal jurisdiction, such as telecommunications, transportation and banking.

The past has taught us that it is very important to have a framework governing the use of unpaid internships, especially within multinational companies that have no shortage of financial resources to hire staff.

While the Liberals would rather wait for the Conservative government to take action, the NDP knows that now is the time to do something. I hope that my response has clarified some of the points that came up during the debate.

Some witnesses testified in committee. They told us that too many young Canadians are being exploited because there is no federal legislation for unpaid internships. Interns in Canada deserve protection, and now is the time for Parliament to take action.

• (1155)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): 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. Bruce Stanton): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): In my opinion the yeas have it.

Business of Supply

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Pursuant to Standing Order 93(1), the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, April 22, 2015, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

[English]

Mr. Wayne Marston: Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties and I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move that, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Motion No. 587 on genocide recognition standing on the order paper in the name of the member for Mississauga—Streetsville be adopted.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Does the hon. member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Brad Butt: Mr. Speaker, this was a complete shock to me. I was not consulted on this motion. I am glad that the NDP, I am assuming, supports the motion. I wanted to have the opportunity to speak to the motion in the House. It is my motion, after all. I would be delighted to work with the opposition parties to get this motion passed, but I feel that today I am completely caught off guard. I was not consulted in any way on this and I would like the opportunity to speak to my own motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I appreciate the intervention by the hon. member for Mississauga—Streetsville. The House recognizes consent was not given on the motion that the hon. member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek was seeking.

Hon. members will know that it is somewhat common practice that if members seek the unanimous consent of the House on certain questions, it is absolutely at the House's discretion to consider those motions. As for the opportunity for the hon. member for Mississauga—Streetsville to speak to his motion, as he mentioned, I am sure that will be taken up in due course in the normal procedures that the House provides.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1200)

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—COASTAL WATER PROTECTION

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, the recent toxic bunker fuel spill in Vancouver Harbour represents an urgent reminder of the fragility of our coastal waters and, therefore, the government must reverse its cuts to marine safety, oil spill response, and environmental clean-up capacity in Vancouver and elsewhere on the coast of British Columbia by: (a) re-opening the Kitsilano Coast Guard Station; (b) re-opening the recently-closed Ucluelet Marine Communication and Traffic Service

Centre; and (c) halting plans to close the Vancouver and Comox Marine Communication and Traffic Service Centres.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

The toxic bunker fuel spill that occurred in the Vancouver harbour on April 8, 2015 provided a vivid and terrible example of why we need immediate action to restore our Coast Guard services in British Columbia. The federal government must reverse Conservative cuts to marine safety, oil spill response and environmental clean-up capacity in Vancouver and on the west coast.

That is why today New Democrats are calling on the government to take three immediate steps to protect B.C. coasts from future marine emergencies: number one, reopen the Kitsilano Coast Guard Station; number two, reopen the recently closed Ucluelet Marine Communications and Traffic Services centre; and number three, halt plans to close the Vancouver and Comox MCTS centres.

The federal government is responsible for keeping Canada's coasts safe, secure and free of environmental contamination through the implementation of measures to prevent, detect, prepare for and respond to spills from ships in Canada's marine environment. In 2010, the Auditor General warned that Canada's oil spill response capacity was inadequate and that we are not prepared to deal with even a moderate-sized spill. However, over the last four years, rather than increase resources needed to respond to marine emergencies on B.C.'s coast, the Conservative government has shut down the Kitsilano Coast Guard base, closed B.C.'s oil spill environmental response centre and is in the process of shutting three of five Marine Communications and Traffic Services centres, all while marine traffic is increasing.

Experts warned of the negative impact that cutting resources to organizations tasked with responding to environmental incidents on the B.C. coast would have. Now these warnings have become a reality. The closure of the Kitsilano Coast Guard station had a direct impact on the Coast Guard's ability to stage a quick response to last week's spill. Prior to its closure, the Kitsilano Coast Guard station was one of the most active in the country, servicing Canada's largest and busiest port. The reckless decision to close the Kitsilano Coast Guard station was an abdication of the federal government's responsibility to protect Canada's coastal waters, and is already undermining the Coast Guard's abilities to respond to spills and maritime emergencies on B.C.'s coast.

Business of Supply

According to the former Kitsilano Coast Guard base commander, Fred Moxey, a single rubber boat was initially deployed on Wednesday night as the Richmond Coast Guard station's hovercraft is not able to travel on an oil slick. However, the Kitsilano base, if it were still operational, would have been able to respond to the incident in six minutes with the proper equipment to contain a spill from spreading across the water and onto the shoreline. Instead, there was a six-hour delay in placing booms around the leaking tanker to mitigate further dispersal and contamination. The delayed response was unacceptable, and unnecessarily risky for the environmental protection of our coastal waters.

It comes on the heels of the Conservatives' refusal to engage with the many stakeholders who warned the government about the strategic importance of the Kitsilano base prior to its closure on February 19, 2013. At that time, Vancouver's fire chief, John McKearney, stated, "This closure has put the safety of our harbour and waterways at risk." Shockingly, the government failed to consult with the provincial government, the City of Vancouver, Coastal Health and marine emergency response partners like the Vancouver police and fire departments and Jericho Sailing Centre.

Since the closure of the Kitsilano Coast Guard station, Canada's New Democrats have repeatedly raised concerns in Parliament about the impact the closure would have on marine emergency response. Until now, the government has stubbornly refused to reverse the closure despite calls from the opposition, environmentalists and first responders who warned the closure would increase response times, leading to increased risk on B.C.'s coast.

It is also important to highlight that while the closure of the Kitsilano station saves just \$700,000 a year, the Conservatives are in the midst of spending \$7.5 million advertising tomorrow's budget before it has even been approved by Parliament.

• (1205)

This bill also "underscores a major gap in research and preparedness because of federal cuts to science programs", said an expert with the Vancouver Aquarium. According to Peter Ross, director of the Vancouver Aquarium's ocean pollution research program, because of Conservative cuts, "there is no cohesive long-term monitoring of British Columbia's coastal ecosystems. The lack of baseline data makes it difficult for scientists to assess the spill's impact".

New Democrats are also deeply concerned that the closure of the marine communication and traffic services centres put Vancouver and other areas of B.C.'s coast further at risk. The scheduled closure of the Vancouver MCTS station threatens the ability to prevent shipping accidents and weakens the capacity to provide a rapid response. Currently, the Regional Marine Information Centre in Vancouver, part of the MCTS program which is scheduled for closure, maintains the responsibility for alerting responders and government agencies so that an immediate response can be mobilized. However, because of Conservative cuts, this vital service is also being closed, and no replacement system or training has yet been put in place. This means that if a spill happened in May of this year, there would be no system in place to alert authorities.

The cuts that will shutter this important notification centre are part of broader cuts to the west coast marine safety network by the

Conservative government. When the MCTS centres close next month, the Coast Guard will no longer provide anchorage assistance to ships, including oil tankers. BC Coast Pilots and Port Metro Vancouver have opposed the elimination of anchorage assistance by the Coast Guard. The serious nature of these cuts was explained by Allan Hughes, western director of Unifor Local 2182, who stated:

When a serious pollution incident happens, quick notification and response is key to limiting the spread of pollutants. The...government is dismantling the west coast's prevention and emergency response system that has been in place for decades.

Imagine if the spill had been much worse. Imagine if it had been an oil tanker or an issue at the refinery in the Burrard Inlet. The situation would have been devastating. A crude oil spill in the Lower Mainland would be catastrophic. It would not only affect the coast but the communities and economies that depend on these environments.

B.C.'s coastal regions are a vital part of the economy, providing employment and a way of life for millions of people. Our coastal waters support a vibrant fishery, tourism, and recreation. They also provide habitat for a variety of wildlife, including numerous species of fish, shellfish, seabirds and mammals, all of which contribute to the economic, social, and environmental well-being of Canadians. Ship-source spills of pollutants, such as oil and other hazardous substances, are one of several sources of marine pollution with the potential to negatively impact commercial and recreational use on our coast. That is why it is important to take a proactive approach to the management of our coastal waters.

British Columbians deserve to be represented by members of Parliament who are not afraid to stand up for what is right. Conservative MPs across British Columbia have quietly let these disgraceful closures happen, but they now have an opportunity to do the right thing by voting in favour of this motion. The choice is clear. They can either stand up for west coast marine safety or turn their backs and vote against this important motion.

In conclusion, before British Columbians are forced to respond to another oil spill on our coast, the government must immediately reopen the Kitsilano Coast Guard station, restore operations at B.C.'s marine communication and traffic services centres, and work with the province, municipalities, health authorities, and the network of marine safety responders to quickly put in place a modernized spill response plan for British Columbia. Anything less would jeopardize the long-term prosperity of our west coast.

Business of Supply

•(1210)

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for New Westminster—Coquitlam for his eloquent speech, but even more importantly I would like to thank him for his strong advocacy for the B.C. coast and for standing up for British Columbians in the House of Commons. He has done a remarkable job in highlighting the problems with what has been a reckless and irresponsible policy by the Conservative government.

I would like to ask him about the comments that have been made by current and former members of the coast guard, like Captain Fred Moxey, who was a former base commander at Kitsilano, about the government's reckless drive to shut down marine safety on the coast of British Columbia.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the question and for the work he has done as well, in speaking out on this issue over the years. His riding of Burnaby—New Westminster is right next to my riding on the Fraser River. We on the west coast know the vital role that our coast guard plays in immediately responding to disasters: oil spills or those of a human nature.

He asked what the coast guard officials had to say about this oil spill and the response. Fred Moxey, a former commander at the Kitsilano Coast Guard base was there for over 30 years; I believe it was 34 years. He said there was adequate equipment to respond to the spill within six to ten minutes. He feels there could have been a boat dispatched from strategically located Kits Bay. From where the ship was, they could have had a boat there within six minutes. They could have had the equipment to contain the spill much quicker than the six hours it took the private company to finally get the booms around the ship.

There are many other coast guard officials who are quietly saying that this was an unacceptable response and that we need to do better.

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would express to my colleague that that is plain nonsense. The Kitsilano station was a search and rescue station, not an environmental response station. It had a small amount of equipment that could be used in search and rescue operations, for example, if a sailboat overturned and its fuel tanks were leaking into the water. It had a small amount of equipment to handle something like that. It certainly was not and never would have been asked to respond to an incident like the one with the grain carrier.

•(1215)

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Mr. Speaker, this is the typical response we are receiving from the Conservative government. It is not listening to our marine safety experts, who have over years warned that this station is absolutely outfitted for search and rescue response and is also able to play a vital role in quick response to oil spills and spills of toxins and contaminants.

Fred Moxey pointed that out. Even Commander Girouard admitted that a fast response by the Kitsilano Coast Guard station could have played a role in preventing the further spill of what was carried out over 12 km from the ship.

It is this kind of response from the government that has marine spill experts and others who care about the ocean and our ecosystem stymied as to why it would disregard the importance of that station and the vital strategic location it could play in a quick response.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the member for New Westminster—Coquitlam, for bringing the motion forward.

We have just heard the stupefying nonsense from the Conservative side. We have had a reaction right across party lines in British Columbia. The foolishness and the recklessness with which Conservatives have handled this file, shutting down marine safety on the west coast of British Columbia, is simply unbelievable.

To start off I think I need to quote from a strong colleague of the Conservatives. The premier of British Columbia who has been a supporter of the Conservatives in the past, following an almost catastrophe in English Bay, said:

Somebody needs to do a better job of protecting this coast, and the coast guard hasn't done it.... It is totally unacceptable that we don't have the spill response that we require here and the federal government needs to step up.

It is not just the premier; it is all members of the legislative assembly. It is mayors in the area of the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, on Vancouver Island and up the coast. It is city councils, school boards, people throughout British Columbia, who are speaking up. The only reason that British Columbia Conservative MPs have not heard the very strong reaction from the British Columbia public is that they seem to be willing to listen to the Prime Minister and not to British Columbians.

On the official opposition NDP side of the House, we believe that as members of Parliament we should be listening to our constituents, and that is what we do each and every day.

We have heard from former coast guard officials of their very clear indications of what should have happened when that spill started. My colleague mentioned Captain Fred Moxey, who pointed out that a 47-foot ship named the *701*, equipped with oil recovery tanks, skimmers, a boom—everything that could have been used to quickly respond and contain the bunker fuel leaking from the cargo ship—has been up on blocks for the last two years.

The ship is there. However, the reckless Conservative government has made reckless cuts. It always seems to find money for its pet projects, but when it comes to marine safety, it would prefer to have a boat up on blocks rather than have that boat, with all of the equipment that goes with it, out there containing the boom.

What Captain Fred Moxey said on April 12, I think is very indicative of how reckless the current government has been:

The crew was trained and the ship was ready around the clock for a first attack.... Had the base been open and the crew on duty, they would have been out into English Bay in a matter of minutes."

That is from somebody in the coast guard, Captain Fred Moxey, who has rendered terrific service to the province of British Columbia and to our country.

Business of Supply

However, he is not the only one speaking out. I only have 10 minutes; I could be spending literally hours listing former coast guard workers, former coast guard leaders, who have all spoken out against how the government has been so reckless.

We have also heard from a retired Canadian Coast Guard captain, Tony Toxopeus. He maintains that the English Bay spill could have been contained within half an hour if the Kitsilano base were still operating. Toxopeus, who worked out of Kitsilano, said that the base was equipped with a purpose-built oil pollution response vessel, 300 metres of self-inflating boom, and other equipment. Crews were trained regularly to deal with oil spill response.

As soon as we saw there was bunker (oil) we would have hit the alarm button and got moving.... We could have backed the boat in, towed the boom there and be alongside the boat in 30 minutes."

This does not come from Conservative MPs speaking up to try to defend a reckless and irresponsible decision by the Prime Minister; this comes from coast guard officials who were active for decades in the coast guard. They understand marine safety. They understand how to act in environmental emergencies. Yet the Conservatives seem to say "Well, we just want to brush over this. We want to paper this over. We're hoping British Columbians don't wake up to how irresponsible we've been". They are ruining coastal safety.

However, the leader of the official opposition and the NDP caucus are putting forward a motion today that all Conservative MPs for British Columbia should be voting on. We are going to repair the damage that the current government has done to the coast and to emergency environmental safety in British Columbia .

• (1220)

If we do not do it with this motion, if the Conservatives actually have the gall to vote against what are commonplace, common-sense policies, British Columbians will have another opportunity on October 19, 2015 to decide who will govern, who will make those decisions on the floor of the House of Commons, and who will bring forward those sensible policies. I would say to the Conservative members of Parliament from British Columbia that they have a chance today to fix what they broke, but if they do not, British Columbians will have their say on October 19.

I hope that they are willing to listen to British Columbians today, because the reality is that we have seen an unprecedented outpouring of concern from right across British Columbia and particularly from the communities in the Lower Mainland that I have proudly represented in the House since 2004. The communities in my riding of Burnaby—New Westminster are tied to the coast, as are communities such as Port Moody, Coquitlam, and Vancouver and communities up the Sunshine Coast and on Vancouver Island. They do not get the line from the Conservatives that this spill was fortunately not too large. We are still dealing with the fallout from this bill. The beaches are still closed. The health advisory is still out.

We can point to the leaks coming from the Nestucca barge in 1988. As members know, the Nestucca leaked bunker oil into Washington waters. There was an initial cleanup. Later on, because bunker fuel sinks, that oil started washing up on the shores of Vancouver Island. The idea that because much of the surface oil has been cleaned up we are somehow out of the woods is simply an irresponsible notion. We will not know for weeks, maybe months,

whether that bunker fuel has sunk and whether it will pollute other coasts in the area further away from English Bay, perhaps out in the Salish Sea or up the coast.

We do know that there is an enormous economic loss. We are talking about industries worth billions of dollars to the B.C. economy. For the Conservatives to be so reckless and to say that it does not matter if the seafood industry is harmed, the wilderness tourism industry is harmed, or tourism is harmed overall is simply a reckless and foolish notion.

What are some of these other voices that have stepped forward. One is the harbourmaster from the relatively small city of Bellingham, just south of the 49th parallel. Fortunately, it has not been impacted by the foolish and reckless cuts made by the Conservative government. The harbourmaster of the Port of Bellingham said he would immediately attempt to seal a leak on a vessel like that and to have a boom in place within the hour. Harbourmaster Kyle Randolph said that he was surprised that it had taken officials in Vancouver so long to contain it. He said, "my first obligation is to stop that. The response is absolutely key".

There have been letters in the local newspapers and online journals as well.

Gerald Moores, a former captain in the Coast Guard, said the following:

When the [Conservative] government closed Kitsilano Coast Guard Station two years ago, the bogus justification was that money would be saved while maintaining a volunteer service.

It is time to examine the true costs of the station's closing, and the attempts to replicate its efficiencies with a cadre of well-meaning but inexperienced volunteers.... Vancouver taxpayers should know why marine pollution and search and rescue increasingly involve police and fire departments. My comments are founded in a seafaring career of 50 years, 36 of them with the Canadian Coast Guard.

Sara Kalis Gilbert said this in regard to the Kitsilano coast guard:

The buildings remain intact, the public outcry is growing.

She is requesting that the Prime Minister take into consideration all of these closures for tomorrow's budget.

That is really the issue. Tomorrow there is a budget. Will the Conservatives fix what they wrecked? Will they restore what they closed? Will they assure safety on the coast of British Columbia, or will they continue to have the reckless, irresponsible cuts that have contributed to growing public outrage in British Columbia?

We are asking the Conservative MPs from British Columbia to stand up and vote with the official opposition NDP for marine safety in British Columbia. These are common-sense measures. We believe that they should stand up for British Columbia and support them.

Business of Supply

• (1225)

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, although he was mostly reading from a newspaper. Is he aware that in the two years since February 2013, when the Kitsilano search and rescue station was closed, there have been 851 search and rescue operations in response to distress incidents in the greater Vancouver area? They were responded to by the station at Sea Island as well as by the inshore rescue boat HMCS *Discovery*, and all 851 were responded to successfully within 30 minutes.

Could he clarify why the NDP members, with all their bravado, have consistently voted against all the additions and all the changes we have made to the Coast Guard, with \$5.2 billion in fleet improvements and so on?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I will clarify. Yes, we said no to closing the Kitsilano Coast Guard station, because we knew that it was reckless and irresponsible. We said no to closing the Ucluelet Marine Communications and Traffic Service Centre, because we knew that it was irresponsible, and we are saying no to closing the Vancouver and Comox Marine Communications and Traffic Service centres, because that would be irresponsible, particularly in light of the near disaster two weeks ago. We also have opposed the government's attempt to shut down environmental emergency programs right across the country. Yes, we say no to those kinds of reckless and irresponsible policies.

This is a wake-up call to Conservative MPs from British Columbia. Do they represent British Columbia in the House of Commons, or do they represent the Prime Minister's Office to British Columbia? They are going to have to decide, and they are going to have to decide pretty quickly, because the vote is this evening.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on the point that the Prime Minister has not been successful in dealing with what are important issues for Canadians. This is an excellent example of that. I appreciate the motion the New Democrats have brought forward. Whether hearing it from my Atlantic colleagues or from colleagues from British Columbia, we have genuine concerns that the government has dropped the ball in dealing with safety and environmental issues, particularly along our coastlines.

Could the member elaborate on what he believes is general neglect by the Conservative government in making sure that our coastlines are served adequately enough that we can provide assurances in terms of safety—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the NDP official opposition MPs will be making the case all day that the reckless, foolish, and irresponsible cuts by the Conservative government are putting our coast in British Columbia, a coast that generates billions of dollars in economic activity, in peril. There is no doubt.

I have a question for the member for Winnipeg North. I recall that when I first came into the House in 2004, when the Liberals were in power, we were pressing them to bring in legislation to ban oil tankers off the north coast of British Columbia. The New Democrats brought that forward, and the Liberal government at the time said no,

it was not going to legislate that ban on oil tankers off the north coast. That is what British Columbians want. Why did the Liberals fail British Columbians when they were in power?

• (1230)

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we just heard from the parliamentary secretary, who said that the Kitsilano Coast Guard station did not have the equipment to respond to the oil spill that happened recently. I am wondering if he is aware that former Kitsilano Coast Guard commander Fred Moxey is willing to write an affidavit to say that the government is not telling the truth about having the equipment or the training the Coast Guard could have provided for that oil spill response. Is he aware of this?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for New Westminster—Coquitlam for his question and for all his activism in protecting the B.C. coast.

The reality is that retired captain Fred Moxey is highly regarded and highly respected throughout British Columbia. He says that the equipment is sitting there. The boat is actually up on blocks. That is a boat that could have contained this oil spill. It could have prevented that bunker oil from sinking down and going goodness knows where throughout the coast of British Columbia.

I believe captain Fred Moxey every time he speaks. I do not believe that the government stands up for British Columbians. I do not believe its explanations and excuses about the near disaster that happened two weeks ago today.

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I wish to note that I will be sharing my time today with the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country.

Our government's policy is always the safety of Canadians and the protection of the environment. Our government has taken steps to improve our marine safety system through unprecedented investments in the Canadian Coast Guard. As well, we are committed to ensuring that the companies that cause marine pollution incidents pay for any of the clean-up operations that may be required.

In response to the MV *Marathassa* fuel leak, the Canadian Coast Guard, Transport Canada, the Province of British Columbia, and their partners have been working together to clean up the pollution and protect the marine environment. Due to their dedicated work, these efforts have been successful. In fact, this past weekend, the City of Vancouver announced that many of the beaches are now reopened.

As the Canadian Coast Guard Commissioner has repeatedly said, the response to the *MV Marathassa* fuel leak was immediate, measured, coordinated, and effective. I would like to acknowledge and express my gratitude to the dedicated service of the men and women of the Canadian Coast Guard, who tirelessly work every day to keep mariners safe across Canada. I hope everyone in this House would join me in congratulating them.

Business of Supply

As a British Columbian, I would like to extend specific thanks to all the Coast Guard personnel involved in the containment and clean-up efforts associated with this unfortunate incident. There has been a lot of speculation from different sources regarding the Coast Guard's response to this leak. I would like to provide the house with a summary of the events, as reported by the Canadian Coast Guard.

Although this operation has been publicly discussed by both the commissioner and the assistant commissioner of the Coast Guard, I believe it is important that we take the time to appreciate the hard work that went into those early hours of the operation.

In the early evening of April 8, at around 5:00 p.m., the Canadian Coast Guard received a report of a potential oil slick around the bulk carrier *MV Marathassa*. Within minutes of receiving this notification, the information was shared with Port Metro Vancouver. A pollution report was then issued to inform DFO, Environment Canada, Transport Canada, the Joint Rescue Command Centre, Port Metro Vancouver, and the provincial authority, Emergency Management BC. Within 30 minutes of receiving the notification, vessels were sent to investigate the report.

During the early evening, various sources were reporting a non-recoverable spill. However, as the Canadian Coast Guard and its partners performed additional assessments, they determined that the situation was more serious and took action.

By 9:25 p.m., Western Canada Marine Response Corporation, the certified organization responsible for cleaning up marine pollution, was on the scene, and a Canadian Coast Guard incident commander had taken charge.

During the overnight hours, the Canadian Coast Guard and its partners were able to determine which of the many vessels in the harbour was the source of the fuel. The team carried out skimming in the dark and secured the boom to the *MV Marathassa* to contain the leak. Even before most British Columbians had woken up, the boom was secure and completely surrounded the vessel.

By 9:00 a.m. the next day, the Coast Guard had established a unified command with its many response partners involved, including the province and the City of Vancouver. As the Coast Guard Commissioner has repeatedly stated, within the first 36 hours, 80% of the pollution had been recovered.

As we can clearly see, the Coast Guard and its partners took strong and deliberate action to address the spill. They engaged the proper response authority with the capacity and expertise to do the job and ensured that the appropriate containment and clean-up efforts were under way.

I will now address the specific motion brought forward today. First, I would like to respond to views expressed about the closure of the Kitsilano search and rescue station. The Coast Guard Commissioner has confirmed that this station never provided these types of environmental response operations, and its presence would not have changed how the Coast Guard responded to this incident.

In fact, the assistant commissioner of the Coast Guard for British Columbia has also clearly stated that the Kitsilano station would not have made an iota of difference to the response. I encourage the

opposition to listen to the experts when it comes to managing this kind of marine incident.

Second, I would also like to take this opportunity to address the point raised by the opposition regarding the modernization of our Marine Communications and Traffic Service Centres. Again, their arguments miss the mark.

● (1235)

The modernization of these centres will in fact strengthen the effectiveness of the services the Coast Guard provides to mariners and improve work efficiency for the officers at the station. These strategically-located centres will have state-of-the-art technology. As a result, equipment will be more reliable, disruptions will be reduced and service coverage will remain the same.

The reorganization of these centres has absolutely no bearing on the *MV Marathassa* response and will only improve marine safety through the addition of improved technology. Suggestions otherwise are simply ill-informed.

I encourage opposition members to focus their attention instead on our government's support of the polluter pays principle, which requires the polluter to pay the full cost associated with an oil spill cleanup, including third-party damages. Members could also focus on the fact that the Coast Guard maintains environmental response equipment in more than 80 sites across the country and has over 75 trained and experienced environmental response personnel available to mobilize, monitor, advise and take action in addressing pollution incidents and protecting the marine environment.

I would also remind hon. members that our government's economic action plan 2012 provided \$5.2 billion for the Canadian Coast Guard's fleet renewal plan to ensure that the Coast Guard had the tools it needed to get the job done.

The Coast Guard has clearly stated that it would work with its partners to conduct a complete and thorough review of how the incident was handled and where operations could be improved. Like always, the work that takes place after an incident of this nature will help improve our nation's already robust incident command system and marine safety in general.

As a resident of British Columbia, I fully understand and share the concern expressed over the *MV Marathassa*'s pollution into English Bay. However, it is simply not correct to state that these unrelated organizational changes to the Canadian Coast Guard are somehow linked to the specific response to this incident. As I have stated, the Canadian Coast Guard leadership has been crystal clear in this regard. I suggest that hon. members of the opposition listen to those who know marine safety best.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to again thank the hard-working men and women of the Canadian Coast Guard and all the marine safety partners for their tireless work to keep Canadians and the marine environment safe.

Business of Supply

• (1240)

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on what the parliamentary secretary said about consulting with experts. Could he specifically mention which marine emergency response partners the government consulted with, not just in the last few weeks or days, but in the last number of years on oil spill response, specifically relating to the closure of the Kitsilano Coast Guard station?

When the Conservatives closed the Kitsilano Coast Guard station, the province of British Columbia, the city of Vancouver, and the Vancouver fire and police stations were opposed. Mariners said that it was an outrageously bad decision, reminiscent of 20 years prior.

What marine experts did the government consult?

Mr. Randy Kamp: Mr. Speaker, as I think my colleagues knows, it is the responsibility of the Canadian Coast Guard to make decisions as it consults with partners and those in the field. The Canadian Coast Guard has its own marine search and rescue experts. In fact, considerable work was done to analyze this new arrangement to provide search and rescue services in the greater Vancouver area, with Sea Island being the primary source of services.

Also, the HMCS *Discovery* inshore rescue boat station was put in place as well as the services of the Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue, which is a volunteer organization. In fact, I think the member will find, as I mentioned earlier in my comments, that the system has worked very well.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government and, in particular, the minister and some of his colleagues need to acknowledge and take responsibility for their poor actions with regard to what has taken place. We need to realize that after the spill, it took over 12 hours to communicate it to the city of Vancouver. Then once the city found out about it, it took an hour to start taking some action.

Does the minister believe the government did not do its job in alerting or advising the city of Vancouver quickly enough, or does he believe the lapse in time of 12 hours was an adequate or acceptable before the city of Vancouver should have been notified?

Mr. Randy Kamp: Mr. Speaker, that is a valid question. We followed the protocol that was in place at the time. We contacted the province. Because there is more than one municipality involved, not just the city of Vancouver but others, the expectation was, according to the protocol, that it would contact the municipalities that needed to be informed. The commissioner has said that is something we need to look at to see if we need to change that protocol so we do the contacting rather than expect the province to do it.

In fact, the city of Vancouver was contacted before the morning, as has been reported, but we are certainly willing to take a look at that to see if it needs to be improved.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the parliamentary secretary for providing information to the House about the time frame and how the cleanup happened.

How important is it that members of Parliament vote in support of funding for programs to ensure we protect our fragile environment? On one hand, members say that we need to protect it, but when there is opportunity to vote for the necessary funds, the NDP is absent in

its support of funding. If we do not fund programs, they do not happen. How important is it that the NDP provides some wisdom in funding the programs that need to be funded?

• (1245)

Mr. Randy Kamp: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent point. We see this time and again when we bring forward improvements and new funding opportunities. As I mentioned in my comments and as stated in economic action plan 2012, there was a comprehensive plan to improve the Canadian Coast Guard fleet, a \$5.2 billion plan, and the opposition voted against these things. It makes no sense to me.

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in an Earth Day talk I heard on April 17, Chaplain Jason van Veghel-Wood asked the question, “What is the 800 pound gorilla on the basketball court?” The question refers to something that is large and important, something that everyone should know about, but which is somehow ignored as people get distracted by less important things.

The question related to a famous psychology experiment by Chabris and Simons in which students were instructed to watch a video in which they were to count the number of times persons passed a basketball back and forth. The students were good at counting the number of passes, but when questioned, half of them failed to notice that during the game, a man dressed in a gorilla suit actually crossed the basketball court, thumped his chest and spent 10 seconds on the video screen.

As we consider the motion brought by my NDP friend this morning, I ask, Is there a gorilla on the court? Are we missing something more important than this specific question being posed today? Let me come back to that question in a moment.

As a British Columbian, like many others, I am concerned about the fuel leak from the *Marathassa* in English Bay. However, as a maritime nation, Canada relies on marine transportation for the success of our economy. In fact, I have heard that most Canadians do not realize this, but 92% of Canada's economy floats on salt water. Think of the grain, the natural resources, the finished materials that we ship overseas or that we receive by sea, and B.C. ports handle almost 40% of Canada's international marine traffic, more than any other province.

Business of Supply

Our government is focused on creating jobs and economic growth. A thriving maritime trade sector continues to be a key pillar of Canada's economic opportunity, but safe and efficient marine transportation does not happen by itself. The dedicated men and women of the Canadian Coast Guard spend day and night ensuring safe navigation so Canadians from coast to coast to coast can enjoy the quality of life we are so fortunate to have in Canada.

The Coast Guard accomplishes this important mandate by having highly trained men and women in its ranks, specialized equipment at the ready and a fleet of over 115 vessels strategically deployed across the country. In addition, it maintains strong partnerships with other organizations, such as the Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue in B.C., which has proud and effective stations and vessels in at least five parts of the riding I represent, West Vancouver Squamish, Gibsons, Pender Harbour and Half Moon Bay.

For friends and neighbours who believe that my riding is the most beautiful place on earth, we look to people like them to keep it that way. In other words, we British Columbians have a personal stake in maintaining the pristine nature of our coastline.

Events of the past two weeks have shown that we do have a world-class system in place. Reasonable people agree that does not mean perfection, but what does it mean? What would we expect to have in place in a world-class response system? We would expect the minimization of oil spills in the first place, a containing of the leak, committed people there to respond, top communications networks in place, good coordination among the various parties, oil out of the water fast and a minimizing of injury to waterfowl, fish, plants and humans, the whole ecosystem.

What did we see in the response to the *Marathassa* oil spill? We saw newly implemented regulations that govern foreign vessels that require them, within 96 hours of entering our waters, to advise what is their emergency response plan. We saw 2700 litres of bunker fuel spilled into the water. We saw a Coast Guard boat in the water within an hour and coordination among a vessel of convenience, aerial surveillance and the Coast Guard. We saw the Coast Guard working through the night to boom the spill. Eighty per cent of the oil was collected within 36 hours, and over 95% within four days, leaving just 0.3 litres in the water.

Yes, there were beaches closed, but there were hard-working trained people who were there to clean those beaches by hand. We saw a wonderful populace in British Columbia, people who take these things seriously for our environment, our tourism and our very identity as British Columbians. Thanks to our Conservative government, we saw polluter pays law that the company and its insurer will pick up the tab, not Canadian taxpayers.

Contrary to much of the speculative comments made by opposition and others following the *Marathassa* incident, the Coast Guard has been clear that its response was not affected in any way by the former Kitsilano base. This fact has been repeatedly stated by both the commissioner of the Coast Guard and the assistant commissioner. The Kitsilano station was a search and rescue station, not an environmental response station, and was therefore not equipped to conduct an operation of the magnitude required during this incident.

● (1250)

Certified environmental response organizations have the capacity and expertise to respond to these types of emergencies and, as per protocol, it was one of these organizations that was contracted by the Coast Guard.

We saw four pillars of preparation in place, investment by the government in maritime safety that paid off.

First were the area response plans. In B.C., the Coast Guard maintains marine pollution response equipment in three major centres, namely Prince Rupert, Richmond and Victoria, as well as equipment caches in 12 other communities. These caches contain a variety of response equipment, including booms, skimmers, storage tanks, protective gear vessels and other supporting equipment in order to handle a wide range of situations.

The environmental response program maintains a duty officer presence 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. These duty officers are the first line of defence to marine pollution incidents, and ensure that all reports of marine pollution are investigated and that an appropriate response is undertaken. When the Coast Guard needs the support of certified environmental response organizations, like the Western Canada Marine Response Corporation as in this incident, it can do so through its emergency contracting authority.

Second were the navigation aids. Our government has modernized our Marine Communications and Traffic Services centres. This modernization project is replacing the Coast Guard's current, outdated marine communications technology with a state-of-the-art platform that will improve the safety of those at sea.

Third, we have seen improved transport regulations, like the polluter pays principle that I have already referred to.

Fourth, as was discussed by the parliamentary secretary, there has been an expansion of the Coast Guard fleet. Since 2009, the government has delivered 9 mid-shore patrol vessels and 11 smaller vessels, including the pollution response vessels that support the environmental response program in B.C. Going forward, our Conservative government has committed over \$5 billion to build more Coast Guard vessels, many at Seaspán, in the riding I represent.

What are we seeking when we talk about a world-class response system? Remember, excellence is not the same as perfection. While we had a world-class response, it does not mean that we cannot do better.

Business of Supply

What would have prevented the oil spill in the first place? Maybe there were preventive measures that should have been in place. The district of Sechelt, in the riding I represent, has called for an independent investigation. We need to be committed to independent, objective reviews if we are to adhere to world-class standards in what we do.

Yes, perhaps there are better protocols that could improve the communications systems. The Coast Guard has already committed to an independent review, as discussed by Commissioner Jody Thomas on CBC last week.

In conclusion, I think the Coast Guard people who work so hard and efficiently, the clean-up crew and people who worked to clean the beaches, and the concerned public, people like Mr. O'Dea, the boater who alerted the Coast Guard in the first place.

However, if we ask the wrong question, we will get the wrong answer every time. The NDP in this case is focusing on too narrow a question. It is a question about the installation that was at Kitsilano. What is the 800-pound gorilla on the court? Is it the provisions of one base or another? I say no. We have to take this to 30,000 feet if we are truly committed to an excellent environment and an excellent economy. If the goal is to score cheap political points on an unacceptable incident, then we can look at a policy decision that focuses on specific installations, but the installations are not the resources on which we need to call to attain a best-in-class result for the environment and the economy.

On Earth Day, a billion people will celebrate the 45th annual event. Yes, we are connected to one another and to our environment. When it comes to our government's promotion of the economy and jobs, we all know that this may mean an increase in vessel traffic in English Bay, Howe Sound and up and down the coast. Like many British Columbians who care about jobs and the economy, we accept the presence of these vessels in our waters, but only in the event of world-class marine safety.

In our pursuit of excellence for our country, we must not fall into polarized, mind-numbing, vacuous debate. I ask my friends in the opposition to be open to the true spirit of continuous improvement as we protect our marine safety. I pledge to do that. I know that my colleagues do. We must not say "stop" to our growth as a country. We must say "no" to the stop mentality. I say "yes" to independent, objective, science-based processes that will deliver to get the best guidance in how we keep our economy thriving and our environment the best that it can be.

• (1255)

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his intervention. However, I do not know where to begin on all the claims that he made in his speech. I hope he will start by supporting the motion. The first thing the member from British Columbia can do is listen to the people of British Columbia and support the motion.

I wonder, if his area of West Vancouver was affected by the spill, if his beaches have reopened. Could he talk about the impact to the fishery, marine mammals and wildlife? I know he has been on the fisheries committee. He talked about the spill being 2,700 litres. We do not even know that. That was from a flyover, and we are not sure how big that spill was.

He talked about modernizing a state-of-the-art platform. If he were to actually talk to the Coast Guard he would find that there are still problems with the INNAV system that it has not been able to work out in over eight years. They have to actually use Post-it Notes at times when the system crashes.

The member calls this a world-class response. I wonder if he has spoken to Fred Moxey, the former commander at the Kitsilano Coast Guard station, who will swear an affidavit to say that the government is not telling the truth. The two members that he quoted are not telling the truth about the role the Kitsilano Coast Guard station could play in a strategic response and the training and equipment that it had available at the station.

Mr. John Weston: Mr. Speaker, it is an unfortunate aspect of our adversarial system that when one is in opposition everything has to be a no or a stop or a wrong. What I would love to see is my NDP colleagues coming together and asking "How can we get together and make sure we have a world-class system? How can we conduct the independent review that the Coast Guard has actually committed to doing?"

Yes, I have spoken to the Coast Guard. I spoke to the director of operations as the situation was unfolding. It was he who verified with me that the government has invested in improving the transport regulations, in improving a tailor-made kind of area response system rather than a cookie-cutter system that would apply right across the province. The government has invested in navigation response technology. These things will all be reinforced by an expanded Coast Guard, with over \$5 billion in Coast Guard vessels.

We are not talking about perfection. We are not talking about saying "stop" to an economy. What we are talking about is a commitment to world-class excellence. We have seen it, we are going to continue to see it and yes, we can still improve.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the House has just heard that we have a world-class response system but we should be working together to create a world-class response system. Either we have one or we do not.

The reality facing cities in this situation is very similar to the rail accidents we are seeing across the country. Cities are not notified. In particular, in Vancouver, cities were not notified. Public beaches were kept open even though toxic substances were washing up on the soil. School children were playing in it and there was no notification because cities were not included in the process.

Business of Supply

We have also heard, and this is very concerning, that everything happened within an hour, yet there were private yacht owners reporting the spill, and nothing happened for up to five hours. There was an absence of a proactive approach to safety, one the Conservatives seem to embrace when it comes to terrorism but they walk away from when it comes to public safety in every other aspect in the country. Why is the government so resistant to proactive environmental processes that protect Canadians?

● (1300)

Mr. John Weston: Mr. Speaker, it is a fallacy to say that world-class processes means that we do not ask questions. In fact, a world-class process means a commitment to reviewing what happens after an incident like this and a commitment to make it better.

The Coast Guard has already said that the protocols can be improved in terms of the notification. The Coast Guard notified the province and expected the province to notify the city. That did not happen fast enough and it is going to happen faster next time. That is what world class means.

World class means continuous improvement. It means daring to look at the best practices from around the world to adapt them and make them particularly Canadian. That is what the Coast Guard is committed to doing. That is what our government is committed to doing. We can have an economy that walks and chews gum at the same time. We can have a pristine coastline and we can still export our resources. The opposition would say “no”. It would say “stop”. I say “yes”. We can continue to improve and we will do so. That is what world class is.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague, the member for Vancouver Quadra.

I do not know where to start because right across the street from my constituency office is one of the busiest beaches in Vancouver, Greater Vancouver and British Columbia. It is English Bay. Right now it is still closed. This is a beach where children go to play, where people walk along the water in bare feet. This is where paddlers, canoeists and boaters all just go around as pleasure craft. This is now closed.

It is not as if this is something we have just heard about. I remember standing in this very House in June 2012 when the current government, celebrating the great Canadian Coast Guard, decided to shut down Kitsilano Coast Guard base. In that year, the Conservatives did it without informing the Province of British Columbia, City of Vancouver or the Vancouver city firefighters or police. It was just done. In order to celebrate a wonderful Coast Guard, they cut it.

For the last seven years, since the Conservatives have been in government, there have been cuts of 34% to marine search and rescue and coastal safety. This is a planned series of cuts.

I listen to people talking about world class and what defines world class. What bothers me most is that an oil spill occurred and it took 12 hours to let the City of Vancouver first responders know that there was even an oil spill. It took eight hours to get a boom around that spill so they could try to staunch the surface oil. The City of Vancouver then took 45 minutes to get out there and do what it

needed to do. That is not world-class response from the government. I call it “Mickey Mouse” to say the least. Everyone warned the Conservatives when they cut Kitsilano Coast Guard, and not only Kitsilano Coast Guard but all of the marine communications centres along the coast. We saw Comox and Tofino cut. We are now down to two communications stations along that coast of British Columbia, which is the longest and arguably the most treacherous coastline in Canada. However, the Conservatives have cut all the communications links, leaving only two.

They talked about how it was okay to move the Kitsilano Coast Guard base to Lulu Island. They said it would take no time at all for a hovercraft to get there. It takes 35 minutes for the hovercraft to get from Lulu Island. The Vancouver Coast Guard, which was staffed 24/7, would take five minutes to get to a vessel in distress and had the ability to work with the City of Vancouver on oil spills.

We all know it is not just the City of Vancouver. Today we hear of all of the first nations in that region shutting down their fisheries for shellfish and groundfish. We see people in Vancouver cutting their fisheries and closing down for shellfish and groundfish. I live in a very urban riding, but I have one of the largest fisheries in False Creek in the heart of my riding. All of this is cut. People's ability to be able to fish and earn a living is going to be hampered now at the best fishing season. This is not without warning.

They cut communications centres and a major Coast Guard station, when the response time is so long and they fail to let people know that is not just an oil slick. The current government was warned by the City of Vancouver. I will read what the City of Vancouver stated when this all happened. The City of Vancouver, the police and everyone sent letters begging the government to reinstate the Kitsilano Coast Guard station. The B.C. justice minister of the time for the province said that protecting the fabric and safety of society must be a grounding principle for all budget cuts. Everyone said not to do it, that it will be dangerous.

● (1305)

While everyone loves to say that 80% has been cleaned up, bunker sea fuel is a thick globular tar-filled toxic fuel. The sheen at the top is gasoline, 10% of which evaporates. However, what happens when the big globules sink to the bottom? We know that in bunker sea spills around the world, they are on the beds for decades, where there are groundfish such as smelt, which people in my riding love to fry, dry, and eat a lot. Shellfish, which use their mechanism muscles, et cetera, to sift through the sand and clean whatever is there to get their food, to clean their muscles and themselves, clams, et cetera, will deal with thick globular stuff that has now sunk down to the bed and will be there for decades.

Business of Supply

How will that impact the fisheries? What would happen if this was a small spill? What would happen when we double, as the government plans to do, the number of tankers going through that whole area? What will happen if one of those tankers has an accident and there is a spill? What will happen when it can not even deal with a 2,700 litre spill? This is extraordinary. This is my province and my riding. This is where people earn livings and children play. It is irresponsible and unconscionable when the government has been warned over and over. The Attorney General said that the government needed to improve the communication stations, which it has cut, the resources, which it has cut, and the number of Coast Guard stations. The government needs to do that in order to ensure marine safety. The fifth estate said that Canada had one of the worst search and rescue and marine safety resources in a lot of the industrialized world.

Under the Conservative government, we seem to be spending so much time racing to the bottom to see if we can be the worst. This is where we are. The problem is we are talking about the health and livelihoods of people. We know that Ucluelet is going to be closed at the end of this month. We know there is consideration that the first group out there, after port metro called it in to deal with this oil spill, will be closed soon.

What do we hear when we talk about world class? The premier of British Columbia had a press conference that day and said that this was not world class and that the province would take over search and rescue and marine safety because it could not depend on the federal government to do it. The city of Vancouver was out there in 45 minutes. It has first responders that do not have any authority over the ocean or the sea, but they are prepared to go out there and do what they need to do because we have to protect our beaches for our children's safety, the people who work there, the fisheries and the shellfish.

This is not a small thing and no one is able to estimate what damage will be caused to the fisheries over the next decades. It is a joke to tell people that because we cannot see the spill anymore, it is gone. Canadians are not stupid. Canadians saw what happened in the Gulf of Mexico. We dealt with the *Exxon Valdez*. We know there is still tar and oil at the bottom of the ocean, where shellfish live. We know this will harm a valuable resource in British Columbia.

I have no idea what the government is thinking. It cost \$700,000 a year to keep the Kitsilano Coast Guard base open. That is just once piece of marine safety. Yet the government is about to spend \$7.5 million to advertise the announcement of a budget. It would cost less than 10% of the money it will spend to announce, in a partisan way, its budget, to keep the Kitsilano Coast Guard station open. Where is it written that a government does not put the safety of its people ahead of any other kind of partisan rhetoric in an election year so it can win and be government again? Why does the Conservative government want to be government when it does not give a fig about the people of our country, their safety or security? What does it want to do? Why does it want to be government?

This is extraordinary. I speak for all of the people who signed the thousands of petitions I have tabled in the House, people in my riding in which the spill took place and is creating a major problem for the fisheries and beaches there. All I can say is that the

government should care about the people of our country if it ever wants to be re-elected.

● (1310)

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, I spoke in the House when the government was about to close the Kitsilano Coast Guard station. In voicing that opposition, we heard many speaking out. We also heard in 2010 from the Commissioner on Environmental and Sustainable Development who said that procedures for verifying preparedness for the Coast Guard were not in place, that the responses to ship source spills were poorly documented and that there was no national regime for ship source chemical spills.

The government has asked for input and feedback from experts. People are providing feedback by saying years in advance that we need to make changes, that we need to implement these systems and that we need to include the Kitsilano Coast Guard station. Could the member comment on that?

Hon. Hedy Fry: Mr. Speaker, I recall being there with the hon. member, people from the Coast Guard and concerned people from my riding when the Kitsilano Coast Guard base was closed. We spoke at the same rally protesting this cut.

In my speech I noted that the Auditor General said that we needed to spend more money on resources, communications, personnel and Coast Guard stations in our country if we were to maintain any kind of safety. Canada is surrounded by three oceans, yet we are putting very little resources into dealing with those coastlines.

Earlier my colleague from the north shore said that this was not just about Vancouver. The largest port in our country is in metro Vancouver, right outside my doorstep. Over three million vessels as well as people and various groups come through that port every year. This is not a joke.

I am pleased to speak to the NDP motion today. We will see what happens when people start to suffer or people die. The government members will have that on their heads. They already have enough on their heads, but they do not seem to care.

● (1315)

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her passionate defence of the Kitsilano Coast Guard base and the ecology of our port and beaches. Between the member for Vancouver Centre and myself, on 30 different occasions we raised in questions and in other ways in the House of Commons the issue of the closing of the Coast Guard base.

Business of Supply

We also worked on reaching out to have non-partisan support for keeping the base open. We sent letters to all the Conservative members of Parliament as well as NDP members to band together and pressure the government to do the right thing. I would like to invite the member for Vancouver Centre to discuss the response we received from a neutral non-partisan letter to the Conservative members of Parliament on this issue.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Mr. Speaker, it is a very short answer, none. Conservative members who come from British Columbia and live on a shoreline should be ashamed of themselves. They do not seem to care for their constituents.

When the oil spill occurred, as soon as we heard about it, my leader immediately put out a press release saying that he would reverse the cuts, spend more money in doing exactly what the Auditor General said, which is to spend money on communications stations to bring back the Kitsilano Coast Guard base and any others that may be necessary and to bring back all of the resources that we need. He was right there on the spot. He comes from British Columbia. He understands it and he knows exactly what the problem is and exactly what to do to fix it.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support the opposition motion brought forward by the NDP to restore the Kitsilano Coast Guard base and reverse cuts to the marine communication centres, another very important network of safety and service in the Vancouver area.

What we have heard in the debate today is really exemplified by the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country. He had many fine words about the measures the government had taken, yet in an Orwellian way, they were simply a smoke screen for the fact that the government's cuts to services and budgets have reduced the safety of the environment and the people on the coast.

I am disappointed that the member who should be listening to the concerns of the citizens in his community, with their very important beaches and fisheries, shellfish, crabbing and tourism, is instead defending the undefendable, indefensible actions on the part of the government.

The government has promoted the idea that the health and safety of Canadians is the government's number one priority. That is but a myth unfortunately. The reality is that the health and safety of Canadians and the environment are being sacrificed on the altar of the 2015 election tax breaks for the 15% of families, the wealthiest families who need it the least. That is the reality.

When the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country said that he wanted to take the discussion to 30,000 feet, what actually happened with this oil spill was that air surveillance came out hours before anything happened on the water. That is where we need to take this discussion, onto the ground, onto the water. We need to look at the cuts the government has applied and the consequences of those cuts.

There have been cuts and clawbacks to many of the agencies that serve the safety and security of Canadians and British Columbians, cuts to the RCMP operations on streets which keep Canadians safe from organized crime, drug activities and gangs, many of the kinds of activities that have led to missing and murdered indigenous

women. Cuts have been made to those very kinds of programs intended to protect the safety of Canadians.

Defence is a whole other matter in which the government has the myth that it has increased funding to defence when in fact it has cut its funding substantially in order to offer these tax breaks.

Veteran Affairs has had over \$1 billion clawed back, while veterans have been crying out for services, standing in lineups, not being able to speak to a human being, having to call 1-800 numbers when they are in a crisis from a mental injury like PTSD.

Cuts to the very programs that support the safety and health of Canadians is a hallmark of the government. Marine safety has seen major cuts, from \$82 million for the marine safety program in Transport Canada in 2007 to \$57.5 million by 2015. That is a 37% drop.

Meanwhile, the government claims it is protecting the services and safety of Canadians. That is nonsense. It is reducing services to and the safety of Canadians. This oil spill in Vancouver harbour is an example of the consequences of that.

I will talk a little about my riding of Vancouver Quadra, which is proud to be the home of the Kitsilano Yacht Club, the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club, and the Jericho Sailing Centre.

● (1320)

There are many recreational facilities where Vancouver's mariners come to bring their crafts of all types and sizes to carry out their recreation and exercise, maybe with their paddle boards, kayaks or sail boards on the waters of Vancouver harbour.

At the time the announcement of the shut down of the Kitsilano Coast Guard station was made, there was an uproar in Vancouver among my constituents of Vancouver Quadra and right across the region, but the government ignored them. In fact, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans did something similar to what the Conservatives are doing today, in talking about a laundry list of supposed investments to cover the fact that they were cutting funding for these very important safety measures.

In response to a letter from Mr. Cotter, a key search and rescue volunteer in our city who runs the Jericho Sailing Centre Association, the MP for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission stated:

Coast Guard officials have done extensive analysis of Kitsilano's historical workload...and are confident that the reshaped search and rescue system in place next year, working collectively, will maintain the high level of service currently provided.

Business of Supply

Well, that is absolute balderdash, because we have had incidents already of slow response times where human life was at risk. Now we have the incident of a slow response time that has cost our marine ecosystem and tourism industry and poses a potential health risk to children on our beaches. It is an example of a complete and utter failure on the part of the Coast Guard's response time.

The Liberal leader's response to the Vancouver fuel spill from the *Marathassa* vessel was to say that we must protect the health and safety of the environment and British Columbians, and therefore, the Liberals would restore the full service Coast Guard base in Vancouver and the other marine safety cuts would be built back. That was the Liberal response. What was the Conservatives' response? The minister stood up and said things that were absolutely untrue. That is my deepest concern, that the government and its ministers cannot be counted on to tell the truth to Canadians.

Mr. Cotter brought it upon himself to write and explain exactly how the minister was incorrect. His letter to Minister Moore reads:

Since the April 8 bunker C fuel spill in English Bay, 3km directly north of the Jericho Sailing Centre, I have heard various reports from Canadian Coast Guard officials—

—and the minister—

—stating that the Kitsilano Coast Guard Station was not equipped with pollution response equipment. I know this not to be true, having been familiarized with the Station, and having witnessed their environmental response to several incidents over the 25 years I managed the Jericho Sailing Centre while the Kits Station was open (1988-2013).

Mr. Cotter enclosed photos of the very pollution response vessel that was based at the station, which the minister and current Coast Guard leadership have claimed would not have been available even if the station were open. These falsehoods are to cover the impact of the Conservatives' cuts and the resulting ineffectiveness of response.

I find it hugely concerning that a minister is trying to cover up with inaccurate information what actually happened. At the very least, our constituents deserve an apology from the minister and they deserve the truth about the failure on the part of the Conservative government and the Coast Guard to maintain their health and safety as a key priority.

• (1325)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my friend from Vancouver. In a sense does this not represent a wake-up call for the people in the immediate area, the Lower Mainland and Vancouver? Bunker fuel leaked out of that ship. It is almost impossible to believe how little coordination and urgency there was on behalf of the federal government with respect to this.

There are plans proposed to double the amount of diluted bitumen going through the port in Vancouver. The Conservatives are rapidly pushing Kinder Morgan, northern gateway, and some of these other more perilous projects. What if a spill of significant size were to occur? If this was the response to this order of magnitude spill, what does it tell the people of British Columbia and Canada more broadly about the Conservative government's attention to the importance of protecting our marine ecosystem and the economies and the environment that depend upon it?

Ms. Joyce Murray: Mr. Speaker, the answer is it tells the people of Canada and British Columbia that the Conservative government

cannot be trusted to tell the truth and that the marine response provisions are completely and woefully inadequate to deal with a spill of this or any other size.

I will note that according to the chronology of what happened here, the containment boom around the ship was not in place until 4:30 in the morning. That is almost 12 hours after the mariners first called in this problem.

In contrast, had the Coast Guard still been open, according to Mr. Cotter, the pollution response vehicle would have been on the scene and commenced spill containment within an hour of the report. He stated:

The Osprey and her crew, adept at containing smaller spills, could have commenced clean-up operations immediately. The suggestion by Canadian Coast Guard management—

—and the minister—

—that the response of the Kitsilano Coast Guard Station would not have made a difference from the containment 12 hours later, after 2 tidal flow changes, is beyond believable and simply not credible.

The lack of trust we can have in the Conservative government is a key concern and should be a key concern for all Canadians.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a serious issue. My colleague from Vancouver outlined some of the seriousness related to the oil spill in Vancouver, but this is not a one-off situation. I met with people on the weekend who work for the Coast Guard. They are concerned about cutbacks on the east coast. The Conservative government is failing mariners everywhere with cutbacks relative to the Coast Guard and it is failing communities which could face oil spills and human safety concerns as a result.

What does my hon. colleague think is the reason for the government making these cutbacks that are affecting public safety and the environment in relation to the ability of the Canadian Coast Guard to do its job? Is it simply so that it can save money in that area and put people at risk so that it can give tax breaks to the most wealthy in the country?

• (1330)

Ms. Joyce Murray: Mr. Speaker, I want to confirm my colleague from Malpeque's comments about the cuts to marine data and research.

Peter Ross, the director of Vancouver Aquarium's ocean pollution research program, said that there is no cohesive long-term monitoring of British Columbia's coastal ecosystems and that it is a major gap in research and preparedness because of federal cuts to science programs. He said that the lack of baseline data makes it difficult for scientists to assess the spill's impact. He said, "We think there is a gap in terms of our capacity to understand the ocean, document our impact on the ocean, and consequently that renders very, very difficult our ability to protect the ocean".

Business of Supply

This is right across the country. What is the reason for these egregious cuts to very important research? As my colleague from Malpeque said, it is to be able to offer tax breaks to the families who need it the least, the 15% of wealthiest families to whom the government shamefully will be providing a tax break.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Before we resume debate, I would note that there have been a couple of occasions today where other hon. members' proper names have been mentioned, normally in the context of citations which members were referring to in the course of their remarks. I would just pass along to the House that even in a citation, members should substitute either the title or the riding name of the hon. member in those cases. It is just a note of caution to observe.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time this afternoon. I absolutely take note of your concerns about the use of proper names in the House.

[*Translation*]

It is my pleasure and honour to rise here to speak to this incident. However, this is also difficult for me, since the events of last week affected British Columbia, where I am from, and its citizens.

The oil spill in the port of Vancouver is very troubling, and last week's events should raise a red flag. Because of the cuts made by the Conservatives when it comes to protecting our coastal waters, our economy and our environment, the response capacity following a spill in British Columbia is woefully inadequate.

Furthermore, I am not the only one to say so. In 2010, the Auditor General sent a very clear message about this problem: not only does the Conservative government have no plan to protect our coastal waters, our economy and our marine environment, but it is also putting the oil industry before the people of the west coast.

For me and my fellow British Columbians, the response, or rather the lack of response, on the part of the Conservative government to this situation is unbelievable.

[*English*]

We want to put some of this into some context. In British Columbia, the seafood industry represents \$1.7 billion just to the B.C. economy. Tourism represents \$1.5 billion per year and is growing. Just those two industries, which rely heavily on the importance and protection of our coast, employ 45,000 people across British Columbia. Just on economic terms, one would think the government would be at least a little preoccupied with protecting and maintaining services to our environment.

Let us look at the spill that happened in the port of Vancouver, the busiest and largest port in Canada, on Wednesday, April 8. I am going to walk members through the timeline, because it is important to the context to prove in fact, rather than in spin and hyperbole which we get from the government, the realities on the water and coast in British Columbia, and the results of the cutbacks the Conservatives have made to coastal protection. These include not only the marine safety cuts more broadly, but the shutting down of the oil spill response centre, the marine communications centres and particularly the Kitsilano Coast Guard base. It operates one of the

busiest Coast Guard bases in the country and operates so close to where this incident happened.

When we look at the timeline of events, it is incontrovertible that the Auditor General back in 2010, going back five years now, said:

Emergency management plans are not all up to date

The Canadian Coast Guard lacks a national approach to training, testing its plans, and maintaining its equipment

Procedures for verifying preparedness of the Canadian Coast Guard are not in place

Responses to ship-source spills are poorly documented

There is no national regime for ship-source chemical spills.

That was the wake-up call the Auditor General gave to the government five years ago. In the meantime, what has the government's response been? It has been to cut more money from the Coast Guard and DFO budgets on the west coast, to shut down bases, and at the same time, tragically, to try to force through a much greater expansion of dangerous goods through those very same coastal waters, namely, the Enbridge northern gateway pipeline and the Kinder Morgan pipeline, which together plan to move in excess of 1.5 million barrels a day of diluted bitumen through B.C.'s waters.

Let us look at this bunker spill that came off of this one ship, the *Marathassa*. At five o'clock on Wednesday evening, sailors noticed a sheen across the water in the port in Vancouver. They notified the Coast Guard, which notified Port Metro Vancouver. One would think that when there is an oil spill of some kind in a busy, well-populated place with beaches and tourism and all that goes on, they would be quick to the response.

● (1335)

At six o'clock, an hour later, the port sent out a boat. Three hours later, Western Canada Marine Response Corporation was notified. Four and a half hours later, crews from the WCMRC arrived on the scene. It is not until the next morning, at 4 a.m., that the Coast Guard was able to identify the source of the spill, even though the people in sailboats and pleasure craft who first noticed it told the coast guard and the port exactly where it was coming from. They were sailing right by the ship and could see the plume coming out of it. Twelve hours later is when the coast guard notified the city. One would think there might have been some interest in notifying the City of Vancouver, which has all of these beaches where people swim, and where dog walkers and folks use the very same coastline. It was more than 12 hours later, at 5:53 a.m., that response crews secured a boom around the ship. It was twelve and a half hours later, to be exact.

Business of Supply

That is what the current government calls a world-class response, world-class oil emergency preparedness. That is what the Conservatives have consistently said through all of the debates on these pipelines on the west coast: “Don't worry, Canadians. Don't worry, British Columbians. We have world-class systems”. Well, that was a world-class lie. What we saw in reality with an incident that happened in the immediate vicinity of the city of Vancouver with some millions of people, with all of these ships and supposed equipment ready to handle this kind of thing—that is where the clean-up services are—is that it took them twelve and a half hours to show up and put a boom around it.

The tragedy with not only this type of spill, but also with the millions of barrels of bitumen that the government would like to move through our waters, is that much of it sinks. The securing of booms is one small and partial measure. However, anyone who wants to note that this is a clean-up operation, in the sense that things are cleaned up after the fact, should dissuade themselves of that idea. A 5% to 10% recovery is typical in a diluted bitumen spill. They would call that cleaned up.

I have little kids. If I asked them to clean up their room and they cleaned up somewhere between 5% and 10% of their room and said “Dad, we're done”, I, like I would suggest all parents, would say “Not yet, kids. That's not cleaned up. Now, let's get the rest of the 90% done”.

Now that is a child's room and we can laugh about it. However, when we are talking about 90% or 95% of the spilled oil in one of the incidents going into our environment, embedding itself on our shores, within the fish, within our ecosystems, the impact is not only on the environment but on our economy. As we saw on the gulf coast, and with the *Valdez* spill in Alaska, north of where I live, it can be devastating

We know that this was an accident, but yet an accident almost prescribed in the way that we deal with it, with a government that consistently tears up environmental laws, downgrades and guts the environmental protections within the Fisheries Act, the navigable waters act, and on and on. It then further compounds the problem by not only stealing away our legal protections, but goes further and makes cuts to the very services that we need.

Tomorrow these guys are going to present this balanced budget and people are going to ask how we got there. This is how we got there. This is how they chose to get there, by cutting the basic protections that Canadians need.

The former base commander who operated Kitsilano Coast Guard station, Commander Moxey, said that if the Kitsilano station that had a ship that did this exact thing were available and ready, which it would have been if they did not shut the base, he figures we could have been there in six minutes.

What was the Conservatives' response? It was twelve and a half hours until the boom showed up. This is what they think is protection.

One can only wonder. Even with a coming election and everybody starting to position themselves, only a government of complete arrogance and taking people entirely for granted would suggest this to British Columbians, who deeply care about their coast and the

protection of that coast, not just for us but for all Canadians. Only a government taking people for granted would take these very measures that the government has taken. This is a wake-up call. This was a spill, and it is an important spill. However, in the global scale and what is projected, the threats posed by the Conservatives and their friends in the oil patch would be minor compared with the spills we would experience from a much larger ship.

● (1340)

If this does not wake the government, like the Auditor General's report did not wake it up, like the private members' bills we move here do not wake it up, like the polling of the people of British Columbia cannot wake government members up, then there is a date in the near future, the fall of 2015, when people in B.C. and right across this country will not only wake them up, they will toss them out.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is right on the mark. This is a government that cannot be trusted. It is a government that has done things that are to the detriment of the environment and tourism.

The Conservatives put in place legislation on employment insurance, and then they had to go back and fix it when they did the changes. Tourism is such a big factor with the Algoma Central Railway, and they were willing to throw that to the wolves. It is unbelievable. Millions and millions of dollars would be lost in tourism, and this government has turned a blind eye.

We can look at Lac-Mégantic when it comes to the environment, and railroad safety as well. This is not just about the environment; it is about economic impact and about safety.

I am sure my colleague still has lots to say, but maybe he could elaborate on the changes that the government has made which have been negative when it comes to the lives of Canadians and the survival of communities.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, here are the facts of the matter, and the facts are important. The Conservatives may be entitled to all the opinions they want, but they are not entitled to their own facts. The facts are that there has been a 25% reduction in front-line staff on British Columbia's coast by the Conservatives. That is a choice that they made.

The Conservatives will herald themselves as great managers and stewards of the economy. We have all of the facts there as well: 400,000 lost manufacturing jobs; anemic, atrocious job growth, according to the Governor of the Bank of Canada. Those are the facts of the matter. Conservatives will seek to deny those facts, but what people saw after the spill of last Wednesday in Vancouver is also a series of facts: a government unwilling, uncaring, and unable to respond to something that matters to us. When there is a spill, there should be a response by the government.

Business of Supply

It is the responsibility of the government to protect its citizens. Why the government cannot fathom that, is incapable or unwilling, it does not matter. The facts on the ground remain. This threatens our environment, our economy, our very way of life on British Columbia's coast.

• (1345)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important that we recognize that Canada is an exporting nation. Whether it is Halifax, Churchill, or the main subject of discussion today, Vancouver, the future and the potential of Canada's growth will in good part be based on exportation.

Our national government has the leading role to play in dealing with and providing assurances to Canadians from coast to coast that it is on top of the issue that is impacting safety, that we have a sense of protecting our environment, that we are taking the actions that are necessary to protect our environment.

The cuts we have witnessed over the last couple of years by this Conservative majority government is putting into question issues related to the environment, which does nothing to build confidence going forward as we want to expand the Canadian economy.

I am wondering if the member might want to emphasize or get something on the record with regard to tomorrow being budget day. The government will be in an excellent position tomorrow to provide assurances to Canadians that it understands the importance of our ports and our environment.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, governing, and certainly budget making, is all about choices, where a government chooses to place its priorities.

We have seen from the Conservatives so far that the budget is leaking more than the *Titanic* did. We pretty much have most, if not all, of the budget details. However, we have seen them making a choice to skew benefits to the wealthier side of Canadians and to cutting back on services, like rail inspectors, marine inspection, food safety, the very basic things that Canadians rely on.

With respect to my friend's question on trade, we had a bill that I presented in this House not two weeks ago. It not only asked for the government to increase protection of our rivers, our oceans, things that are also part of our economy, particularly when moving oil through pipelines or supertankers, but also to ask a fundamental question on value added.

All of the pipelines we are discussing today, the ones that the government is trying to ram through Vancouver, up through the north, the Keystone pipeline, are about raw exports. My people in the northwest of British Columbia look at this quite sensibly and ask about the risks versus the benefits. The government, through its cutbacks, its negligence, constantly increases the risk, and through its policies of raw export of our natural resources constantly diminishes the benefits.

The people where I live understand this. Canadians more broadly understand this. A government that continues on this approach, both to our economy and our environment, is a government that is not only doomed to fail our economy but is also doomed to fail politically.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the word “urgent” is used in the motion before us, and there is no doubt that is the correct word.

I would like to begin by quoting from Kai Nagata, who wrote in the Dogwood Initiative blog the following:

One week ago Vancouver residents woke up to the news that a grain freighter at anchor had leaked bunker fuel into English Bay. No reason to panic, right? Conditions were sunny and calm, there was hardly a breeze: a golden opportunity for the federal government to demonstrate its “world-leading” spill response.

It's pretty clear now what a meaningless phrase that is. After watching federal officials trip over themselves for the past seven days, one thing is clear: it makes absolutely no sense letting Kinder Morgan run 408 crude oil tankers through Burrard Inlet every year. What spilled from the Marathassa was equivalent to 17 barrels of oil. Aframax tankers carry 800,000 barrels of oil.

So what do everyday British Columbians do when we're told to expect more and more oil to keep washing up on our shores? We grab our clipboards and get to work, channeling our frustration into something productive.

Something productive would be to get rid of a government that has disdain for the coast of British Columbia, whose priority is to save \$700,000 in closing down the Kitsilano Coast Guard station but has no trouble spending \$7.5 million to tell us about its budget and political triumphs.

We get it in coastal British Columbia. I live in an island riding. A number of people over the last two weeks have brought to my attention their disdain for the government. Its priorities, as my colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley has said, are skewed. On October 19, or as soon as possible, we have to get rid of a government that cares so little for coastal British Columbia.

Closing a coast guard station might not sound like a big deal to people in central Canada. It is a big deal. It closed not just the Kitsilano Coast Guard station, but the one in Ucluelet, the Ucluelet marine communications and traffic services centre. It will soon close the Vancouver and Comox marine communications and traffic services centres, cutting 25% of the coast guard staff in British Columbia.

What does it mean in Ucluelet, not far from where I live in Victoria? It means, in the case of that particular station, an officer in charge, 17 marine communications and traffic services officers, 5 electronic technicians, and 2 administrative support people gone.

This was a minor spill in the grand scheme of things, and it was a wake-up call for everyone on our coast. Those stations cannot be closed in good conscience. The cost-benefit analysis is simply ridiculous. It is lunacy, and people get that.

Do not just take our word for it. The commissioner for sustainable development proved it 10 years ago. He said there is no way that we are prepared to deal with even a moderately sized oil spill. With the incredible increase in tanker traffic that is expected, how could we possibly cope if the government continues to close these stations down? Its priorities are skewed.

The Kitsilano Coast Guard station was the subject of an opposition day motion. I want to commend my colleague, the member for New Westminster—Coquitlam, for his leadership on this. He brought an opposition day motion forward back in June 2012.

Business of Supply

The official opposition has been all over this issue. What has the government done? It has done nothing. In fact, the Conservative member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, in responding to a question from another of my colleagues back then, assured the House that safety would not be affected by the closure. He boasted that the newly acquired hovercraft would “better service this area”. Apparently hovercrafts do not do oil slicks, as we have now discovered. They just do not work. The government found that out, thank goodness with a small spill, relatively speaking, of toxic bunker fuel oil.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans told Parliament that “the level of search and rescue service in Vancouver...will remain the same”. The folly of that particular claim was exposed last week. The spill response did not take the six minutes we were told by the former base commander it would have taken to get the ship out and put the booms on the spill, et cetera. It could have taken 35 minutes from Sea Island station. That did not work either. It took six hours.

• (1350)

Finally, twelve and a half hours later, they told the people in Vancouver who are responsible for public safety and beach closures that they had a tiny problem. “Houston, we have a problem. Vancouver, we have a problem. Canadians, we have a problem”. This was directly traceable to the choice the government made to close down, for a \$700,000 saving, a Coast Guard station.

I want to commend my colleague for his leadership in bringing this up over and over again, with the current government saying, “No problem. Do not worry, be happy”. Well, we are not happy in coastal British Columbia. We are very concerned. Why? As Professor Tollefson of the UVic Environmental Law Centre has noted, this was an easy one. The vessel could have been much larger, the conditions far worse, and the response time much longer.

Let me explain. First is the location. Even setting aside the proximity to the shuttered station at Kitsilano, the spill occurred remarkably close to a Coast Guard station at Sea Island. What if it had happened midway between Victoria and Vancouver, at Turn Point? Turn Point was identified at the National Energy Board hearing as the most challenging section of the route from Vancouver to international waters. The tidal conditions and the currents in that area can be devastating.

Second is conditions. The spill occurred in daylight in calm, protected waters. What if it had happened at night when the currents were running strong? What if it had happened in a storm?

The *Marathassa* is a brand new Japanese-built grain carrier. It is large, but many vessels that transit the waters are much larger. What if, instead, this had happened to another vessel in a port that day, the 340-metre long container ship *Hyundai Global*, a vessel twice as large as the *Marathassa* in gross tonnage? Of course, there is the catastrophic scenario of a tanker full of bitumen.

The *Marathassa* was flagged in Cyprus and owned by a Greek company, which is apparently fully co-operating with Canadian authorities to pay the cleanup costs. However, the prevalence of flags of convenience makes it very difficult to hold owners accountable. Who pays? Do I need to remind this House that the cost of the catastrophic oil spill in the case of the *Exxon Valdez* was \$7 billion?

Currently, maximum liability is \$1.3 billion, but after that, it is the public that pays these costs. I am not just talking about cleanup costs; there are the ecological costs as well.

The substance was bunker oil. I grant members that it is a serious toxic substance as well, but diluted bitumen is far worse. It would sink, and it contains chemical dilutants that are highly toxic.

One of the many failings of the National Energy Board's rubber-stamped review of the plans to expand the Kinder Morgan pipeline in Vancouver was its refusal to assess just how a number of chronic spills that could happen would increase the risk if there were a problem with tanker collisions.

There has been a complete breakdown in communication, which we saw in Vancouver. We had the silly response by government officials that the response was excellent, that they were going to get 80% of the English Bay spill. As the former Coast Guard base commander Fred Moxey said, that is simply not true. It is likely false; they are not going to get anything near that amount.

There is another point that Dr. Ross, of the Vancouver Aquarium, discussed. He was one of the many DFO scientists fired by the federal government as it cut millions of dollars in funding from the DFO in 2012. Dr. Ross said that there is no official clarity as to who is to monitor the effects of a spill. Yes, it is the Coast Guard's job to respond to the immediate aftermath, but we do not know who is supposed to be monitoring it. He is, on his own, with the Vancouver Aquarium, doing the monitoring. One hopes that the government has woken up and is doing its own monitoring. However, with more than 50 scientists having lost their jobs, including Dr. Ross, whose marine toxicology program was shut down, one wonders whether that is going to be the case.

Monitoring is a problem. We clearly find that this excellent response was nothing of the sort.

• (1355)

The motion started with the word “urgent”. I commend to this House this motion. We have to open those coast guard stations and not close the others. We have to move on in British Columbia to protect our sacred coastal environment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member for Victoria will have five minutes remaining for questions and comments when the House next resumes debate on the question, presumably later on today.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS***[Translation]***THE BUDGET**

Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matapédia, FD): Mr. Speaker, with the federal budget being tabled tomorrow, I would like to call on the government one last time to help communities and middle-class and less fortunate families instead of big corporations and the richest taxpayers.

Tomorrow, the government will renew some tax measures and announce new ones, including income splitting, which will mostly benefit the wealthiest taxpayers. In all, in 2015 alone, \$2.5 billion will go into the pockets of those who already have money. Ordinary families will have to be content with crumbs.

Instead of doing that, the government could invest in the transportation sector by maintaining and upgrading rail and marine infrastructure. It could launch a second phase of the eastern Quebec forestry development program for private forests. It could support scientific research at MLI, spend money on affordable housing and come up with a meaningful contribution to stimulus plans for the regions.

The people are hoping that, tomorrow, the federal government will focus on the families that need the most help and on their communities.

* * *

● (1400)

*[English]***LAWRENCE ROSIA**

Mr. John Barlow (MacLeod, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 1945, World War II had just ended, and a 16 year-old man was looking for his way. Lawrence Rosia found his way to the Bellevue Fire Station.

On April 11, Lawrence passed away after serving the Bellevue fire hall for 70 years, Canada's longest serving volunteer firefighter. It is truly an incredible achievement and one of which the community of Crowsnest Pass is extremely proud.

During his time as a volunteer firefighter, Lolly, as he was affectionately known, mentored and inspired many young firefighters, instilling in them the true meaning of compassion, dedication, courage, and character.

He earned the Queen's Jubilee Medal and the Fire Service Exemplary Medal for his commitment to community. He exemplified what it meant to be a volunteer, and volunteers are something our rural communities depend on.

He lived his life dedicated to his faith, community, and family. What was essential to Lawrence was ensuring that those he loved knew they were loved.

I want Lolly to know that his friends, family, and the community of Crowsnest Pass loved him. He will be missed, but his volunteer spirit lives on.

*[Translation]***ZÉNITH AWARDS**

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Saint-Jérôme chamber of commerce and industry handed out its Zénith awards at its 40th awards gala. I want to acknowledge the perseverance and leadership of Rivière-du-Nord's businesses and community organizations. It is through their commitment, innovation and determination, as well as the involvement of their employees, that our private sector and social economy businesses reach their zenith.

The Conservative government's last budgets gave large and unnecessary tax cuts to corporations that, for their part, did not reinvest these giant sums into our economy. For once, the budget has to focus on SMEs, which are the pillars of our communities and create 80% of all new jobs.

Let us support our SMEs, let us help our small and medium-sized businesses, because they are the backbone of our economy.

* * *

*[English]***MARK REEDS**

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this past week has been a bittersweet time for the Owen Sound Attack alumni. On April 15, former Attack coach Mike Stothers was named AHL coach of the year. Stothers spent five seasons in Owen Sound and is the winningest coach in franchise history.

The day before, on April 14, hockey lost one of its finest. Former Attack coach and Ottawa Senators assistant coach Mark Reeds sadly lost his courageous battle with cancer.

Mark enjoyed an NHL career with the St. Louis Blues and Hartford Whalers. Reeds spent four seasons as the head coach of the Attack and led the team to its first OHL championship. His success in Owen Sound caught the attention of the Senators. Reeds was respected both as a player and as a coach and will be greatly missed by the hockey community.

Both Stothers and Reeds coached a number of players on their way to the big leagues, including Bobby Ryan, Andrew Shaw, Brad Richardson, and Wayne Simmonds. They were two exemplary coaches and Attack alumni.

To Mike Stothers, congratulations. Mark Reeds, thanks for the memories, and rest in peace.

* * *

CANADIAN COAST GUARD

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the bunker fuel oil spill in English Bay last week brought to light the devastating effect of the government's millions of dollars in cuts to marine safety and its bad decision to close Vancouver's Kitsilano Coast Guard base.

The Minister of Industry insisted that the spill response to this incident was world class, when in fact it was anything but. In fact, some of his words were later proven to be completely incorrect.

Statements by Members

The former Kitsilano Coast Guard base commander Fred Moxey said it would have taken them six minutes to respond, but instead, it took the Richmond Coast Guard more than six hours, and it was 12 hours before the oil was actually contained.

This toxic spill fouled our inner harbour and beaches in calm seas on a calm day. Yet imagine what would have happened for a large-scale spill in a remote part of the coast. The government was totally unprepared to respond properly and failed in its duty to lead the response.

Vancouver residents and marine volunteers and experts were vocally against the closure of the Kitsilano Coast Guard base. The Liberals would reopen it and restore services for marine safety in our area.

* * *

• (1405)

RICHMOND HILL VOLUNTEER ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last Friday I had the privilege of attending the town of Richmond Hill's 53rd annual Volunteer Achievement Awards ceremony. It was a wonderful celebration and occasion to thank those volunteers who went over and above in giving back so much to our community. These individuals' generous contributions of time and skills, along with their compassion and tireless dedication, are improving the lives of many in Richmond Hill and, indeed, all of York Region.

I would like to take this opportunity to add my congratulations to this year's Volunteer Achievement Awards recipients, to individuals Sherry Caldwell, Cathy Danton, Anneli Leivo, Asad Malik, Chuck McClelland, Louise Wilson, Haopeng Yang and Arthur Zhou, and the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Toronto Centre. I thank them for their outstanding service.

To all volunteers in Richmond Hill and beyond, I thank them for volunteering in their communities and our country. We could not possibly enjoy the quality of life we do without them.

* * *

[*Translation*]**RACHEL THIBEAULT**

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to express my sadness at the loss of Rachel Thibeault, a resident of Terrebonne, who was well known for her commitment to the community and her volunteerism.

After a long and courageous battle with cancer, Ms. Thibeault passed away on March 28 at the age of 62. As a participant in and ambassador for the Terrebonne Relay for Life, she mobilized her fellow citizens and raised their awareness of the fight against cancer.

In addition to being very involved in her community, Ms. Thibeault had many achievements to her name. She was the administrator for the Griffon d'or gala and the Terrebonne Caisse Desjardins, and she was also the president and co-owner of Administration Thibeault-Lemire.

A mother and businesswoman, she never lost her positive outlook and her contagious cheerfulness. We will remember her perseverance, courage and dedication.

I would like to extend my most sincere condolences to Ms. Thibeault's family and friends. Our community has lost a great lady, and we will miss her very much.

* * *

[*English*]**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the success of Canada's economy and the prosperity and well-being of its communities and families depends on advancing cutting-edge science, technology and innovation. I am proud that our government has provided more than \$11 billion in new resources to support research, talent development, infrastructure and innovative activities since 2006.

In my role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, I have been pleased to support the unparalleled research and development that our scientists are undertaking on a daily basis to improve the lives of Canadians for generations to come. Leading research on drugs, disease and mental health are supported through our government's robust funding for post-secondary institutions and industry. One example is TRIUMF, which is one of the world's leading subatomic laboratories in British Columbia. Our government has been working to support organizations like these, ensuring Canada remains a global leader in science, technology and innovation within the health care field and beyond.

* * *

VICTIMS OF CRIME ROUND TABLE

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on April 14, the Minister of Transport attended my riding of Northumberland-Quinte West to view the progress at the new VIA train station. In addition, she also attended a victims of crime round table in Cobourg. Many stakeholders were present, including community organizations and victims who courageously shared their experiences with our justice system.

I cannot share their stories here, but it was a very emotional experience, and I would like to thank all of those victims who were brave enough to participate, especially Hope Kirksey and Corey Walsh, who shared their harrowing experiences with the community in order to empower more victims to report sexual abuse.

I am proud of the great progress our government has made toward changing the culture of our justice system to make it more victim focused. However, if last Tuesday's round table has taught me one thing, it is that there is still much work that needs to be done.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

BEATIFICATION OF ÉLISABETH TURGEON

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this Sunday at 2:30 p.m., nearly 5,000 people will gather at the Saint-Robert-Bellarmin church in Rimouski to celebrate the beatification of Élisabeth Turgeon by the Pope's legate, Cardinal Angelo Amato.

These 5,000 people will include a delegation of 150 individuals from Montreal's Lebanese community, including the member for Ahuntsic, and I will also have the privilege of representing the riding.

Élisabeth Turgeon arrived in Rimouski on April 3, 1875, and she played a key role in establishing the education system in the region. An elementary school in Rimouski, the one that I myself attended, bears her name in commemoration of her work.

Élisabeth Turgeon also founded the Sisters of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in 1879, where the Musée régional de Rimouski is now located.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the vice-postulator of Élisabeth Turgeon's cause, Sister Rita Bérubé; to the Superior General, Sister Marie-Alma Dubé; and to the entire congregation for their historic contribution and recognition of a woman who helped shape the history of our region.

* * *

● (1410)

[English]

ISLAMIC STATE

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are proud to stand up for Canadians' rights and freedoms at home and abroad. Unfortunately, the Liberals do not agree. According to the Liberal candidate for Red Deer—Lacombe, ISIL's goal "is not international terrorism".

In fact, the death-cult ISIL has declared war on Canada. It has made it clear that it targets Canadians by name and it has called for brutal attacks on Canadian civilians.

Our goal is to degrade ISIL to the point that it no longer represents a threat to Canada, and we will not allow it to have a safe haven in Syria. Unlike the Liberals and their NDP comrades, who would prefer that we sit on the sidelines, we are taking action against a threat to Canadian and international security.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since 2006, the Conservative government has been working on dismantling, shrinking, politicizing and censoring a world-class public service.

The Prime Minister openly said:

[English]

"You won't recognize Canada when I'm through with it."

[Translation]

People in Gatineau and the Outaouais have had a front-row seat to this tragedy, as dedicated government workers have been muzzled and overburdened by a government that is constantly asking them to do more with much less and to ignore legal and scientific advice, all the while praising this "good government" with thinly veiled political ads.

It is impressive to see just how hard the government is going after the people who have dedicated their lives to serving the government and Canadians.

It will be even more impressive to see how these people reciprocate come election time. My New Democrat colleagues and I will stand proudly alongside them before, during and after this battle, since we also believe in a society that is fairer, freer and more generous.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians in Mississauga South know that they can count on this Conservative government to keep taxes low and provide support to hard-working families. They also know that both the NDP and the Liberals, if given the chance, would raise taxes and increase the bureaucracy.

Our low-tax plan for families is opposed by both the NDP and the Liberals. They oppose our family tax cut and enhanced universal child care benefit, which will add \$60 per month per child under 18 years of age. Our plan is helping 100% of families with kids and putting almost \$2,000 back in the pocket of a family with two children.

I am eagerly anticipating what further support the Minister of Finance has for Canadian families in tomorrow's budget, and so are my constituents in Mississauga South.

* * *

EQUAL PAY DAY

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is Equal Pay Day in Ontario, a time to highlight that women generally earn less than men, that reduced pay hurts families and the economy, that solutions are needed to end the gender wage gap, and that we need Equal Pay Day in Canada.

Canadian women have been fighting for pay equity for 100 years, yet the gap in income between men and women still remains at 19%. According to The Conference Board of Canada, Canada ties with the United States for the 11th spot out of 17 peer countries and earns a C grade. A Royal Bank of Canada report estimates the lost income potential of Canadian women due to the wage gap at \$126 billion annually.

It is time that the full value of women's skills and contribution to the labour force is recognized, the injustice of wage discrimination is acknowledged and efforts are made to achieve equal pay.

* * *

UKRAINE

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada recognizes the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and will never recognize the illegal occupation of Crimea.

Last week, the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Defence announced that Canada will be deploying approximately 200 Canadian Armed Forces personnel to Ukraine to develop and deliver military training and capacity building programs for Ukrainian forces personnel. This Canadian military contribution will help Ukrainian forces personnel to better defend their country against Putin's continued aggression.

As the Prime Minister has said:

Whatever difficulties may lie ahead, whatever actions are taken by those who threaten Ukraine's freedom, Ukraine will never be alone, because Ukraine can count on Canada.

* * *

• (1415)

TAXATION

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Minister of Employment and Social Development tweeted “Hundreds of millions of families at risk of not getting money” because they do not know about the tax credit. The fact is that Canada's population is about 35.5 million.

We know that Conservative ministers struggle with numbers. The previous employment minister thought that Kijiji was a legitimate source for job vacancy data, but this recent blunder surprised even those with the lowest expectations. Perhaps now we can convince Conservatives to bring back the long-form census, even if it is just to save them from themselves?

The real numbers show that after a decade of Conservative mismanagement, middle-class families are working harder but falling further behind. Canadians are ready to replace the Conservative government and repair the damage it has done. That is precisely what New Democrats intend to do.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Bryan Hayes (Sault Ste. Marie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are not ready to replace this Conservative government. Canadians know that they can count on this Conservative government to keep taxes low and provide support to hard-working families. They also know that both the NDP and the Liberals, if given the chance, would raise taxes and increase the bureaucracy.

Our plan for families is opposed by both the NDP and the Liberals. They oppose our family tax cut and enhanced universal child care benefit. Our plan is helping 100% of families with children and putting almost \$2,000 back in their pocket.

Oral Questions

Families and businesses in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie are eagerly anticipating what further support the Minister of Finance has for Canadian families in tomorrow's budget, and I know they will be well pleased.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

THE BUDGET

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the Conservatives prepare to table their budget, families know better than to expect much from this government. The Conservatives would rather reward their well-connected friends than help members of the middle class who are having trouble making ends meet. Still, it is not too late.

Will the Conservatives take this opportunity to get their priorities straight and table a budget that will help families?

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will have to wait until tomorrow for the budget and for the specifics of it.

I can assure the House that we will fulfill our promise, the promise we made to Canadians, by balancing the budget, creating jobs, creating economic growth and keeping taxes low. We will build on our tax plan for Canada's economy that has created 1.2 million net new jobs. We are proud of a plan that is working: \$6,600 to families this year, to the average family of four.

However, the opposition would raise taxes. The opposition would set working families back. Canadians know they are better off with this Conservative government.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadian families are working harder than ever yet falling further behind.

The Conservatives are still more focused on the well-connected than on the well-being of middle-class Canadians. If one is an insider or one of the wealthy few, tomorrow's budget will have billions in loopholes and handouts. However, if people are regular Canadians trying to make ends meet, they will get more cuts to services.

Will the Conservatives change course and commit to real action to create jobs and make life more affordable for Canadians?

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, make no mistake that while the global economy remains fragile, and we have seen the drop of oil prices, our government is focused on creating jobs, lowering taxes and providing benefits directly back to those families.

Oral Questions

Since the depth of the global recession, 1.2 million net new jobs have been created, 90% full-time and 80% in the private sector. Two-thirds of those jobs are in high-wage industries.

However, the Liberals and the New Democratic Party would reverse those plans. A \$20 billion carbon tax that the New Democrats talk about will cost Canadians.

* * *

ETHICS

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Crown in the Mike Duffy trial alleges that the senator was never eligible to sit in the Senate. His presence was fraudulent from the beginning. Yet the Prime Minister told the House that all senators meet the residency requirements.

Is the Prime Minister still of the belief that Mike Duffy conformed to Senate constitutional requirements when he appointed Mr. Duffy to the Senate in 2008?

• (1420)

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the constitutional practice on this has been clear for over 150 years.

What is also very clear to Canadians is the fact that House of Commons resources cannot be used for partisan political purposes. That is why I encourage the 68 members of the NDP caucus who owe Canadian taxpayers \$2.7 million for illegal offices to pay it back. The Leader of the Opposition could show some leadership by repaying the \$400,000 that he personally owes taxpayers for illegal offices.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member is confused again. We are not talking about fake allegations from a Conservative kangaroo court. We are talking about a real criminal trial with a real judge.

[*Translation*]

On February 27, 2013, the Prime Minister said this in the House:

All senators conform to the residency requirements. That is the basis on which they are appointed to the Senate.

Why did the Prime Minister tell the House that when clearly it was not the case?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, the constitutional practice on this has been clear for 150 years.

[*English*]

What is also clear is that House of Commons resources cannot be used for partisan political activities like the NDP did.

The Leader of the Opposition signed off on employees working in Ottawa, suggesting they were working and living in Ottawa, but actually they were working in an illegal, partisan office in Montreal.

The member for Scarborough Southwest thought this was so impressive that as opposed to giving \$140,000 in resources to his community, he funnelled it through an illegal office in Montreal.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what is clear is Conservatives have messed up on the Senate, but they have really messed up on marine safety.

The completely inadequate response to the fuel spill in English Bay has made it clear that the government does not have the capacity to respond to spills properly. The Conservative cuts to marine safety and environmental protection are putting the public, our environment and our economy at risk.

This should be a wake-up call, and the Conservatives should be listening to British Columbians.

I have a very simple question. Will the Conservatives reverse cuts to marine safety and move now to reopen the Kitsilano Coast Guard station?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, I want to commend the Canadian Coast Guard on its excellent work in cleaning up the spill and for the short period of time in responding to it.

The reason why I say this is because it is important for the House to realize and remember that for the past 20 years it is the ship transiting Canadian waters that is ultimately fully responsible for its own pollution and has a contract with responsible organizations to clean up that spill. When the spill was not identified, it was the Canadian Coast Guard that came in to do what needed to be done in an excellent way.

* * *

FINANCE

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' balanced budget law is a phoney gimmick. It was the Conservatives who inherited a \$13 billion surplus, spent us into deficit even before the 2008 downturn, then gave us seven deficits, adding \$160 billion to the national debt.

Now the law only applies outside of recessions. However, we have not been in a recession since May 2009. Therefore, will the Conservative ministers agree to make the law retroactive and return 5% of their salaries over the last six years to Canadian taxpayers?

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member referenced the balanced budget legislation. Canadians understand the importance of living within their means and they expect that governments will do the same. Balanced budgets keep taxes low and ensure that government services are sustained over the long term.

We will introduce legislation regarding balanced budgets. Our government is committed to balanced budgets. The good news is that tomorrow Canadians will see the Minister of Finance stand and deliver a balanced budget that will create jobs. Canadians know they are better off with this Conservative government.

*Oral Questions***TAXATION**

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, doubling the TFSA limit is just another Conservative tax break for the rich. Most middle-class families cannot make use of that extra limit. In fact, very few middle-class families have an extra \$20,000 kicking around every year to invest in their TFSAs. Wealthy Canadians can and in time, doubling the TFSA limit will give billions more to the wealthy.

Why are the Conservatives making middle-class Canadians who are struggling pay for tax breaks for the rich?

• (1425)

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know the Liberal Party wants to raise taxes on families and force every Canadian to pay more tax to finance those Liberal spending schemes. We are not going to let that happen.

Members do not have to take my word for it. Let me read a quote, “Liberals believe Canadians will not be bothered by being taxed more”. Who said that? It was the hon. member for Kings—Hants.

We get it. Canadians get it. They are better off with this Conservative government.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when given the choice between being consistent and being right, I choose to be right. The fact is that Liberal governments actually cut taxes and actually paid down the debt. The Conservative government has actually raised taxes on middle-class Canadian families and at the same has increased the debt.

A lot of young Canadians are having trouble finding jobs. One NHL economic action plan ad run by the Conservatives would pay for 32 summer jobs for young Canadians. Why will the Conservatives not cut their partisan advertising that is wasting millions of dollars and help young Canadians find work?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only plan of the Liberals for students is to raise their taxes. The member across the way claims that students do not pay taxes. Apparently he is not aware of the thousands of hard-working young people who work all the time to make ends meet. We are lowering their taxes as well. We have lifted the amount of money they can earn tax free. We have lowered payroll taxes so that when they earn wages, they keep more of what they earn and their employers can hire them. That is why we have created 1.2 million net new jobs with 90% of them being full-time and two-thirds in high-wage sectors. We are going to continue to cut taxes.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if there was one member of the Conservative caucus who was popular, it was Mike Duffy, who was so popular in fact that he received a \$90,000 cheque from the Prime Minister's chief of staff to cover up his bogus expense claims.

Some 74 Conservative MPs benefited from Mike Duffy's travel privileges when the senator participated in their fundraising events. The Prime Minister even personally thanked him, saying that he was his hardest working appointment ever.

What was it about Mike Duffy's work that the Prime Minister loved so much?

[English]

The Speaker: Order, please. I would just remind members that questions should touch on administrative responsibilities. I do not know if the hon. parliamentary secretary wants to answer it or not. I see him rising so I will allow him to do so.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, certainly touching on the administration of the House is very important. That is why there are 68 members of the NDP who owe taxpayers \$2.7 million for illegal offices. The member herself owes over \$25,000 to the taxpayers for these illegal offices. I suggest the member encourage the other 67 members to pay back the \$2.7 million they owe the taxpayers.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadian taxpayers certainly did not get much value out of Mike Duffy's time as a senator, but at least 74 Conservative MPs did very well and they did not even have to be his cousin. In fact, the biggest beneficiary appears to be the Prime Minister.

Duffy's diaries are pretty skint on his work as a senator, but have a lot of details of his work as a full-time booster for the party. Since Canadian people are on the hook for this, that makes this government business.

Why did the Prime Minister have Duffy travelling around the country working for the party when his job was supposed to be representing the people of Prince Edward Island? What was Duffy's special role to the Prime Minister?

The Speaker: Order, please. I see the hon. parliamentary secretary rising to answer the question so I will allow him to do so. However, I again remind members that questions should touch on the administrative responsibilities of the government.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in keeping with your suggestion, I will do just that.

Oral Questions

Talking about taxpayers not getting value for their money, I wonder what the taxpayers of Scarborough Southwest think about their member sending over \$140,000 to an illegal office in Montreal, that the member for Davenport sent over \$1,000 to that same illegal office, that the member for Beaches—East York did the same thing, that the former member for Trinity—Spadina did the same thing. Sixty-eight members of the NDP caucus sent millions of dollars to an illegal office and they should pay it back.

• (1430)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as one of the 74 MPs who called on Duffy, I see the member is feeling very touchy today. Let us lower the temperature and see if he can help explain this to me.

I need assistance from the Prime Minister of Canada who said, “To Duff...Thanks for being one of my best, hardest working appointments ever”. Here is the thing. He was put in to represent Prince Edward Island. He never introduced a single piece of legislation. His diary mentioned dinner 616 times, lobster dinners 24 times, his dog Chloe 47 times, but Senate business a mere 2 times. This is the business Canadians are—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Saint-Lambert.

* * *

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is always a double standard with this government. While Conservative and Liberal senators were entitled to an all-you-can-eat buffet, the Conservatives were cutting services for our veterans and reducing the number of inspectors who ensure the safety of our food. Now they want to impose additional cuts totalling \$500 million.

Why do Liberal and Conservative senators get treated one way, while middle-class Canadians get treated altogether differently?

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since we have been elected, our number one priority has been the economy. That is why we put thousands of dollars back into the pockets of hard-working Canadian taxpayers. We understand that they work hard and that they play by the rules.

In my riding of Oak Ridges—Markham they get up every morning and get to work. What they want their government to do is put more money back in their pockets to invest in their priorities. This is why we have done that. We have increased the universal child care benefit to \$160. We have increased and made a new commitment from \$60 for children from 6 to 17.

That is putting more money in the pockets of Canadians. While the NDP take \$2.7 million out of their pockets, we are putting it back in.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are sick of seeing the Conservatives giving handouts to their friends when they should be tightening their belts. For six

years, the Conservatives have made more than \$45 billion in cuts to government services. They cut services to the public. They closed Coast Guard stations. Canadians have to line up at Service Canada offices to get help.

Will this upcoming budget make more cuts to services or will it finally support the middle class?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are helping the middle class by putting money directly into the pockets of families and parents. We have lowered taxes and increased the child care benefit, which the Prime Minister created in 2006. Families will now receive \$2,000 for every child under six and \$1,720 for every child aged 6 to 17.

The NDP and the Liberals want to take that money away from families and increase taxes. We will not allow them to do that.

* * *

THE BUDGET

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, choices must be made in budgets. Not only are the Conservatives' priorities clear, they are deplorable. The Conservatives are cutting seasonal workers' access to employment insurance, support for SMEs and job creation in the regions.

This government, and the previous Conservative and Liberal governments, have allowed a total of half a million jobs in the manufacturing sector to disappear.

Will the Conservatives finally invest in health and job creation, rather than continuing to cut services that the middle class need?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are helping the middle class by reducing taxes and putting more money in their pockets. Furthermore, we have created more than 1.2 million good jobs for Canadians thanks to our action plan.

We have also created apprenticeship grants. We have provided more than 500,000 new grants to young apprentices, so they can work in the trades that are in demand. This will create real jobs for the middle class and real opportunities for our youth.

*Oral Questions***CANADIAN COAST GUARD**

[English]

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, far too many Canadian families are struggling to make ends meet while job losses keep mounting. Under the Conservative government we have lost more than 400,000 good manufacturing jobs. Now the Conservatives say they are going to have a deathbed conversion to manufacturing in the budget, but their actions speak louder than their words. These job losses have affected Canadian families who depend on them to pay the bills and to send their kids to school.

Will the Conservatives reverse their trend of neglect and invest in Canadian manufacturing to create and preserve good Canadian jobs?

• (1435)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP and Liberals only have one plan for jobs and that is to raise taxes on those who create them. Our plan is trade, training and tax cuts. For example, on trade, the Prime Minister recently announced that our trade agreement with Europe will allow Honda Canada to export vehicles directly to Europe for the very first time, creating 400 jobs in the manufacturing sector.

Mr. Sierra who owns Novo Plastics is a small businessman. He is going to create an extra three jobs for engineers because he will be sending his aluminum products to Europe because of the Prime Minister's free trade agreement.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I guess after they have lost 400,000 manufacturing jobs, any small job creation is a celebration for the Conservatives.

Budgets are about making choices and Conservatives are once again putting their own self-interests ahead of middle-class Canadians.

Conservatives are planning billions of dollars in handouts to the wealthiest, a \$700 million tax loophole for CEOs, and yet they are telling ordinary Canadians that after years of painful cuts they are going to have to settle for less, less food safety, less rail safety, less money to stop oil spills and no money to help parents find affordable child care. If this is all about making choices, why are the Conservatives choosing as their first priority helping out wealthy Canadians?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised to see the NDP turning its nose up at a small business that is trying to create jobs for Canadians. Mr. Sierra said the fact that we are eliminating the 10% tariff that Europe used to have on imported aluminum goods is going to allow him to hire three new engineers. That is just three examples of the 1.2 million net new jobs that our low-tax plan has created.

These are real human beings who got the phone call and on the other end of the line someone said, "Congratulations, you got the job".

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): The Auditor General has been clear. The government is not prepared to deal with even moderately sized oil spills, but the Conservatives keep cutting the organizations that respond to these emergencies, including the Kitsilano Coast Guard station, B.C.'s oil spill environmental response centre and Coast Guard communication centres.

The recent Vancouver oil spill should be a wake-up call. Will the Conservatives repair the damage they have done and restore these critical services?

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Coast Guard experts have been crystal clear that there is no change in our Coast Guard response. The Kitsilano station was not an environmental response station and never provided these types of environmental response operations.

As the assistant commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard has stated, the Kitsilano station would not have made any difference to the response of the *Marathassa* leak. The proper responder was tasked in this situation.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are once again lowering taxes for the rich.

Income splitting—a \$2 billion tax break—will disproportionately benefit the wealthy, and now the Conservatives are now preparing to double the contribution limits for tax free savings accounts.

The majority of middle-class Canadians cannot take advantage of this measure. They are already struggling to make ends meet.

Why are the Conservatives not helping the middle class? Why do they want to bring in even more tax breaks for the wealthy?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, income splitting—our tax break for families—will help them by putting around \$2,000 in their pockets.

However, the Liberals want to increase taxes for these same families. They also want to eliminate income splitting for seniors. Now, they claim to want to eliminate the tax free savings account, which will not only increase taxes for 9 million families but also threaten their retirement savings.

The Conservatives are the only ones who can be trusted to help families and lower their taxes.

Oral Questions

•(1440)

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell the House whether the government has gone beyond discussions between officials and reached a formal agreement with Quebec on the implementation of the changes to the temporary foreign worker program?

It seems that the changes announced on April 2 will unilaterally take effect in Quebec on April 30. As we know, there is a Canada-Quebec accord on immigration.

Will the principles of that accord be respected?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we respect all of our agreements with the provinces. The rules regarding the temporary foreign worker program will apply across the country, in every province.

The Liberals want to raise taxes for workers, which will kill jobs, and apparently the Liberals plan to give those jobs to temporary foreign workers.

We want all available jobs to go to Canadians.

* * *

[English]

CANADIAN COAST GUARD

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 2,700 litres of toxic bunker fuel was spilled in English Bay. Despite 911 calls from boaters, the Coast Guard took 5 hours to respond, 11 hours to find the source and contain it, and 12 hours to notify the City of Vancouver. The closed Kits Coast Guard base could have responded in six minutes.

The government cut 34% from marine search and rescue communications and resources. Now fisheries and beaches in Stanley Park are closed indefinitely. Will the government reverse its cuts and reopen Kits Coast Guard station immediately?

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have improved our ability to respond to these events, including new funding, new tools, and ensuring that companies responsible are the ones that pay. Under our government, investment in the Canadian Coast Guard has increased by 27%, but the Liberals would not understand that.

I can assure members there will be a full review of this incident, including the response, and we will wait for all the facts to be known instead of speculating about what happened.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, three separate investigations were launched following Sergeant Doiron's tragic death in Iraq on March 6, 2015.

However, *The Globe and Mail* recently learned that the investigation on the circumstances of his death is now complete.

This information came from an interpreter, who is working on contract in northern Iraq for the Department of National Defence.

Can the minister confirm this information and tell us when the findings of the report on Sergeant Doiron's death will be released?

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.

Canada is conducting two internal investigations.

[English]

The military investigation service is leading one of the inquiries and the other is being done by Canadian Special Operations Forces Command. As soon as I have received both of those reports, I would be happy to render all aspects of those reports public that would not affect operational effectiveness.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last month, the Chief of the Defence Staff told the Canadian press that the U.S. would be "leading their own investigation" into the death of Sergeant Doiron in Iraq, but the U.S. Combined Joint Task Force has now told *The Globe and Mail* that they are "not conducting a separate or concurrent investigation". Also, details about Canada's own investigation are scanty.

Can the minister tell the House exactly who is doing an investigation into the death of Sergeant Doiron, when will we have the results and why is there not a board of inquiry?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question about this very tragic friendly fire incident. The National Investigation Service, which is operated by the Canadian Forces Military Police, is conducting an inquiry. We have not yet received a report. Another inquiry is being done by the Canadian Special Operations Forces Command.

I do intend to release those aspects of these reports that do not bear on confidential military operations.

The CDS informed me this morning that he had received a summary of a U.S. report as well.

* * *

•(1445)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians in Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Windsor, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Vancouver, Victoria, and many other communities gathered together this weekend with one common goal: to urge the government to stop Bill C-51 from becoming law.

They recognize that this legislation will be ineffective, dangerous and that it undermines Canadians' rights and freedoms. Why does the minister not listen to them and withdraw this legislation?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know they can count on our government to keep them safe. That is why we are making sure that our police have the tools they need to keep Canadians safe.

We are of the view of the witness who came to committee and said that legislation is important to combat radicalization. We need better tools to try to track jihadists who travel overseas.

Ms. Raheel Raza is the president of the Council for Muslims Facing Tomorrow. We share her views and we will deliver.

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have managed to get unanimity across the country. Canadians are unanimously opposed to the government's anti-terrorism bill.

In cities such as Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Vancouver and Ottawa, thousands of people have protested against Bill C-51. Members of first nations, unions and experts across the board are telling the Conservatives that this legislation is unnecessary and dangerous.

When will the minister listen to Canadians and do the right thing: drop Bill C-51?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government will continue to take responsible measures to fight terrorism by preventing terrorists from boarding planes, by allowing parents to know that their child is being radicalized, and by shutting down sites that promote terrorism.

Common sense measures are supported by Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent's sister, who came here to Ottawa to call on all parliamentarians to stand up and protect Canadians from terrorism.

[English]

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are very concerned at the reports coming out of Montreal that two ISIS inspired extremists have been detained for plotting to engage in terrorist activity.

We all recall the horrific terrorist acts last October when Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo lost their lives at the hands of cold-blooded jihadi terrorists.

Could the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness give this House an update on what our Conservative government is doing to combat terrorism?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale for his excellent work and his important question.

I also want to thank our RCMP officers for their work, working hand-in-hand with police officers and with other agencies to keep Canadians safe.

This is a stark reminder that the threat is real, that we need to take action and make sure that we have the resources and the tools that

are needed to keep Canadians safe. Canadians can count on the Conservative government to take action.

* * *

FOOD SAFETY

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative cuts to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency are putting Canadians at risk. Inspector positions have been cut or left empty, the frequency of inspections has been reduced, and companies are now being expected to inspect themselves. Inspectors are even being asked to sign certificates for products they have not inspected. This is just the beginning. There are more cuts to come.

Will the Conservatives finally take food safety seriously, stop the cuts, and immediately restore the number of food inspectors we need in this country?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important to note that The Conference Board of Canada rates our food safety system number one out of 17 OECD countries. In 2014, we hired more than 200 front-line inspectors.

I would like to share a quote from Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, from the University of Guelph, who says that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's method is the "right way" to approach inspections.

• (1450)

[Translation]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is incredible. We are talking about a real shortage of inspectors in Quebec.

Data gathered by federal unions show that on average, the abattoirs and processing plants where deli and prepared meats are produced in Montreal East, Saint-Hyacinthe and Quebec City have 10 fewer inspectors than required. More cuts to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency are anticipated in tomorrow's budget.

Why is food safety not a priority to this government?

[English]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate our commitment in economic action plan 2014 for 200 more front-line food safety inspectors.

Let me share another quote, from Dr. Stuart Smyth, who is with bioresource policy at the University of Saskatchewan. He says:

Canada has one of the top...food safety systems in the world. Other countries look to our regulatory system as a model of food safety....

...food products that are available for purchase in our grocery stores are as safe as they possibly can be.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

SENIORS

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many seniors groups, including CARP, are hosting a meeting today to talk about the issues facing our seniors: the lack of home health care, the shortage of beds in long-term health facilities and the critical need for a seniors' strategy.

All of the parties were invited, but the Conservatives did not even bother to send anyone. Why? Is it because the government does not consider these issues to be important?

[English]

Hon. Alice Wong (Minister of State (Seniors), CPC): Mr. Speaker, no other government has done as much as our government for seniors. At this morning's meeting, I was unable to attend, but I did send my staff.

We will continue our record of support for seniors with initiatives like increasing funding to community-based projects for seniors, which both the NDP and Liberals voted against, a low tax that has helped to remove thousands of seniors from the tax rolls completely, which again both the Liberals and the NDP opposed, and of course, a policy that both the NDP and Liberals have wanted to repeal: pension splitting for seniors that is keeping their hard-earned money in their pockets, where it belongs.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect their government to listen and to participate in dialogue. Today the Conservatives did not even bother to send anyone to a major seniors event, and last week, the Conference Board of Canada warned that failure to address the demographic boom of seniors will compromise health care services. They also joined a growing list of organizations calling for a coordinated seniors strategy.

Will the Conservatives finally listen to the experts? Will there be a seniors strategy in tomorrow's budget?

Hon. Alice Wong (Minister of State (Seniors), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was not able to attend this morning, but I sent a representative from my staff to be there. She probably overlooked that part.

We have had the largest increase in the GIS in a quarter-century. There have been millions of dollars invested in low-income housing for seniors, and the list goes on and on. Our record is that we stand by seniors, and the opposition would take away income splitting for our great seniors.

* * *

ETHICS

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, nobody begrudges the Prime Minister looking his best. Even I know nice hair is a wonderful thing. However, we learned from court that Mike Duffy paid for his makeup artist from a slush fund. Then we heard that the Prime Minister's makeup artist was paid from that same slush fund.

Why did the Prime Minister's budget not pay for his makeup rather than taxpayers being stuck with that bill, and will the government conduct an immediate review of all the Prime Minister's

makeup expenses and repay Canadian taxpayers for any work paid for with this dirty money?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very surprised to be getting a question about expenses from that particular member of Parliament. Really? Honestly, this is coming from a party that has \$40 million outstanding. Some of those members there I know had some issues with respect to their living allowances and were ordered to pay back hundreds of thousands of dollars. I am not sure what member that might have been over there, but I am sure he will investigate that.

Of course, we do not comment on things before the court. Taxpayers did not pay any of these expenses.

● (1455)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Malpeque. I know that he will want his supplementary question to touch on the administrative areas of government, so I will give him the floor now.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I guess that we are not getting any answers on whether or not the Prime Minister and the government are paying for the makeup of the Prime Minister, but this goes to the Prime Minister's judgement.

First, he appointed Mike Duffy, calling him "one of my best, hardest working appointments ever". Under the Prime Minister's watch, his closest staff paid \$90,000 in hush money to a sitting senator and then covered it up, but only after the Prime Minister said that they were good to go.

The crown attorney has said that this man should not have been appointed from P.E.I. Why was he—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the constitutional practice on this has been clear for over 150 years.

Back to the topic, of course, of expenses and makeup, I would suggest that he turn around and look at the Liberal member of Parliament for, I think it is Mississauga—Brampton South, who was accused of charging taxpayers for makeup expenses during a campaign. Of course, that party is littered with individuals who have been forced to repay. There are still members in that caucus who have not even paid their campaign debt.

They are given—

The Speaker: Order, please. We seem to have drifted a little way off from the administrative area of government, but I see the hon. member for Northwest Territories rising. I am quite confident that he will bring us back to what question period is about.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Northwest Territories, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a report by the chaplain for Joint Task Force North shows that there have been a significant number of deaths of Rangers and junior rangers over the past three years.

The Rangers shoulder the important burden of protecting our north, carrying out their duty in Canada's harshest environment. Can the minister tell us how many of our brave Rangers have died and what Canadian Forces mental health services are available to our eyes and ears in the north?

Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has led efforts in support of the Canadian Rangers, our eyes and ears in the north. The Rangers demographic faces the same health challenges faced by the northern communities they represent. Our government has taken action to provide additional medical resources for Rangers deployed in the north.

Canadian Rangers who are injured during active duty have access to a suite of benefits and services provided by the Canadian Armed Forces, and any other health care needs are the responsibility of the provinces or the territories where they reside. We will continue to support our Rangers in all of their needs.

* * *

NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Northwest Territories, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Rangers need action, not words.

During the Conservatives' turn at the helm of the Arctic Council, they moved away from its mandate of research, environmental protection, and co-operation to one of resource exploitation and confrontation with our Arctic neighbours. The Conservatives' failed domestic northern strategy has resulted in less food security, a higher cost of living, and the trampling of aboriginal rights.

When is the government going to bring in policies that actually support northerners and not just make a few large southern companies rich?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hosting the Arctic Council ministerial meeting this Friday in Iqaluit.

The member opposite issued a statement that misrepresents the economic situation in the north. Each year between 2010 and 2013, both the economy and the number of jobs across the north increased, and growth was supported by the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency in more than 900 projects that created jobs and opportunities for northerners.

In the meantime, the member opposite, from the Northwest Territories, has rejected important projects that would benefit northerners, not just the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk highway, which supports economic development and opportunities for northerners. This just once again shows how disconnected the member—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Don Valley East.

Oral Questions

CHILD CARE

Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government knows that all families have different needs and different dynamics. That is why our universal child care benefit provides support for every single family with a child. Incredibly, the opposition members have attacked the universal child care benefit and have pledged to take it away from families. They just do not get it. They just do not understand how the UCCB is helping families.

To help the opposition members come to their senses, can the Minister of State for Social Development please inform this House how the universal child care benefit is helping families?

• (1500)

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has been listening to Canadian families from every walk of life. As the member for Don Valley East just said, Canadian families have a variety of needs when it comes to child care. That includes families with older children, because older children also bear costs to their families, and it is a cost that we want to help those families with. That is why we have increased and expanded the universal child care benefit to include children between the ages of seven and 17.

We have also doubled the fitness tax credit and have introduced income splitting for families, all the while putting money back into the pockets of Canadian hard-working families.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, through access to information, the media have uncovered a significant number of deaths of members of both Canadian Rangers and Junior Canadian Rangers, who are the eyes and ears of Canada's military in the north.

While the Prime Minister continues to boast about his trips to the Arctic, he refuses to disclose information on these deaths, to answer critical questions about a lack of instructors on patrol, or even to allow the Canadian Ranger Patrol Groups to speak out. I ask the government, why the gag order on those critical issues surrounding Canada's Rangers?

Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are in fact the only party in this House that takes our responsibility to the Rangers and our north seriously, and we are acting on it full bore.

Canadian Rangers injured in the line of duty are eligible for benefits and services from the Canadian military. Canadians expect no less.

Oral Questions

Of course, we will continue to take action so that the Canadian Armed Forces can defend our territorial sovereignty in the north and count on the Rangers to continue doing the great job they are in fact carrying out for Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Quebec City's files clearly do not move quickly when they are on Conservative ministers' desks. The clock is ticking for the organizers of the 2017 Tall Ships Regatta in Quebec City. If federal funding is not confirmed by the end of the week, this project will sink. There is no way to improvise and extend the deadline once again, as they did for the armoury.

Will the Conservatives finally listen to the demands of the people of Quebec City? Will Quebec City finally see funding for the Tall Ships Regatta in tomorrow's budget?

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times in the House, our country's 150th anniversary will include all Canadians, including Quebecers. We have already had discussions with them. As I have already said, we already provided funding for a pilot project for the tall ships in road to 2017.

We will continue to enjoy planning our 2017 celebrations with all Canadians in all provinces and territories.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse released findings from its upcoming report on marijuana use. This timely release confirms once again that smoking pot is directly linked to lower IQs and dependency and harms the developing brain. Stats Canada also confirms that our approach to keeping pot out of the hands of kids is working. Over the past decade, usage by teens has dropped by nearly a third.

Can the parliamentary secretary please update the House on our Conservative government's efforts to stop kids from smoking marijuana?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, marijuana is an illegal drug, and we are learning more and more about the serious and long-term health consequences, so certainly we do not support making access to illegal drugs easier.

The Liberal plan wants to make smoking marijuana an everyday, normalized activity, with it available in stores, like alcohol and cigarettes. That would only have one effect, and that would be to increase the use of marijuana.

Our Conservative government will continue to work to stop kids from smoking marijuana and the associated long-lasting effects it will have.

MARINE TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, changes to pilotage requirements on the Great Lakes are overdue. Thunder Bay welcomes salties that come thousands of kilometres from around the world, waiting and waiting for a local pilot to go that last kilometre to our grain terminals. Let us facilitate trade not impede it.

My constituents are asking, "Can we get some common sense about pilotage requirements in Thunder Bay and throughout the Great Lakes?"

● (1505)

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, marine pilots are a very important part of our supply chain. They are uniquely qualified to be able to take vessels in Canada through those areas of specific water conditions and ensure they can avoid hazards. As a result, they play an important part.

The Canadian Transportation Act is currently being reviewed by a pre-eminent panel, chaired by David Emerson. It will be looking at the future of transportation in Canada, and I am sure this issue will come to its attention.

* * *

CANADIAN COAST GUARD

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, recent studies have shown that oil spills are going to happen, even under the best conditions, especially in Placentia Bay.

Last week's tardy response to the oil spill in British Columbia illustrates the serious gaps in Canadian Coast Guard oil response protocols. As the minister is aware, increased oil tankers and low visibility in Placentia Bay makes this region particularly sensitive and high risk from an oil spill, with Coast Guard equipment days away.

Could the minister assure residents of Placentia Bay, Newfoundland that the Coast Guard can ensure a timely and effective response time if an oil spill should occur?

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Coast Guard works closely with emergency response companies, which are certified by Transport Canada and they are part of the response regime in Canada both on the west coast and on the east coast. They do have the equipment and the expertise to respond. Response plans encompass many partners and these emergency response organizations are part of that plan.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, an oil cartel ripped off more than a million drivers, most of them in central Quebec and the Eastern Townships, to the tune of \$200 million, and now an oil company has been fined \$1 million. If not for a complaint from a Victoriaville retailer that refused to participate in price fixing, the Competition Bureau would not have investigated, and charges would not have been laid because the government is refusing to amend the Competition Act.

Will the government finally take action by enabling the competition commissioner to open investigations, by creating a petroleum monitoring agency and, most importantly, by no longer sabotaging the people who are now launching a class action against the oil companies?

Hon. Ed Holder (Minister of State (Science and Technology), CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government took action by passing a new law that makes gas pump inspections mandatory. When Canadian families fill up their tanks, they expect to get what they paid for.

That is the answer to the question.

* * *

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Fazal Hadi Muslimyar, Speaker of the House of Elders of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

The Speaker: Pursuant to Section 552 of the Canada Elections Act, I have the honour to lay upon the table the registered party financial transactions return form and the registered party return form in respect to general election expenses, prepared by the Chief Electoral Officer.

[Translation]

These reports are deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

* * *

[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 response to 92 petitions.

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women entitled "The Economic Leadership and Prosperity of Canadian Women". Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

• (1510)

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the New Democrats believe that action is needed in order to ensure the economic security of Canadian women. Unfortunately, a number of witnesses confirmed that gender equality in Canada is going backward, not forward, under this government.

We heard from witnesses who explained what it would take to achieve economic equality. We need to invest in women, tackle poverty and violence, and provide essential services, such as affordable and accessible child care, safe housing and good jobs—not part-time, minimum-wage jobs. That is what the Leader of the Opposition has planned to foster women's economic prosperity.

I am proud to have taken part in the study and proud of the dissenting report presented by the NDP members of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women in that regard.

[English]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114 I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 35th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding membership of the committees of the House. If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the 35th report later today.

* * *

WAYS AND MEANS MOTION NO. 18

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, you shall find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, any recorded division demanded on Thursday, April 23, 2015, in relation to proceedings on Ways and Means Motion No. 18 shall stand deferred to the ordinary hour of daily adjournment on Monday, April 27, 2015.

The Speaker: Does the hon. Chief Government Whip have unanimous consent to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Routine Proceedings

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 35th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier today, be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in honour of Colton TB Keeler and Tyson Vanderzwaag, teenagers from my riding of Red Deer who were tragically killed by a drunk driver in 2012.

Colton and Tyson's death are a tragedy, and sadly the Keeler and Vanderzwaag families are not alone. Thousands of families every year have to experience the same anguish and suffering because of the stupid decision by some to drive impaired.

That is why I am presenting a petition on behalf of Families For Justice, a group composed of Canadians who have had a loved one killed by an impaired driver. They believe that Canada's impaired driving laws are far too lenient. Families For Justice is calling for mandatory sentencing for vehicular homicide and for this Parliament to support Bill C-652, Kassandra's law.

AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present petitions on behalf of workers in my community.

The petitioners call upon the government to: (a) develop a national auto strategy; and (b) review current policy to track investment in the auto sector to maintain and eventually increase jobs in automotive manufacturing.

I want to thank Jessica John and Heather MacDonald-Ellis for collecting over 9,000 signatures, taking action in direct response to the federal government's failed bid to secure a new small engine program to our local Ford facilities, an investment that would have exceeded \$1.5 billion and created an additional 1,000 assembly jobs.

Today I stand in solidarity in calling for an assertive plan that actively takes action to win value-added jobs. Canadians deserve a plan.

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL AID

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to present a petition.

A number of people in my riding from across southeastern New Brunswick and organizations such as Development and Peace have collected the signatures of many people who are calling on the government to adopt international aid policies that support small farmers, especially women. Furthermore, they want the government to ensure that programs established by Canada truly support the development of an agricultural sector that will benefit the vast majority of people around the world. This is a challenge that I encourage my colleagues to consider.

• (1515)

[English]

POVERTY

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting two petitions today.

The first petition calls on the Government of Canada to eradicate poverty and to support Bill C-233.

ANAPHYLAXIS

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls upon the Government of Canada to enact a policy to reduce the risk of anaphylactic reactions for airline passengers.

AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am also happy to present petitions today calling on the government to develop a national auto strategy, to review the current policy to attract investment in the auto sector and to maintain and increase jobs in auto manufacturing.

Under the Conservative government's watch, we have lost more than 400,000 good jobs in manufacturing. My colleague talked about the loss of Ford investment. General Motors just announced a couple of days ago a \$16 billion joint investment in development new cars. Where? In China.

We need the government to stand up for manufacturing, to stand up for the auto industry and to stand up for good, quality Canadian jobs. That is what we are supporting.

WOLFE ISLAND FERRY

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Wolfe Island, if empty but unpurged propane trucks return to the mainland by themselves on empty ferries in the middle of the summer, tourist season, there is a long lineup for the rest of the day. That is why Wolfe Island had a short-run ferry exemption from the Cargo, Tackle and Fumigation Regulations.

The distance between the two ferry docks is 5.03 kilometres, only half a boat length over the 5 kilometre limit for short ferry runs. Recently, however, the exemption was denied because a different short-run ferry definition of three kilometres from the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations was used.

My constituents on Wolfe Island ask the government to harmonize the definition of short-run ferries at 5 kilometres, and to renew the short-run ferry exemption based on a previous exemption and on the fact that the Wolf Island ferry is never more than 1.15 kilometres from land.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today from St. Patrick's Church, which is the church I attended as a young kid. It is next to St. Patrick School, the grade school I went to in Markham, which is a great school.

The petitioners ask the government to consider international aid policies that promote small farms, especially the role of women.

I am excited by a petition like this because it also gives us an opportunity to highlight some of the great work we are doing in Haiti with our Canadian embassy and McGill University to promote such farming techniques, and the great work by Professor Dion, the brother of the Liberal member of Parliament in the House. We continue to do that, and I am proud to present this petition on behalf of my constituents.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition to the House of Commons demanding respect for the right of small-scale family farmers to preserve, exchange and use seeds.

The petitioners ask the House to adopt international aid policies that support small family farmers, especially women, and recognize their vital role in the struggle against hunger and poverty. They also ask the House 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.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions.

The petitioners deem the impaired driving laws to be too lenient. They want to see tougher laws and the implementation of a new mandatory minimum sentence for those persons convicted of impaired driving causing death. My colleague has just talked about his experience with people he knew. This is similar in that the petitioners ask that the Criminal Code of Canada be changed to redefine the offence of "impaired driving causing death" to "vehicular manslaughter".

● (1520)

SEX SELECTION

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is one that has come forward a number of times also. It goes back to when the CBC revealed that ultrasounds are being used in Canada to tell the sex of an unborn child so that expecting parents can choose to terminate the pregnancy of the unborn child if it is a girl. It is condemned here by all national political parties. Ninety-two per cent of Canadians disagree with it. Millions of girls have been lost through this pregnancy termination, and many who were not have gone into prostitution.

Routine Proceedings

Therefore, the petitioners ask that Parliament condemn the practice of sex-selective pregnancy termination.

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present six petitions: three on one topic and three on another.

The first three petitions relate to the need to ensure that the CBC, our national public broadcaster, receives predictable, stable and long-term funding. The petitioners are from Vancouver, Kingston, Ontario, as well as Saskatchewan, Pender Island, Gabriola Island and Salt Spring Island.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second set of petitions relate to the need to have a legislated ban on tanker traffic, particularly, supertankers contain dilbit.

These petitioners, in three different petitions, come primarily from the Vancouver area. They want a legislated ban.

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, I also rise to present petitions regarding CBC Radio.

The petitioners say that we need national, regional and local programming across Canada and that we reiterate the need to maintain stable and predictable long-term funding to CBC Radio.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Questions Nos. 1067 and 1084 will be answered today.

[Text]

Question No. 1067—**Mr. Scott Simms:**

With regard to government communications: for each announcement made by a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary since January 1, 2006, in a location other than the Parliamentary precinct or the National Press Theatre, what were the (i) dates, (ii) venues, (iii) purposes or subject matters, (iv) names and portfolios of the Ministers or Parliamentary Secretaries, (v) amounts and details of all expenses related to making each such announcement?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the information requested consists of thousands of records, mostly available in original language only. It is not possible to produce and translate the requested information in the time period required for this response.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1084—Ms. Megan Leslie:**

With respect to the Raven Underground Coal Mine Project: (a) has the Minister of the Environment had, or does the Minister plan to have, any public consultations regarding the proposed project and, if so, what are the details of these consultations; (b) has the Minister been in contact with representatives from the (i) Comox Valley Regional District, (ii) Island Trust Council, (iii) Cumberland Village Council, (iv) Courtenay City Council, (v) Comox Town Council, (vi) Port Alberni City Council; and (c) has there been any consideration on the part of the Minister to refer this project to a review panel with public hearings in order to allow the public to address concerns related to the environmental effects of this project and, if so, what are the details of any such planned panels?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the raven underground coal mine project is subject to a comprehensive study under the former Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, and is being reviewed in close co-operation with the Province of British Columbia. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency and British Columbia's Environmental Assessment Office have consulted the public as part of this co-operative environmental assessment process through public comment opportunities and community meetings, including on the potential environmental effects of the project. In 2013, the agency asked the Compliance Coal Corporation to provide more information to fully understand the environmental effects of the project. Should this information be provided, future steps in the environmental assessment would include public consultation on the proponent's environmental impact statement and the agency's comprehensive study report.

With regard to (b) (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v), I have written directly to these municipalities in response to correspondence they had sent.

With regard to (b) (vi), the Port Alberni City Council is participating in the technical working group as part of the environmental assessment for the project. This working group communicates with the agency for which I am responsible.

With regard to (c), based on the information currently available on the potential environmental effects of the project, the agency is of the view that a comprehensive study is the most appropriate type of assessment for the raven underground coal mine project.

* * *

[English]

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 Questions Nos. 1056, 1059, 1061, 1063, 1066, 1068, 1069, 1071, 1072, 1077 to 1081, and 1083 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1056—Mr. Fin Donnelly:

With respect to government grants and contributions allocated within the constituency of New Westminster—Coquitlam from fiscal year 2011-2012 to the

present: what is the total amount allocated, broken down by (i) amount, (ii) individual recipient?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1059—Hon. Mark Eyking:

With regard to government investments, excluding those in relation to the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency: what are the details of all investments made in Nova Scotia from 2005-2006 to 2013-2014, broken down by (i) project, (ii) fiscal year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1061—Mr. Marc Garneau:

With regard to exceptions granted under the Policy on Tabling of Treaties in Parliament (the Policy): (a) broken down by year, since the Policy became effective, how many and which specific instruments were granted exemptions; (b) on what basis was each exemption granted in (a); (c) if the exemption in (b) was based on urgency, (i) how was the treaty determined to be urgent, (ii) who made this determination, (iii) when; (d) if the exemption in (b) was for a reason other than urgency, (i) what was the reason, (ii) how was this determined; (e) who determines what constitutes an acceptable reason, other than urgency, to exempt a treaty from the normal tabling requirements under the Policy; (f) have any requested exceptions to the Policy not been granted; (g) broken down by treaties exempted, (i) on what date did Canada sign the instrument, (ii) when did Canada ratify the agreement, (iii) when was the treaty tabled in Parliament; (h) broken down by treaty exempted, was a joint letter drafted "that clearly articulates the rationale to proceed with the ratification, without tabling in the House of Commons"; (i) for each letter described in (h), (i) what is the date of the letter, (ii) to whom is it addressed, (iii) who signed it; (j) broken down by year, what treaties have been exempted from the Policy without a joint letter; (k) broken down by treaty in (j), why was no draft letter created; (l) with respect to the response of the government to part (gg) of Q-816, stating that no joint letter was created with respect to the exemption granted to the Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada to Improve International Tax Compliance through Enhanced Exchange of Information under the Convention Between the United States of America and Canada with Respect to Taxes on Income and on Capital, is the lack of such a letter typical; (m) in each case where an exception to the Policy was granted, was the approval of the Prime Minister sought; (n) in each case where approval for an exception to the Policy was sought from the Prime Minister, was the approval granted; (o) if there were any cases where an exception was granted without approval being sought from the Prime Minister or being granted by the Prime Minister, (i) what treaty was at issue, (ii) what happened, (iii) what justified the course of action; (p) has any study or analysis been undertaken with respect to exceptions granted under the Policy; (q) when was the last time the Policy was reviewed and what were the conclusions of this review with respect to exemptions; (r) what is the policy justification for allowing an exception to the tabling policy; (s) is the granting of an exception always indicated in the explanatory memorandum; (t) if the answer to (s) is no, in what cases was a treaty granted an exception to the Policy but this information not included in the explanatory memorandum; (u) when an exception is granted and this is indicated in the explanatory memorandum, is the reason for the exception indicated in all cases; (v) in what cases has an exception been granted but the treaty still tabled for twenty-one sitting days prior to any Parliamentary action to bring it into force, where applicable; (w) may an exception be granted to the Policy without the Prime Minister's approval being sought; (x) may an exception to the Policy be granted without the Prime Minister's approval; (y) what statistics are kept and by whom regarding exceptions to the Policy; (z) by what means, and when in the process, is the public informed that an exception to the Policy has been granted; and (aa) by what means, and when in the process, is Parliament informed that an exception to the Policy has been granted?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1063—Hon. Carolyn Bennett:**

With regard to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and to each First Nation reserve community: (a) does the community have its own on-reserve fire department or fire protective service; (b) if the answer to (a) is negative, does the community have a contract or agreement with a municipality or other fire department or fire protective service, providing (i) the name of the other party to that contract or agreement, (ii) the start and end dates of that contract or agreement; (c) if the answer to (b) is negative, did the community formerly have a contract or agreement with a municipality or other fire department or fire protective service, providing (i) the name of the other party to that contract or agreement, (ii) the start and end dates of that contract or agreement, (iii) the reason for which the contract or agreement is no longer in force; and (d) what are the titles, dates, and file numbers of all reports, briefing materials, briefing notes, memoranda, dossiers, dockets, or assessments, created or modified since January 1, 2010, held by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Public Safety Canada, Health Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, or Intergovernmental Affairs, concerning fire protective services in any particular First Nations reserve community or group of communities, or concerning fire protective services in First Nations reserve communities in general?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1066—Ms. Chrystia Freeland:

With regard to government communications: what are the details of all bulk-mail or addressed direct-mail advertising or communications activities undertaken by any department, agency, or crown corporation since January 1, 2011, including the enclosure of informational pamphlets or leaflets along with a cheque, statement or notice, giving in each instance (i) the start and end date of the advertising or communications activity, (ii) the nature, purpose, or description of the activity, (iii) the cost of printing the advertising or communications piece, pamphlet, or leaflet, (iv) the cost of mailing the advertising or communications piece, pamphlet, or leaflet, other than in those instances where it was mailed along with a cheque, statement or notice, (v) the language or languages in which the communications piece, pamphlet, or leaflet was printed, (vi) the title, headline, or rubric of the communications piece, pamphlet, or leaflet, if applicable, (vii) the intended demographic segment which the activity was intended to reach or influence, and the criteria by which that demographic segment was identified, if applicable, (viii) the geographical distribution which the activity was intended to reach or influence, such as Forward Sortation Area, municipality, province or territory, federal electoral district, or other geographical area or areas, and the criteria by which that geographical distribution was identified, if applicable, (ix) the file or other identification number of the activity, (x) the file or other identification number, title, and date, of any report or analysis of the effectiveness or outcome of the bulk-mail or direct-mail campaign?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1068—Hon. Gerry Byrne:

With regard to the Small Craft Harbours Program of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, for each fiscal year since 2006-2007, or each calendar year since 2006, as appropriate, and broken down by Department of Fisheries and Oceans administrative region and province: (a) what was the total employment related to administering the program, distinguishing (i) program officers, (ii) project support technicians, (iii) other employees, providing those employees' job titles; (b) what was the number of client service locations; (c) what was the total expenditure to administer the program; (d) how many harbour authority seminars were held; (e) how many harbour authority representatives were provided with funding, or reimbursed, relative to their travel expenses to attend harbour authority seminars; (f) what were the total grants and contributions to harbours or harbour authorities, distinguishing those made to (i) Core Fishing Harbours, (ii) Non-Core Fishing Harbours, (iii) Recreational Harbours; and (g) what was the total of grants and contributions made to, or in respect of, each individual harbour or harbour authority?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1069—Mr. Denis Blanchette:

With regard to the lawsuit initiated by the government in 2005 against Canadian National concerning compliance with agreements to maintain the Quebec Bridge, which was subsequently divided into two suits, and the ruling by Judge Louis Lacoursière with costs on October 22, 2014: (a) how much has the federal government spent on legal fees for the two suits between 2005 and now; (b) are there any foreseeable costs, other than those mentioned in the ruling, that have yet to be accounted for; (c) how much are the costs referred to in the ruling; (d) does the

government plan to appeal the ruling delivered October 22, 2014; and (e) what is the status of the second suit?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1071—Ms. Chrystia Freeland:

With regard to hiring and promotion practices of female employees in departments, agencies, Crown corporations, commissions and other organizations since January 1, 2006: (a) what is the total number of employees occupying senior executive positions, broken down by (i) department, agency, Crown Corporation, commission or other organization, (ii) calendar year, (iii) gender; (b) what was the total number of vacancies for senior executive positions, broken down by (i) department, agency, Crown Corporation, commission or other organization, (ii) calendar year; (c) what was the total number of employees who have been promoted from a non-senior executive position within the organization, to a senior executive position, broken down by (i) department, agency, Crown Corporation, commission or other organization, (ii) calendar year, (iii) gender; (d) what was the total number of employees who have been hired, from outside of the organization, to occupy a senior executive position, broken down by (i) department, agency, Crown Corporation, commission or other organization, (ii) calendar year, (iii) gender; (e) what was the total number of board positions, broken down by (i) Crown Corporation, commission or other organization, (ii) calendar year, (iii) filled or vacant, (iv) gender of board member; (f) what are the details of all documents, guidelines or internal policies relating to gender-balanced practices in recruitment, hiring, promotion, and board appointments including (i) the dates, titles or subject, and departmental internal tracking numbers, (ii) results or success rate information of these initiatives; (g) what are the details of any internal programs designed to increase prospects of advancement for female employees, such as mentorship programs or workshops, including (i) the starting date, duration, and program names, (ii) results or success rate information of these programs, (iii) relevant costs by program; and (h) what are the details of any advertising campaigns related to recruiting, promoting or empowering female employees, broken down by (i) title or subject of campaign, (ii) starting date, (iii) duration, (iv) form of media, (v) cost, (vi) results or success rate information of these initiatives?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1072—Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:

With regard to Health Canada's Food Labelling Modernization Initiative of proposed Daily Values (DV) for sugars and trans fats: (a) how did Health Canada determine a DV of 100 grams of sugar; (b) with which individuals or agencies did Health Canada consult to arrive at a proposed DV of 100 grams of sugar; (c) during consultations, did any individuals or agencies propose a lower DV than 100 grams and, if so, (i) which individuals or agencies did so, (ii) what reasons were given for disregarding their suggestions of a DV of sugar lower than 100 grams; (d) which peer-reviewed, independent, scientific research articles were referenced to support the proposed DV of 100 grams of sugar; (e) during consultations, which peer-reviewed, independent, scientific research articles were referenced that supported a DV lower than 100 grams, and what reasons were given for disregarding their conclusions; (f) why was the World Health Organization's recommended DV of 25 grams of sugar not adopted; (g) how did Health Canada determine a DV of 2 grams of trans fats; (h) with which individuals or agencies did Health Canada consult to arrive at a proposed DV of 2 grams of trans fats; (i) during consultations, did any individuals or agencies propose a lower DV than 2 grams of trans fats and, if so, (i) which individuals or agencies did so, (ii) what reasons were given for disregarding their suggestions of a DV of trans fats lower than 2 grams; (j) which peer-reviewed, independent, scientific research articles were referenced to support the proposed DV of 2 grams of trans fats; (k) during consultations, which peer-reviewed, independent, scientific research articles were referenced that supported a DV of trans fats lower than 2 grams and what reasons were given for disregarding their conclusion; and (l) why were the World Health Organization's statements that "industrial trans fats [...] do not belong in a healthy diet" and that fat consumption should shift "towards the elimination of industrial trans fats" not interpreted to mean a DV of 0 grams?

(Return tabled)

S. O. 52

Question No. 1077—Ms. Christia Freeland:

With regard to safety measures of commercial railways since January 2006: (a) what was the total number of safety audits conducted by Transport Canada, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) province, (iii) operator, (iv) those carried out in the Greater Toronto Area, (v) those carried out within 5 km of the Summerhill-North Toronto CPR Station, (vi) associated cost, (vii) percentage passed, (viii) percentage failed; (b) what was the total number of operator-led audits performed, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) province, (iii) operator, (iv) those carried out in the Greater Toronto Area, (v) those carried out on the CP North Toronto Subdivision, (vi) associated cost, (vii) percentage passed, (viii) percentage failed; (c) what are the details of Transport Canada's most recent safety audit for each area of track between stations, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) province, (iii) operator, (iv) subdivision name, (v) internal tracking number of report, (vi) result, (vii) recommended follow-up action, (viii) associated cost; (d) what was the total number of safety audits performed by Transport Canada on equipment, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) province, (iii) operator, (iv) results, (v) recommended follow-up action, (vi) associated costs; (e) what was the total number of operator-led safety audits performed on equipment, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) province, (iii) operator, (iv) results, (v) recommended follow-up action; (f) what was the total number of safety audits recommended by Transport Canada, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) province, (iii) those carried out in the Greater Toronto Area; (g) what was the total number of safety auditors employed by Transport Canada, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) province, (iii) those employed in the Greater Toronto Area, (iv) full-time, part-time, or contract status; (h) what was the total number of job postings for safety auditors, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) province, (iii) those employed in the Greater Toronto Area, (iv) full-time, part-time, or contract status; (i) what was the total number of apprentices or trainees receiving training to conduct safety audits, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) province, (iii) those being trained in the Greater Toronto Area, (iv) full-time, part-time, or contract status; (j) what was the total government cost of training new safety auditors, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) full-time, part-time, or contract status; (k) what are the details of any internal training programs intended to provide the necessary training to conduct safety audits, including (i) name or subject, (ii) province, (iii) starting date, (iv) duration, (v) internal tracking numbers of documents related to such programs, (vi) outcomes; (l) what are the details of any Transport Canada training programs intended to provide safety training to operators, including (i) name or subject, (ii) province, (iii) starting date, (iv) duration, (v) internal tracking numbers of documents related to such programs, (vi) associated cost; (m) what was the total number of accidents reported within the Greater Toronto Area, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) cause of accident (e.g., collision or derailment), (iii) total number of injuries, (iv) total number of fatalities, (v) monetary value of damage to goods, property or environment, (vi) type of material being transported, (vii) follow-up action recommended, (viii) follow-up action taken; (n) what was the total number of accidents reported within 5 km of the Summerhill-North Toronto CPR Station, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) cause of accident (e.g., collision or derailment), (iii) total number of injuries, (iv) total number of fatalities, (v) type of material being transported, (vi) follow-up action recommended, (vii) follow-up action taken; (o) for each calendar year in the period in question, what was the total government spending on oversight of follow-up action following rail accidents, broken down by (i) province, (ii) amounts spent within the Greater Toronto Area, (iii) amounts spent following incidents within 5 km of the Summerhill-North Toronto CPR Station; (p) what was the total number of safety concerns reported, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) province, (iii) concerns reported within the Greater Toronto Area, (iv) concerns reported within 5 km of the Summerhill-North Toronto CPR Station; (q) what was the total number of staff reprimands for safety violations, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) province, (iii) operator, (iv) safety violations within the Greater Toronto Area, (v) safety violations within 5 km of the Summerhill-North Toronto CPR Station; (r) what was the total number of staff terminated for safety violations, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) province, (iii) operator, (iv) safety violations within the Greater Toronto Area, (v) safety violations within 5 km of the Summerhill-North Toronto CPR Station; (s) what was the total of government spending on advertising related to the promotion of rail safety measures and precautions, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) province, (iii) type of media (e.g., print, radio, television), (iv) starting date, (v) duration; and (t) what was the total of government spending on advertising promoting Canadian railways, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) province, (iii) type of media (e.g., print, radio, television), (iv) starting date, (v) duration?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1078—Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:

With respect to existing federal government obligations in the area of social housing funded through long-term housing operating agreements for each fiscal year from 2005-2006 to 2039-2040: (a) what is the total amount of federal monetary commitment, broken down by province and territory; and (b) what is the total number of social housing units funded, broken down by province and territory?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1079—Mr. Ted Hsu:

With regard to the Canada Border Services Agency: (a) what have been the total expenditures to maintain the customs building on Cornwall Island since 2008, broken down by fiscal year; (b) what is the estimated current market value of the customs building on Cornwall Island; (c) does the Agency have plans for future operation, use, disposition, or disposal of the customs terminal on Cornwall Island; (d) if the answer to (c) is affirmative, what are the particulars of those plans; (e) what have been the total expenditures to maintain and operate the temporary customs terminal on Three Nation Bridge, or adjacent to the recently-constructed low-level bridge, broken down by fiscal year; and (f) what are the details of the plans, projected costs, and anticipated timeline for the construction of a permanent customs terminal at the Cornwall-Akwesasne-New York State border crossing?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1080—Ms. Yvonne Jones:

With regard to materials prepared for past or current deputy heads of departments, crown corporations and agencies or their staff from April 1, 2011, to March 31, 2013: for every briefing document or docket prepared, what is (i) the date, (ii) the title or subject matter, (iii) the department's internal tracking number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1081—Ms. Yvonne Jones:

With regard to materials prepared for past or current ministers or their staff from April 1, 2011, to March 31, 2012: for every briefing document or docket prepared, what is the (i) date, (ii) title or subject matter, (iii) department's internal tracking number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1083—Mr. Claude Gravelle:

With regard to government funding: what is the total amount allocated for fiscal year 2013-2014 within the constituency of Nickel Belt, specifying each department, agency, initiative and amount?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

The Speaker: The Chair has notice of a request for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

Business of Supply

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 52(1), I request leave to make a motion for the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a matter that I believe to be of great urgency, of national importance and timely relevance, namely the announced intention of the government to transfer at no upfront cost all of the assets and majority stake in the former Canadian Wheat Board to a partnership between the American agrifood giant Bunge Limited and the wealth management fund of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

It is disturbing and confusing to my constituents that in making its decision the government inexplicably dismissed a cash offer of \$380 million to purchase the Wheat Board and its assets, which came directly from western Canadian grain farmers themselves. Bunge Limited and Saudi Arabia are paying nothing for the Wheat Board and its assets except for a promise to invest in their own company at some later date.

This wholesale giveaway of the Canadian Wheat Board's considerable assets was announced during a break week when the House of Commons was not sitting. Therefore, members of Parliament have not had the opportunity for the examination, the scrutiny, the oversight and the due diligence of this preposterous disposal of assets as is our right, our obligation and duty as parliamentarians. In keeping with the criteria for granting an emergency debate, I ask that you take note that this is the first opportunity we have had since the deal was announced to bring it to the attention of the House. I also believe the matter should qualify as an emergency because the impact on this important strategic industry will be permanent and irreversible if this corporate giveaway is allowed to proceed further.

Until it was dismantled by legislation, the Canadian Wheat Board was one of the largest and most successful grain marketing companies in the world. It was a Canadian success story as it was owned and operated by Canadian grain farmers for Canadian grain farmers, with revenues of over \$6 billion a year. It not only provided the best possible return for producers, it ensured orderly marketing and reliable deliveries, and protected the premium quality brand and reputation of our Canadian wheat and barley products. It is a bizarre irony that, while this government administration is openly hostile to the concept of state-owned enterprises in Canada, it is allowing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to be a major partner in the takeover of this great Canadian institution.

This issue is urgent. There has been little disclosure of details of the transfer. Misinformation abounds and many questions cry out for answers. For example, how can the minister say there will be greater competition in grain marketing by this takeover when in fact the merger will result in one less actor in the market? How can the farmers expect a higher price for their product with this new company when the Wheat Board was a non-profit entity and by legislation returned all profits to the producers? In contrast, Bunge Limited paid its CEO \$6 million last year and earned \$207 million. That money came from somewhere.

It is only fair to all parties that this debate be held today so that Canadians and particularly Canadian prairie farmers may understand the implications and details of this shadowy "sale that is not a sale", so that they can know what time-sensitive options are open to them

both in terms of the sale itself and how that might affect the business decisions they must make right now about spring planting and planning their crops in the future. Taxpayers have a right to know why their government would give away the assets of this great Canadian institution to foreign interests for nothing except a promissory note that the company will invest in itself at some future date. How is that good business by anybody's standard?

For these pressing and urgent reasons, I request that there be an emergency debate in this House to further discuss this matter. Should you require any additional information about this situation that would assist you in reaching a favourable decision on my application for leave, I would be happy to supply it.

• (1525)

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre for raising the issue of the sale of the Canadian Wheat Board. As a member from western Canada, I am very familiar with the Wheat Board as well in my own riding. However, I am not sure that it rises to the level of need for an emergency debate. I do note that today is a supply day and I am sure there will be other opportunities to raise questions about the Wheat Board in days to come. However, I am not sure that it meets the test for an emergency debate as it stands.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—COASTAL WATER PROTECTION

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to note that I will be sharing my time today with the hon. member for Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière.

Let me begin by reassuring parliamentarians and Canadians alike that Canada has one of the strongest marine safety regimes in the world. Our government remains committed to continual improvement, and continues to take action to strengthen our marine spill prevention, preparedness, response capabilities, liability and compensation regime.

On April 8, 2015, a marine fuel spill occurred in Vancouver's English Bay. Since learning of the incident, we have confirmed that the spill originated from the MV *Marathassa*, a bulk carrier on her maiden voyage that was scheduled to pick up grain. At the time the incident occurred, she was anchored along with several other vessels in the area.

When notified of the spill by a concerned boater, the Canadian Coast Guard responded and tasked Transport Canada's national aerial surveillance program, or NASP, aircraft to perform overflights of English Bay. Throughout the response operation, several aerial patrols were made daily. In total, this represents 13 overflights, which were vital to assess and monitor the amount of pollution and the effectiveness of the cleanup efforts. The results of these overflights were shared with all parties involved in the response efforts, and the overflights will continue as needed.

Business of Supply

In addition to the situational awareness provided by the flights conducted as part of the national aerial surveillance program, Transport Canada has conducted inspections of the vessels to verify compliance with applicable safety and environmental protection requirements and to ascertain the cause of the spill. Also, Transport Canada is monitoring the actions of the response organization, in this case the Western Canada Marine Response Corporation, to ensure that it is in compliance with the Canada Shipping Act, 2001 and all regulations.

Transport Canada investigates all reported oil spills, and if there is sufficient evidence that there is contravention of our federal laws, the polluter may be prosecuted in court. Furthermore, an administrative monetary penalty could be imposed on the polluter. This is just another measure to protect Canadian taxpayers.

As the cleanup efforts continue, Transport Canada has already begun to shift its focus in its investigation. Marine safety inspectors are continuing their work examining compliance with the requirements under the Canada Shipping Act and the Vessel Pollution and Dangerous Chemicals Regulations.

Under the Canada Shipping Act, an owner of a vessel like the *Marathassa* must have an arrangement with Transport Canada's certified response organization, as well as under the Vessel Pollution and Dangerous Chemicals Regulations. All vessels are required to report either a discharge or an anticipated discharge of oil. Such a report must be made by the master of the vessel as soon as the discharge occurs or is anticipated, unless the master is involved in saving lives, securing safety or dealing with damage to the vessel or the environment.

As part of its investigation, Transport Canada will review the vessel's compliance with these requirements. The results of the investigation will guide Transport Canada's decisions on the appropriate enforcement action. This can include prosecution as well as seeking administrative monetary penalties.

As well, under Canada's regulatory regime, the Marine Liability Act requires vessels to have insurance to cover pollution damage arising from an oil spill. In Canada, our liability and compensation regime for ship-source oil spills is based on the polluter pay principle. This means that the polluter is responsible for paying the costs of an oil spill. In this particular case, the shipowner's representatives have indicated that they will meet all of their legal liabilities. Losses and damages covered under the regime include reasonable measures to prevent or minimize pollution damage, cleanup costs, property damage, economic losses and environmental restoration actually undertaken. Under the Marine Liability Act, the liability limit for a bulk carrier the size of the *Marathassa* is \$26.5 million to cover eligible losses and damages related to a marine fuel spill.

Although it is unlikely that the costs will exceed that amount in this case, if they do, additional eligible losses and damages may be covered from the Canada ship-source oil pollution fund. Canada's ship-source oil pollution fund was established in 1989, and it is a very important piece of Canada's oil spill preparedness and response regime. The fund covers all oil spills for all classes of ships at any place in Canada or in Canadian waters. As members have heard, Canada has an extensive oil spill preparation and response regime

that is in place to ensure that if a spill does occur the response is effective and efficient, and protects the interests of all Canadians and our marine environment.

• (1530)

As we learn from this incident and continue our efforts to modernize our response regime through the implementation of a world-class tanker safety system, we must also acknowledge the work of all those involved who immediately responded to this incident. The incident serves to highlight the importance of our continued efforts to work collaboratively with our partners, and all levels of government and industry, to achieve a world-class tanker safety system.

Throughout this incident, Transport Canada's teams have been actively engaged with our key partners, such as the Canadian Coast Guard, Environment Canada, and provincial and municipal jurisdictions, as well as the private sector response organization, Western Canada Marine Response Corporation.

Transport Canada is continuing to conduct aerial surveillance flights over English Bay, to survey the area to help with the cleanup efforts. Canada remains an international leader in the maritime community as a country that provides a clear and predictable set of rules. These rules not only help to protect the environment and ensure safety, but also protect Canadians through the liability to collect compensation if spills occur.

Canada depends on marine shipping for economic growth, jobs, and prosperity. With the inspection and investigation regime currently in place and the continued improvements being implemented through the world-class tanker safety system, we will continue to ensure that our marine environments remain safe.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have to question my colleague about keeping Canadians safe. We saw what happened at Lac-Mégantic. We see another incident where the response time was not acceptable. Conservatives are trying to tell us that even if the Kitsilano Coast Guard had been there, they would not have been able to respond. However, we hear otherwise from the people who actually worked there.

I was at the North Channel Marine Tourism Council conference this weekend, and they raised concerns about the fact that the coast guards in our area were cut back or closed. I am wondering how the member can stand in the House and say they are doing what is best for Canadians when there is accident after accident. We can talk about the railroad accidents, the train derailments in Gogama, in White River, and Lac-Mégantic, as I mentioned. How can the Conservatives be so clear that they are doing things for Canadians when they are not? They do not have Canadians' safety and security in the environment at heart.

Business of Supply

• (1535)

Mr. Ted Opitz: Mr. Speaker, obviously I disagree. Canada has the safety of all Canadians at heart.

The task was responded to fairly quickly. It was tasked at 20:06 hours and arrived at 21:25 hours. Remember, it is on the sea and it takes a while to get there. We are not on land and cannot race at speeds that some people might want to consider. We have to remember that this is a marine emergency being responded to, and the entire ship was boomed off by 5:53 in the morning. I think that was responded to quite well.

The other thing we have to remember is that across Canada there are over 80 caches of oil spill equipment that are accessible very quickly, and all of that was brought to bear within that timeframe. All of our services that were engaged in this incident responded very quickly, professionally, and did their jobs to a very high standard.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is budget day, and we have a government that is committed to spending endless millions of dollars in self-congratulatory types of messages about its budget. It is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on single ads during the NHL games. Yet, the government has cut back on some of the vital services that could have gone a long way in addressing the concerns being expressed today and over the last couple of weeks. It is not just the harbours in Vancouver. We have ports in Halifax, Churchill, and other areas where people want and need assurances from government that the money and resources will be there to protect our environment, especially if we look into the future in terms of economic growth. We are an exporting nation.

How does the member justify the advertising dollars being spent, the millions being spent on advertising and the need to adequately—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The hon. member for Etobicoke Centre.

Mr. Ted Opitz: Mr. Speaker, this country and this government are committed to the Canadian taxpayer. We are committed to balancing the budget. We are committed to public safety, and we are committed to making sure that we have and continue to have the strongest economy in the world.

We have invested in these safety protocols all across the region. As we can see from the reports of the agencies involved, we were involved and moved very quickly to contain the spill. We have moved and made improvements and investments in the coast guard and other assets related to it. We have made sure that the communications enhancements that were made enable the coast guard and related agencies to communicate quickly and to respond at the quickest possible speed across the area.

We have invested not only in technology, but we have invested in the safety and security of Canadians on land and sea and in the air.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our country has one of the best marine safety regimes in the world. Marine transportation is the cornerstone of many regional economies in Canada. Goods have been shipped safely in Canadian

waters for decades thanks to responsible shipping industry partners and navigators and also because of the effective prevention measures in place.

Our government has made significant investments in the world-class safety system for tanker ships in order to prevent spills, quickly clean up any spills that occur and enforce the polluter pays principle.

Canada continues to be a world leader in the implementation of new navigation technologies by providing navigators with the vital information they need. Progress and innovation, together with real-time analysis of vessel traffic and the extension of automatic identification requirements to a greater number of vessels, will ensure that ships navigate even more efficiently and safely.

As a result of the world-class tanker safety system, there has been even better co-operation between experts in various fields. Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard, Transport Canada, Environment Canada and Natural Resources Canada are working together on important initiatives that support marine safety and the protection of our marine environment.

In May 2014, our government announced that Canada had adopted an area response planning model, which provides a new, collaborative, transparent and risk-based approach to preparing for and responding to ship-source oil spills.

As a federal agency responsible for providing an appropriate response to ship-source marine pollution incidents, the Canadian Coast Guard will bring its partners together more than ever to develop area response plans and further improve the decision-making process. These partners include many local stakeholders and representatives from aboriginal communities, the industry and other levels of government.

The area response plans will be improved through scientific research on pollutants and how they behave in water. This research will help the Canadian Coast Guard learn more about new products and how they interact with the marine environment. It will also give the coast guard a wider range of response measures to draw upon. This new response planning approach will strengthen the current system, under which private sector response organizations are required to maintain a 10,000-tonne response capacity throughout Canada. The current approach has proven to be extremely effective for many years and has successfully protected the environment.

However, our government is committed to continually improving the safety of Canadians and the environment. That is why our government is taking this opportunity to strengthen and improve the existing measures in order to protect our environment now and for generations to come.

Business of Supply

The new area response planning process will be piloted at four test sites: the southern portion of British Columbia, Saint John and the Bay of Fundy in New Brunswick, Port Hawkesbury and the Strait of Canso in Nova Scotia, and the St. Lawrence Seaway from Quebec City to Anticosti Island, Quebec.

The Canadian Coast Guard and our federal colleagues recognize that we cannot develop area response plans in isolation. That is why, beginning this year, a series of activities will be planned so that the perspectives of stakeholders and aboriginal groups can be taken into account throughout the process.

• (1540)

To reinforce the response element of our world-class tanker safety system, our government announced \$31 million over five years for the Canadian Coast Guard to adopt an incident command system, known as ICS, across the Canadian Coast Guard.

This is a critical initiative that will bring about the implementation of a standardized management approach on the ground for the efficient command, control and coordination of responses to all marine incidents.

The new incident command system will enhance the Canadian Coast Guard's ability to respond to marine pollution incidents together with major partners and response organizations.

The Canadian Coast Guard recently used the incident command system to successfully manage the recovery of pollutants from the wreck of the *Brigadier General M.G. Zalinski* in the Grenville Channel. The system creates a centralized, controlled approach enabling the Canadian Coast Guard to collaborate with federal and provincial partners, first nations and the private sector to respond quickly and safely.

Over the next few years, the incident command system will be fully implemented, thereby strengthening the existing response regime. Simply put, the Canadian Coast Guard and its partners will be in a better position to deal with pollution incidents and other marine incidents, by relying on an already robust environmental response system.

The incident command system is another example of how our world-class tanker safety system is being enhanced in order to protect Canadians and our environment.

It is important to note, as many of my colleagues know, that under the laws of Canada, the liability and compensation regime for oil spills is based on the polluter pays principle. In other words, the polluter is always responsible for paying for the costs of an oil spill. If a ship causes a spill, Canadian law makes its owner liable for losses and damages.

Our laws also require ships to have an arrangement in place with a marine response organization to respond to any requests for an environmental response that may be needed.

These response organizations play an important role by being an essential part of the environmental response capability in Canadian waters.

In closing, through our robust safety regime and our world-class tanker safety system, our government will continue its important work to protect Canadians and our marine environment.

• (1545)

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe my ears.

I am fortunate to represent a riding that stretches along the St. Lawrence River. Like all Canadians, we are all connected by our waterways. The spill in British Columbia could just as easily happen on Canada's east coast, because the current government is completely oblivious when it comes to Canadians' safety and especially environmental protections.

My colleague who moved the motion said that the Conservatives decided to shut down the Kitsilano Coast Guard base in secret. It did not consult the provinces or the cities.

What does my government colleague have to say about the fact that co-operative federalism is nowhere to be found in Canada?

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. Our government is ensuring that we are in a better position to respond to such incidents by providing new funding and new tools, and by ensuring that the companies responsible have to pay.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in looking at the economics and how important it is that we do what we can to protect our environment and looking into the future, Canada being an exporting nation, we can see that there is going to be an increased demand for us to use our ports. That is why it is critically important for the federal government to invest in areas in which we can provide that level of comfort and reality of having a safe environment.

At a time when Canada should be investing in our Coast Guard and other safety measures to protect our environment, why has the government chosen to make cutbacks? It seems to be at odds in terms of our being able to create the important jobs in the area of exports. It is also neglecting the important issue of our environment, something on which Canadians have a high expectation and want leadership coming from Ottawa.

• (1550)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

However, I remind him that under our government, funding for the Canadian Coast Guard has increased by 27%. Unfortunately, the member and his party, the NDP, voted against increasing these budgets.

Business of Supply

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc: Mr. Speaker, we have heard the current government's announcements. It has become apparent that the government intends to vote on advertising budgets in order to promote the federal budget. It is completely disregarding the priorities of Canadians, who are talking about climate change and protecting our waterways. They want the federal government to be there to protect the Canadian public. The government is not there for Canadians.

Does my colleague think that the Conservatives are going to turn things around in the budget being brought down tomorrow?

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that my colleagues across the way will completely disregard tomorrow's budget presentation by the hon. Minister of Finance.

I would like them to vote in favour of the benefits for all Canadians in the budget. We shall see what they do tomorrow.

[*English*]

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

As always, it is an honour to speak in the House on behalf of my constituents in Surrey North, especially today, because this issue is very near and dear to them.

I have often spoken about the need to protect the pristine waters off our coasts to ensure that we have a viable tourism industry, a viable recreation industry and a viable fisheries industry. Many individuals depend on having these waters protected and their jobs protected.

I have pointed out previously that it is sad to see what happened in English Bay, a jewel of Canadian inlets where parks are located. Hundreds of thousands of people live around the area where the bunker leaked fuel in the middle of the bay. We have been pointing out for a number of years the need for protection and the need to ensure that if this ever happened, we would have proper resources to deal with it. Not only that, we have seen an increase in tanker traffic, and marine traffic in general in English Bay, yet we have seen a reduction by the government in the number of safety valves that are available.

What are the facts in regard to this bunker fuel that was leaked in the middle of a bay in downtown Vancouver? Let us start with the closing of the Kitsilano Coast Guard station. The Conservative government closed the Kitsilano Coast Guard station after many attempts by not only the opposition parties, but many British Columbians who were concerned. I raised concerns in the House that the closing of Coast Guard stations would have a detrimental effect on the west coast way of life.

Someone called 911 and reported the spill, but it took 12 hours before authorities notified the City of Vancouver, the very people who were supposed to ensure that the public did not go to the beaches and ensure the safety of the general public. To me, 12 hours to respond is not a world-class response; it is more of a Mickey Mouse operation. It took six hours for authorities to get a boom installed to ensure the oil was contained. That is a lot of time before containing what was spilled there.

The former commander of the Coast Guard base that the government closed was quoted in Vancouver media as saying it would only take six minutes to get the Coast Guard to the spillage area. How much damage can be done in the time from six minutes up to six hours? We have heard in the House where the oil went. It was spotted about 12 kilometres away from the original spill.

● (1555)

In six minutes, the Coast Guard could have been there and we would have had some form of containment. However, because the government closed the Kitsilano Coast Guard station, it took six hours before we could get a ship there. That is not responsible. That is not expected from the Canadian government. I know British Columbians do not expect that from the current government, and New Democrats have been calling on the government to ensure that response time would be much shorter if it were to occur again.

In addition to the closure of the Coast Guard, the government has also closed the Vancouver environmental station. Environmental emergencies went through the station, and the marine mammal containment program. That was closed by the government. Those are some of the facts. If we are going to see an increase in traffic in English Bay and Burrard Inlet, we need to have proper safety valves to ensure that if there were an accident that we take steps to ensure it is contained.

As well, the Auditor General has been clear that Canada is not prepared for even a moderately sized oil spill, yet the Conservatives choose to ignore it. I do not know if they choose to ignore it or they do not believe in it, but I can assure members that people from my constituency, from Vancouver, and all along the coastline of British Columbia expect a much better response than there has been from the current government with its gutting of the protections needed in our marine environment.

One can only imagine what would happen if this were a bigger spill. We cannot even contain bunker fuel, which is about 3,000 litres. Can anyone imagine what would happen if a big tanker were to have an accident? Imagine the devastation it would cause to the environment and the fisheries. The devastation would cost jobs in British Columbia. Port Metro Vancouver supports tens of thousands of jobs, and I cannot imagine having a bigger spill from a bigger tanker going down. It would be devastating, not only for our environment but for the economy, because many people depend on the coastal waters of British Columbia.

New Democrats have been calling on the government to establish more safety regulations and safer navigation of the waters off of British Columbia. We should be listening to the experts. The experts are meeting in Ottawa this week: the ITF Canadian maritime coordinating committee and CMWC representatives of all of Canada's maritime unions, which include the SIU of Canada, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, The Canadian Merchant Service Guild, the International Longshoremen's Association, the BC Ferry and Marine Workers' Union, and CUPE Local 375.

Business of Supply

The ITF Canadian maritime coordinating committee and CMWC have unanimously adopted supporting the NDP motion, and make special note of the recent oil spill from the Cyprus-registered, Greek-owned *Marathassa*. It was further noted that under the current maritime provisions of CETA, this vessel would be permitted to operate within Canada's coastal waters, which is presently reserved for Canadian-owned and Canadian-registered vessels adhering to Canadian law.

I hope that members of the Conservative Party, especially the ones from British Columbia, will stand in the House, support British Columbians, and help to pass this motion.

• (1600)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again I want to reinforce the fact that tomorrow the budget will be presented. We have had Conservative majority government, for consecutive years, cut back on issues that would have had a positive impact in dealing with spills.

If we take a look at the budget, Canadians are going to be inundated with millions of dollars of advertising, promoting the Conservative Party. My question to the member is fairly straightforward. Would he not agree that money would be far better spent by bringing back or possibly increasing resources, getting rid of the cuts that the Conservatives have made in the last couple of years, reinvesting that \$7 million-plus of advertising dollars into our Coast Guard, and having other more proactive approaches that deal with issues such as oil spills?

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu: Mr. Speaker, that shows the priorities of the government. It is going to be spending \$7.5 million on advertising the budget it is bringing in tomorrow, taxpayers' money, yet it is failing to fund \$750,000 for the Coast Guard at Kitsilano. That shows the priorities and the lack of initiative from the government.

Canadians expect better. I know British Columbians expect better. Be assured, if the government's priorities are not changing, the government will, come October 19.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his very interesting speech. The situation on the west coast is rather worrisome and the people on the east coast are also concerned.

The government has repeatedly said there is no cause for concern, since shipping companies will be held responsible for potential spills and will have to pay for damages. However, these oil spills kill wildlife and fish, which has an adverse effect on the tourism industry. Beaches have to close, for example.

Is having an insurance policy the same as having equipment on site and a marine traffic services centre?

[*English*]

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine for the hard work he does in the House, and also for his question.

The bottom line is that the official opposition will not be burying its head in the sand. We know the record of the government. We will

continue to speak up on behalf of constituents, whether from Surrey North, British Columbia, or coast to coast to coast.

I often talk about polluter pays. I know I do not have enough time to get into it in this segment of questioning, but polluter pays should be the principle we are guided by. If someone pollutes, they should pay for it. Unfortunately, under this government, the polluter does not pay; the taxpayer is left holding the bag. That is not fair to Canadians across the country.

• (1605)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

It is a question of trust. The polluter pays principle is a good thing. However, it is just as important that the government protect the public because that is its job. It must apply and enforce the regulations pertaining to the polluter pays principle.

What does my colleague have to say about this government in that regard?

[*English*]

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu: Mr. Speaker, the number one responsibility of any government is to ensure that our citizens are safe and our environment is protected. Unfortunately, what I have seen in the last four years is cut after cut, not only to the Coast Guard and emergency services on the west coast but across the country. That is not how to govern. If a government's number one priority is safety of its citizens and the environment, it should be making investments to ensure it is keeping its citizens safe at all times. Unfortunately, this government has failed to deliver. I hear it from my constituents. I see it in papers across the country.

It is time that the government support this very minimal motion we are bringing forward, that immediate steps are taken to ensure safety on the west coast.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on this debate today. I think that the story of the bunker oil spill from the bulk grain carrier, the *MV Marathassa*, is now becoming clear, not from what the government is telling us today, but through the work of journalists, sailors, and maritime workers who observed what happened in this case.

Rob O'Dea and Arnt Arntzen, two sailors, spotted the spill at 4:45 p.m., on Wednesday, April 8, in English Bay. In about 15 minutes, they managed to track the spill to the motor vessel *Marathassa*. During that 15 minutes, the spill had already spread half a kilometre long and 250 metres wide. Seeing no evidence of any cleanup in process, Mr. O'Dea phoned 911 and was assured by the Coast Guard that it already knew about the spill and had dispatched a response team, even though he could not see one onsite. As it turns out, the Coast Guard's initial notice may have only come three minutes before he called.

Business of Supply

Unfortunately, the private contractor was not called for another three hours. Although we do use private contractors to deal with spills, in this case the company happened to be owned by Kinder Morgan, which raises some interesting questions about companies who deliver oil to the coast and then pay themselves to clean up their spills. However, that is for another debate. It took another one and a half hours for the company to get on the water, and the spill was not contained for nearly 12 hours.

Let us remember three things about this spill. First, it was a relatively small spill, approximately 2,700 litres of bunker fuel. However, it is not clear how much oil was spilled at this point. That is probably only an estimate. Second, it occurred in a place of high visibility. It occurred in the middle of a busy harbour and recreational sailing area, so fortunately there were people around to see the spill. Third, it occurred in calm seas on a calm day. This means that it is probably the easiest of all oil spills to clean up.

It is clear in this case that we could have responded more quickly if the Conservatives had not closed the Kitsilano Coast Guard station in 2013, and had not put the ship that was capable of dealing with a small spill like this up on blocks, which is where it sits today. Fred Moxey, the former commander of the Kitsilano Coast Guard station, has offered to sign an affidavit saying that what the Conservatives have said about not having the equipment or capacity at the Kitsilano Coast Guard station is untrue. When he was a commander there, it did have the ability to get to a spill like this in six minutes, and could have contained the spill within 30 minutes.

We have some very specific things we could do that would help us to deal with spills like this. We have some very concrete proposals in the motion before us today. However, I have a wish that goes along with those proposals, and that is for the Conservatives to stop talking about our world-class oil spill response.

First of all, "world class" is not a standard by which anyone measures oil spill responses. Oil spill responses are measured by the amount of time it takes one to get to the spill and the amount of equipment one can have onsite. It is not measured by an advertising or promotional phrase like "world class", which is normally associated with sporting events and luxury cars. It is simply not a standard that anyone uses with respect to oil spills.

Clearly the government is using it because it is trying to sell us the idea that its record of cuts and closures to our marine emergency response system has nothing to do with our ability to respond to oil spills. We have to use this wonderful phrase that makes us all think high thoughts so we do not see the reality of what is happening on the seas, which is that we have a reduced capacity to deal with these problems.

It is not satisfied with having moved the oil spill response centre to Montreal from Vancouver. To think that we are managing oil spills in Vancouver from Montreal boggles the mind. The government has closed the Kitsilano Coast Guard station. It has closed the Ucluelet marine transportation communications centre. Even this spill has not convinced it to back off on closing two more marine communications centres on the west coast, in Vancouver and Comox.

I would like to issue an invitation to Conservatives on the other side to come with me and some of my friends for a crab dinner. Crab

is normally caught off of Jericho Beach in Vancouver. Wait a minute. I cannot do that because the crab fishery is closed as a result of this spill. It took the Department of Fisheries and Oceans six days to close the crab fishery and put up signs. The Musqueam nation put up signs and closed its fishery only one day after the spill. Where was the federal government with respect to protecting people who use these recreational fisheries from the potentially toxic effects of this spill?

An hon. member: Working on their ads.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, one of my colleagues said they were busy doing advertising. I think that unfortunately may be the answer.

● (1610)

The recreational crab and prawn fishery remains closed in Burrard Inlet, including Jericho Beach, a very popular spot in Vancouver, until we can do some sampling of marine pollution. That should not take very long, should it? However, a year ago the government completely closed down its only department which had scientists who could do marine pollution samples, laid off the staff, and now it will have to contract that work out to somebody else because it has no capacity to test the results of these spills.

It is not just NDP MPs who are outraged by the spill response. My colleague from Surrey noted that the Canadian Maritime Workers Council, the International Transport Workers Federation, which have endorsed this motion, have gone further to say that one of the other things we need to watch out for is that in the government's mania for free trade agreements, quite often it includes the coastal trade in British Columbia, which right now is reserved to Canadian registered vessels that have far higher safety standards and monitoring. They are not only supporting our motion, they are saying that we should be very careful about letting foreign flag ships into our coastal shipping.

Even the provincial premier has pointed to the failures of the federal government's oil spill response, although once again she shows a lot of nerve, since what the provincial government has done in these areas is also completely inadequate.

Finally, the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities had its annual general meeting just four days after the spill. It passed an emergency resolution calling for an independent audit of the current state of oil spill preparedness in British Columbia. These are mayors and councils from all across Vancouver Island, and they have no confidence in the current government's assessment of its own ability to deal with oil spills.

Business of Supply

I represent some of those coastal communities, and my concerns about the threats to our maritime environment became most acute when I was first elected to Esquimalt Council. Esquimalt is a town with kilometres of shorelines, both on the Strait of Georgia and around the Victoria and Esquimalt harbours. In our first month on council, we began to examine our emergency preparedness, a key municipal responsibility. What did we find with regard to the threat of oil spills? We found that we had little or no capacity to cope with existing threats, let alone those that would result from increased tanker traffic and increased size of tankers.

It became clear that in the face of a major oil spill, we would have little more to rely on than our citizen volunteers down on the beach with buckets and mops. It is the same for other communities in my riding. We have heard discussions of improvements to come in oil spill capacity, but municipalities at this point are left on their own to try to respond to these things, if the federal government bothers to notify them.

The Coast Guard's own audit of oil spill preparedness released in July, 2013 found that our system on the west coast was disorganized and outdated, and most of the equipment on site on Vancouver Island was more than 25 years old.

In October, 2013, a B.C. government report estimated we would be likely to recover little more than 3% to 4% of a modest 10,000 tonnes spill on the north coast, and somewhere between 10% and 30% on the south coast where there was actually more equipment.

The 1989 *Exxon Valdez* spill in Alaska was 34,600 tonnes of the 200,000 tonnes it was carrying. Therefore, it is similar to the very large tankers we can expect to see if more pipelines proceed.

Some argue *Exxon Valdez* examples are irrelevant because it was more than 25 years ago and technology has changed, but I have to remind the House that the Motor Vessel *Marathassa* is brand new and on its maiden voyage.

In conclusion, we have seen in 2010 two incidents in Malaysia and Texas of accidents involving new double-hull tankers, and both spilled more than 2,500 tonnes of oil. That is more than 2.9 million litres of oil in each case, not 2,700 litres.

We have some very big problems to deal with as tanker traffic increases on the coast, which was why I introduced a motion as a councillor that we have a moratorium on increased tanker traffic until we had better oil response in place.

To protect the future of our existing fishing and marine recreation and tourism industries in the west coast, we have to take the threat posed by oil spills seriously. We cannot simply declare our response world class and turn a blind eye to the lack of capacity that actually exists.

I will be watching very closely to see where B.C. Conservative MPs stand when this vote is called.

● (1615)

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a quote here and would not mind hearing some comments on it. It is from the assistant commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard, Western Region Canada, who said, “Kitsilano, should it have been in place,

would not have been called upon for environmental response in this scenario”.

The members opposite continue to reference Kitsilano as though its closure would have had some impact on the Coast Guard response. We have a direct quote from the assistant commissioner. Is my colleague opposite in effect saying that the assistant commissioner is wrong?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, first, I am sure the commissioner's statement was approved in the minister's office before it was issued.

I am prepared to go with someone who has no dog in this fight, and that is the former commander of the Kitsilano Coast Guard station who said, when he was there two years ago, that they had the capacity, that they could have met the spill in six minutes and that they would have responded.

Again, the government's press releases to the contrary, it is clear that the closure of the Kitsilano Coast Guard station reduced our ability to deal with oil spills in English Bay.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I, too, listened to question period and the debate before question period. I was puzzled by this notion of world class, but also heard at the same time that we could improve on it, which I guess makes it universe class or out of this world. I have no idea how one would improve upon world class, but improvement is possible, apparently.

I also heard that we should not judge the response until we had the facts. I am curious as to how something could be assessed as world class if there was a public admission that all the facts were not available.

I would also like to hear the member's comments about how slow it was to get the mayor of Vancouver notified. As well, the other issue critical to this is if there had been Coast Guard vessels in the harbour, maybe they could have gotten the appropriate people on site sooner, but that without them, that is what the delay was all about.

● (1620)

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, I, too, wondered. Out-of-the-world class is probably where the government is heading with this. I do not know.

It is very clear that all the things we are doing along the coast in marine safety and security and all the things that are being cut reduce our capacity. That is common sense. We cannot cut back on the number of stations and communication centres and say that we are improving the ability to respond to these things. It is simply not true.

Business of Supply

The ability for municipalities to find out what is going on from the federal government is not just in the area of oil spills. We have heard the same thing on issues of toxic substances being transported by rail, where municipalities are asking for advance notice of this stuff coming through the communities and the federal government is responding that it is way too complicated and that it cannot possibly tell the communities if they are at risk.

We do not see this just in this one area. We see it in all these areas, from food safety to rail safety to oil spills. The government's cutbacks are having a real and direct impact on our ability to keep Canadians safe.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we are concerned about the environment. We are concerned about the protection of Canadians. On that side of the House, they prefer to do a lot of cutbacks.

Could my colleague elaborate on the fact that the health advisories have been lifted on all beaches, but the Coast Guard cautioning beach goers to remain vigilant and avoid contact with any small amounts of remaining oil?

The government seems to be saying that everything is hunky-dory and it is taking care of it, yet the Coast Guard is saying that people still have to be concerned. I know that when people are diving underwater, it is very difficult to figure out whether they are going to be coming into contact with some tar balls.

Could my colleague comment on the impact this could have on tourism and on the state of the situation at this point?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, the member raises the important point that while the environment is very important, this is also about jobs.

Many people on the west coast work in tourism, recreation and in areas that depend very much on these pristine waters off our coast to maintain those industries. There is very little in terms of economic benefit in our local communities from tankers and other freighters that go in and out of the harbour.

People's jobs depend on ecotourism and water-based recreation. Every one of these incidents harms our tourism industry and harms our ecotourism and recreation industries. It has a much bigger impact on the economy than members might first think.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): 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 Ahuntsic, Transportation; and the hon. member for Trinity—Spadina, Infrastructure.

[*English*]

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to note that I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the hon. member for Yukon.

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to rise in the House today to discuss the motion put forward by the member for New

Westminster—Coquitlam. As my colleagues stated earlier today, Canada has one of the strongest marine safety regimes in the world. It is my pleasure to speak to the dedication and capacity that our responders and partners have to protect the marine environment.

Today, I would like to focus my remarks on Environment Canada's role in these kinds of environmental emergencies. I will highlight the impressive capacity and dedication that Environment Canada specifically provides in the event of a pollution incident. As well, I will speak to the critical support and expertise that Environment Canada provided in response to the marine pollution incident from the *Marathassa* vessel.

It goes without saying that Environment Canada is an organization that prides itself on its thorough scientific work. In fact, it is one of the largest science programs in the federal government. Environment Canada is a leader, contributing to the Government of Canada's priority of a clean and healthy environment. Its world-class science is the foundation for the department's policies and actions.

Environment Canada's key role is to provide scientific and technical advice, and guidance to reduce the potential consequences of environmental emergencies. The National Environmental Emergencies Centre is Environment Canada's focal point for addressing and managing environmental emergencies. The emergencies centre provides high calibre scientific advice and information to responders and lead agencies in the event of an environmental incident. It advises on issues such as northern and Arctic species, weather and wind predictions, birds oiled at sea, species at risk, pollution dispersion modelling and pollution cleanup techniques.

As members of the House can imagine, this kind of information is critically important in a variety of environmental responses. In order to safeguard the environment and determine the best course of action, lead agencies need access to this kind of strategic, expert advice.

The National Environmental Emergencies Centre also manages the approximately 36,000 environmental emergency notifications that it receives each year. It does this efficiently and effectively. Additionally, it issues directives and takes action as per legislative requirements under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, as well as the Fisheries Act. It also assesses the appropriateness of any remedial actions required under those acts.

Environment Canada's National Environmental Emergencies Centre is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide expert scientific advice to responders and other implicated agencies. The National Environmental Emergencies Centre advises federal departments such as Transport Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard, along with various provincial and municipal departments, agencies and environmental response companies. When needed, it also offers on-site advice and coordination.

Business of Supply

There is another important role that Environment Canada plays in the event of an environmental emergency response. The department also enforces the Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994, and the pollution prevention provisions of the Fisheries Act. This includes those provisions that prohibit the discharge of harmful substances into areas frequented by migratory birds and deleterious substances into waters frequented by fish. To accomplish this, Environment Canada provides information on migratory birds and species at risk in the area of a spill and minimizes harm to oiled birds through deterrent measures. Environment Canada also ensures the humane treatment of migratory birds and species at risk by recommending appropriate response and treatment strategies.

Environment Canada works closely with Transport Canada through a memorandum of understanding in the surveillance of sea-based activities, such as pollution, ice conditions and marine security.

In order to illustrate how Environment Canada helps responders reduce the environmental consequences of polluting incidents, I would like to highlight the actions taken during the cleanup of the *Marathassa* spill.

Earlier this month, on April 8, Environment Canada was notified of an oil slick in the Vancouver harbour-English Bay area. Environment Canada's trained experts in Vancouver and across the country then worked day and night to help the Canadian Coast Guard and other partners successfully respond to the *Marathassa* spill.

•(1625)

Environment Canada's national environmental emergencies centre was activated and it offered initial spill trajectory modelling and maps. In addition, Environment Canada co-chaired the environmental unit inside the incident command post along with British Columbia's Ministry of Environment.

Environment Canada experts were able to provide advice to the response team on the water sampling, monitoring and shoreline cleanup plans. Its scientists at the Pacific environmental science centre analyzed water samples from the incident site to help determine the source of the spill and the type of oil involved. Once identified, scientists within the department's emergencies science and technology section provided additional oil spill modelling services to help responders understand the behaviours of bunker fuel in the water.

As well, staff from the Canadian Wildlife Service inside the incident command post provided advice to focus wildlife and other wildlife response organizations in the development and execution of a plan to assist and protect wildlife in the area.

This is an impressive list of actions already, but Environment Canada's strong support of Canada's marine safety system during this response does not end here. In fact, meteorologists within the Pacific and Yukon storm prediction centre provided weather and sea state forecasts, including site-specific forecasts every six hours to incident command. These forecasts included wind speed and direction, temperature, precipitation, wave height, as well as tidal levels.

Officers from Environment Canada's enforcement branch attended the scene and continued to provide assistance to Transport Canada,

the lead investigating agency on ship-source incidents. Additionally, Environment Canada experts operating the marine aerial reconnaissance team, which is part of Transport Canada's national aerial reconnaissance program, used remote sensors to help calculate the volume of oil in the waters around the *Marathassa*.

Finally, Environment Canada kept Canadians informed on the progress in responding to the spill, including information on oiled birds and efforts to rehabilitate them.

As members can see, Environment Canada launched a robust and exhaustive response to this marine incident. It demonstrates how actively engaged Environment Canada is in helping its partners manage environmental emergencies.

The dedicated efforts and scientific expertise provided by Environment Canada form a critical component of our country's strong marine safety program. It provides efficient and effective emergency response advice and expert assistance to protect the environment, and it will continue doing just that.

•(1630)

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was impressed by the hon. member's speech about what a wonderful job Environment Canada is doing, which speaks to a parallel reality. I am not quite sure how Environment Canada actually does a better job when it lets go 55 scientists from its contaminants program. I am not quite sure how Environment Canada does a better job by reducing the overall budget for emergency responses by something in the order of 35%. I am not sure how Environment Canada actually does a better job by lapsing over the last four or five years the equivalent of one entire budgetary cycle. Every year, Environment Canada lapses a portion of its money and the cumulative total is the equivalent of one budgetary cycle.

I would be interested in the hon. member's analysis as to how, given all of those core facts, Environment Canada is actually responding better.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, obviously, the member listened to my presentation and he heard all of the wonderful work that Environment Canada has done, is doing on a regular basis and did in responding to this emergency as well.

I think the member answered his own question by saying that Environment Canada has done a tremendously good job in this particular case in regard to responding to all of the areas of concern, whether it was the density and of the type of oil that was in the water, the quantity of it and the amount of reclamation that was done for the fowl involved. I pointed out very clearly how Environment Canada has dealt with this emergency in regard to the *Marathassa*. It has been quite effective.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Brandon—Souris for his speech, but I cannot help but wonder what planet he lives on.

My colleague's speech was so off base with respect to what the people in B.C. affected by the spill are experiencing.

We had the same problem in the Quebec City area when the Conservative government, despite all advice to the contrary, decided to close the Quebec City marine rescue sub-centre. Beyond the outcry, the government was forced to realize that moving those services to Ontario was completely unrealistic if it was to respect the linguistic reality of Quebec in the St. Lawrence sector. The government was forced to reverse its decision.

When will the government wake up and reverse its decision to close the British Columbia centre?

• (1635)

[English]

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, my comments dealing with the good work of Environment Canada, the good work of the Coast Guard in B.C., and the notification of the province immediately whose responsibility it is to notify the city and surrounding areas municipally are targeted totally in regard to the excellent response on the *Marathassa* spill situation.

I am not surprised that my colleague from the NDP has some questions in regard to this given that there has been 27% higher federal funding in the Coast Guard since 2005 under the Liberals, but the NDP voted against that increase in funds anyway.

I think it is the opposition members who need to look at the type of plans they have for developing the safety in these kinds of situations and that is what I have tried to focus my comments on.

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today in the House and speak to this important motion.

Of course, our government is committed to protecting both the safety of Canadians and our maritime environment. We have made that abundantly clear through our continued and unprecedented investments in the Canadian Coast Guard fleet.

A key responsibility of the Canadian Coast Guard is to protect our waters through coordinating responses to emergency pollution incidents. To do so, Canadians rely on Canada's marine safety system, a robust, multi-layered regime built on strong partnerships across industry, all levels of government and stakeholders.

The environmental response regime of this system is what I will be using my time to discuss today. While my speech will focus mainly on the Coast Guard response, I would like to take a moment to highlight the other partners that protect the marine environment. For example, this system is founded on a comprehensive framework that is led by Transport Canada. Transport Canada has a key role in inspecting vessels to ensure that they are compliant with Canada's rigorous safety standards. If pollution ends up in the water, it investigates and when necessary, Transport Canada will prosecute the polluters. Environment Canada and Fisheries and Oceans also play an important role in supporting this system by ensuring that we

have the best scientific information available to support our decision-making.

When it comes to the role of the Canadian Coast Guard, its top priorities are to ensure the safety of mariners and the protection of the marine environment. When a response to pollution on the water is required, it is the Coast Guard that ensures the cleanup happens and that it is done right. This is not an uncommon job at all for the Coast Guard. In fact, each year the Coast Guard addresses and investigates approximately 1,300 maritime pollution incidents.

Depending on the situation, the Coast Guard can have a different response and take on different responsibilities during the cleanup effort. In Canada it is the shipowner's responsibility to ensure they clean up any pollution they have caused. If this is the case, the Coast Guard monitors the situation and ensures that the owner follows through appropriately. When the polluter is unknown, unwilling or unable to step up to the task, as we have witnessed in the early hours of the *Marathassa* operation, the Coast Guard then looks after the interests of Canadians and the environment by taking the lead and ensuring pollution is contained and removed.

I want Canadians to understand that they are not on the hook for the costs to clean up marine pollution. In Canada, polluters pay. Let me reiterate that the response is not on the taxpayer's dime but squarely on the polluter's.

A key component of the polluter pay regime is the requirement that vessels of a certain size have an arrangement with a Transport Canada certified response organization to clean up any pollution they may cause. Those organizations charge a fee to ships by the tonne to fund Canada's robust response capacity. Those response organizations in turn are required to maintain response plans and equipment. The legal requirement is that the certified response organizations maintain a capacity to respond to a 10,000 tonne event, which places Canada at the forefront in terms of spill response. In the case of the *Marathassa*, it was this kind of response organization with extensive capacity and expertise that undertook the cleanup work under the supervision of the Canadian Coast Guard.

I would like to reiterate the statements made by my colleagues earlier today and address the motion before us.

The commissioner of the Coast Guard has been crystal clear. The Kitsilano station was not an environmental response station and has never provided the kind of environmental response that the *Marathassa* operation required.

As we have seen, the Canadian Coast Guard has the capacity to manage major ship-source pollution. It plans for these events. It trains its employees and practices the operations with partners to ensure everyone is prepared should such an incident occur. The Canadian Coast Guard has the ability to take these measures and the measures it believes are necessary to minimize or prevent pollution damage to the environment.

In addition to the certified environmental response organizations, the Coast Guard has its own environmental response assets and equipment strategically located across the country.

Business of Supply

●(1640)

The Canadian Coast Guard follows a solid and effective response protocol in responding to the thousand-plus reports of pollution it receives each year. When one of those reports comes in, the first thing the Coast Guard does is investigate it. Coast Guard officials want to know where it is coming from, what it is, and what measures should be taken to protect our waters. Once the determination of the right course is made, they activate the response. They inform the polluters of their responsibilities or take over the response if the polluters are not known or are not able or willing to respond effectively.

The number one goal in a response is to protect the marine environment. I cannot stress enough how important that is to the Canadian Coast Guard, and any decision made during an operation is made with this goal in mind.

As I have mentioned, Canada has one of the strongest marine safety regimes in the world. That being said, we cannot rest on our past or on our successes, and our government is committed to continuing to make our response system even safer. The increase in trade and shipping in Canadian waters is an important consideration for our evolving system, and we are taking action to enhance an already robust marine safety system through the implementation of world-class measures.

Being fully prepared to respond to pollution is only part of the equation. The key to protecting the environment is preventing pollution from happening in the first place. The Canadian Coast Guard is implementing several new prevention measures that will reduce the risk of pollution in Canadian waters. The measures will increase the safety of marine navigation. These include improving the information available to mariners on waterways on potential hazards in real time, ensuring that the Canadian Coast Guard officers have the leading-edge tools, equipment, and technology to provide safer navigation services. This of course includes the Coast Guard's modernization of its Marine Communications and Traffic Services centres, which will provide state-of-the-art technology to officers to improve services to all mariners.

Our government has taken and will continue to take action to strengthen our already rigorous and robust environmental protection and response system. The Canadian Coast Guard has been a tireless pillar in the safety of our waters and the protection of the marine environment. We thank it for its work and continued support on that front.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I could not help hearing the hon. member place a lot of emphasis on polluter pay. My question is to how he understands that. My understanding of polluter pay is that it is just the cleanup costs. It does not account for damage to our tourism industry. It does not account for damage to the fishing industry. In a riding like mine, where we face the extinction of some species, it certainly could never cover the cost of the extinction of species. I wonder if the member would be a little more clear for the public that polluter pay only very narrowly means those costs.

The second part of my question would be this: Which companies are benefiting from the cleanup? Who owns those companies that are

doing the cleanup? I think the member knows the answer to that, because it happens to be companies like Kinder Morgan.

●(1645)

Mr. Ryan Leef: Mr. Speaker, as I stressed in my remarks, what is most important to Canadians is that prevention is the first response of the Government of Canada. We are initiating steps to make sure that accidents do not happen in the first place. The polluter pay principle in fact kicks in only once there has been pollution or when there has been an event. Our preference, and the preference of all members in this House, would be that we take measures and we make investments, and the Government of Canada is doing so, to make sure that an event does not occur in the first place. However, when it does, it is important for Canadians to know that they are not on the hook for the cleanup.

The cleanup, at times, can be very costly. The polluter pay principle in this case is one that directs and dictates that the owners and operators of these vessels need to make sure that they have a system in place ahead of time. It is not something they engage in after the fact but ahead of time to make sure that cleanups can be dealt with in an effective, expeditious, and cost-sensible measure that does not impact the Canadian public.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the enthusiasm for the response to this particular incident seems to be contained only within the Conservative caucus. The Premier of British Columbia was none too impressed. The mayor of Vancouver was none too impressed. In fact, the municipal councils were really irritated in 2013 when they were blindsided by the Kitsilano closing.

I wonder how it is that the hon. member explains that none of the other elected officials, outside of the Conservative caucus in British Columbia, are too terribly impressed by this response. How does he explain that the Auditor General took note of this several years ago, when he said that Canada needs significant improvements in both Coast Guard and National Defence search and rescue equipment and information assistance?

Other than the fantasy world in the Conservative caucus, is there anyone else who actually supports what the response has been to date?

Mr. Ryan Leef: Mr. Speaker, I will quickly touch on the Auditor General's comments from several years ago. How I can explain that is that it was certainly because of the Liberals' legacy we inherited and their deficits, and I can say that since 2005—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Ryan Leef: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that I gave the hon. member the due respect of listening to his question, but he is not prepared to get the answer.

I know he does not like it, but since 2005, our government has increased investments in the Canadian Coast Guard by 27% over what the Liberal government left behind. All the improvements in Coast Guard infrastructure, all the improvements in Coast Guard support and capacity are a direct result of the deficit left behind by the Liberal government. That explains that piece of it.

Business of Supply

Is there anyone outside of the Conservative caucus who thinks the response was appropriate? Let me say this. This individual is not a member of the Conservative caucus and is a valued public servant. The Liberal opposition third party seems to have no problem chastising and throwing under the bus the great people in the public service who do good work for us. Michael Lowry, of Western Canada Marine Response, says there was no delay in its response. The time between when it was officially activated by the Coast Guard and when the first boat arrived was an hour and 19 minutes, which is an incredible response time. The assistant commissioner made remarks about the response time.

While the third party feels comfortable chastising the great people in the Coast Guard of Canada, we will stand behind them and continue to support them with investments.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hard-working member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine today.

It is my pleasure to stand in the House and it is an honour and a privilege to support the motion put forward by the member for New Westminster—Coquitlam, an ardent and passionate champion for our waterways. I know that he has done an incredible amount of work, whether for the Fraser or Burrard Inlet, and now for our pristine coastline. We really appreciate his advocacy.

The motion we have brought forward today is being brought forward as a result of a recent oil spill and a tanker leaking into our beautiful British Columbia, just off the coast of Vancouver. It is an area I know well. I lived there for well over a decade, in English Bay, and I can tell the House that the huge number of people I have talked to from the English Bay area do not feel that the response has been world-class or made up of world-class science.

Just repeating that and hearing the echo from the Conservatives that this response was world-class and science-based does not make it so. Reading out the same phrase over and over again, when they know that it is not so, seems a bit more like electioneering and trying to bury the truth than actually dealing with what really happened.

The oil spill in itself is alarming. It is alarming for those of us who live on the coast, but it is also alarming for those who work on the coastline and for people from coast to coast to coast. What it pointed out was how seriously inadequate our response is and that we are not ready, despite warnings from the Auditor General. The government has had the time to fix it. Instead of blaming a previous government, what it should have done was fix the response. Instead, it has started to make things worse.

Closing the Kitsilano Coast Guard station was a major mistake. Here we have one of the busiest ports for tanker traffic. It is a commercial port. There is high tourism in that area. Taking away the Kitsilano Coast Guard station was ill thought out. Now, with this oil spill, we have seen the consequences.

We have also closed down B.C.'s oil spill environmental response centre and shuttered three of the five Marine Communications and Traffic Services centres, all while marine traffic is increasing. Now there is a call centre in Montreal. Those of us who know our beautiful country know that Montreal is a little bit of a distance away from Vancouver. Even flying across, it takes about five hours. Here

we are, allowing our pristine coastline protection to be sent off to Montreal and not having any eyes on the ground right there in B.C.

As I said, the Auditor General was very clear.

I also want us to imagine that this happened on a fairly calm day. There were not those beautiful B.C. storms that we know so well and love to watch, yet it took hours for the response. Imagine if this had been an oil tanker spill or an issue with the refineries in the Burrard Inlet, and imagine the devastation that would have occurred on our coastline.

It is because of all of that that the NDP is asking for some very simple steps for the government to take. Number one is to reopen the Kitsilano Coast Guard station. Number two is to reopen the recently closed Ucluelet Marine Communication and Traffic Services centre. Number three is to halt plans to close the Vancouver and Comox Marine Communication and Traffic Services centres.

• (1650)

We are not alone on this. Other groups are calling for this and are supporting the motion we are debating today 100%. The International Transport Workers' Federation and the CMWC, representing all of Canada's marine workers, are very clear about what is needed. This is what Peter Lahay had to say:

Typically, the captain of the MARATHASSA tried to deny his ship was leaking. Every day, Seafarers' Representatives in Canada claw at the corporate veil shielding Flag of Convenience ship owners.

Then he goes on to say:

This is exactly why domestic shipping must remain a Canadian industry. In our hands, such a catastrophic event is unlikely to occur, and if it did, the owner of the ship is right down the street. They have a stake in their community. Most importantly, we know who they are. They are not some slippery numbered company in the Cayman Islands, Panama or Cyprus.

The other thing that is absolutely shocking to me is that we have an oil spill, and which is the company that is now in charge of the cleanup and responding to the cleanup? Kinder Morgan. I think all Canadians must be giving their heads a shake. It is not as if oil spills are unique and do not happen very often.

It is inevitable that accidents will happen. I was quite shocked to find out that the International Tankers Owner Pollution Federation has recorded nearly 10,000 accidental oil spills globally since 1970. We are not talking about small numbers, and we are not talking about something that has happened once and will not happen again, so we need to make sure we put systems in place.

I hear my friends across the way talking about polluter pays for the cleanup. It is exactly that, for the cleanup, but what happens to our beautiful, pristine B.C. coastline? What happens to our tourism industry, which generates \$1.55 billion per year? What happens to our seafood sector in B.C., which generates close to \$1.7 billion each year?

Business of Supply

We are not talking about small numbers. We are not talking about thousands. We are talking about industries that generate over \$3.2 billion per year, and that goes right back into our economy. That is people working at decent paying jobs, and that is also ongoing. It is year in and year out.

These sectors provide permanent sources of income for around 45,000 Canadians. Nobody across on that side, or maybe they could after what I have heard today, could argue that they could guarantee that those sectors would not be affected by oil spills.

The other thing is that in terms of the world-class response we have, it is absolutely the Conservative government that has to wear it. The people who responded were doing the best they could with what they had, but really, it is the government that has to take responsibility, because it has been cutting. Some Coast Guard staff in B.C. have been cut by 25%.

We are not the only ones saying that. The mayor of Vancouver stood up and said that it took not one hour, not five minutes, not ten minutes, not even five hours, it took 13 hours to inform the mayor of the city where a major oil spill has occurred.

There is a Conservative-Liberal coalition in B.C.; that is how they govern. I do not often agree with the premier of my province on many issues, but even she was forced to acknowledge that the response was far below what is satisfactory and expected.

I urge my colleagues in B.C. and the rest of the Conservative caucus to do the right thing and support this motion.

• (1655)

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, I listened to the hon. member's speech. I have several questions. All I am hearing is doom and gloom from the opposition. The reality is that the Canadian Coast Guard did a very good job, along with the Western Canada Marine Response Corporation, to respond to an oil spill.

From what I can see, the WCMRC was officially activated at 8:06 p.m. and crews arrived on the scene at 9:25 p.m. That is an hour and 19 minutes. That is only three hours after the original sheen was on the water and they could actually locate where the oil was coming from, and the vessel involved.

Immediately a boom was put around that vessel which contained 80% of the spill by the next morning, and recovered 80% of the spill. The next morning, the only oil on the water was estimated by both Canadian and American authorities to be less than a third of a litre.

You can sit over there and criticize the Canadian Coast Guard all you want and you can say that this is the end of the world as we know it, but on the east coast of Canada, you get a response like that from the Coast Guard, you get your oil spill cleaned up, and you get back to work.

• (1700)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I would just remind all hon. members to direct their comments to the chair rather than directly to their colleagues.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: Mr. Speaker, I am flabbergasted and almost speechless for the first time in this House to hear the minister make up Kijiji data again.

My colleagues across the way are not really known for knowing the data too well. They even have difficulty knowing how many people live in Canada.

Here we are now, being told that less than a litre of oil was actually out there. The former Kitsilano base commander, Captain Fred Moxey, who is not an NDPer and who does not sit in our caucus, was very clear about what would have happened if the Kitsilano coast guard station was open. He said:

The crew was trained and the ship was ready around the clock for a first attack. Had the base been open and the crew on duty, they would have been out into English Bay in a matter of minutes.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was kind of amused by the response from the member for Yukon when I asked why the premier of British Columbia, the mayor of Vancouver and council members were all upset. The police, fire responders and the emergency responders were all upset because of the timelines.

The member did not respond to any one of them, but cited some person who is not known to me, but possibly is known to the hon. member who just spoke.

Can the hon. member who just spoke tell me how it is that there seems to be such a variation in reality between what the Conservative caucus believes happened, i.e. less than a third of a litre of oil ultimately escaped, and this apparent upset on the part of every elected politician and every representative outside of the Conservative members of the B.C. caucus?

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing is a prime example of speaking notes that are being read out just to convince themselves of this reality.

It would be very hard for my colleagues across the way to actually acknowledge that the response was far less than satisfactory and nowhere near world class. The minister came out saying that, despite the fact that everybody who was on the ground was actually saying the opposite, including the mayor and the premier of the province.

I put a lot of weight on what I hear from citizens. I have talked to many people who live in English Bay, and they are still disturbed because they are still convinced it is not as clean as it should be.

[Translation]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, I am pleased and honoured to present my views on the opposition motion on the Kitsilano Coast Guard and the marine traffic centres across Canada.

I have heard repeatedly in the House that the incident in Vancouver was handled properly. Quite frankly, if that is what we consider a proper response in Canada, then we have a problem. People in eastern Canada had similar experiences and understand that we are a long way from handling this sort of thing properly.

Business of Supply

I would like to remind members that the environment commissioner was very clear in the report he published in early 2013: when it comes to eastern Canada and the St. Lawrence estuary, we are not at all prepared to deal with an oil spill.

We need to learn from what happened in Vancouver so that people in eastern Canada have a better understanding of what went wrong in the west coast. Western Canada should also remember what happened in the eastern part of the country. I would therefore like to briefly discuss the incidents that have occurred recently and show that, unfortunately, this government is not handling these situations properly.

On the contrary, it is gutting our country's protection system, which is certainly not good for Canadians. I am therefore wondering who will benefit from the dismantling of search and rescue services and protection services for our coastal communities. This jeopardizes the lives of our fishermen and sailors, not to mention the state of our ecosystems and the industries that depend on them, such as tourism and the fishery.

Finally, the Conservatives are saying that they have greatly improved the Coast Guard's capacity since 2005. I would like to give some examples that clearly show that the Coast Guard's capacity has diminished at the expense of safety.

Remember that the NDP went to the mat for the Quebec City marine rescue sub-centre, the main eastern Canada centre ensuring the safety of fishers and sailors as well as the environment. We need real resources in the regions so that we can respond to distress situations.

In eastern Quebec, the Rivière-au-Renard marine communications and traffic services centre, which is in my riding near the city of Gaspé, is being shut down. They are talking about shutting down the marine traffic centre in St. Anthony and transferring its functions to Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and they also have the centres in Vancouver; Comox; Saint John, New Brunswick; St. John's, Newfoundland; Tofino; and Thunder Bay in their sights. All of those centres are slated for closure, thereby weakening our ability to respond to distress situations.

The people who work at these marine traffic centres are the first line of defence for fishers and sailors. When a fisher is in distress or there is an oil spill, marine traffic centres are the first to respond to the distress calls. Closing these centres will weaken our ability to respond to distress situations.

In Vancouver, the response was extremely slow, even though help was not far away. In eastern Canada, such response teams are located hundreds if not thousands of kilometres away. The marine traffic centres that respond to distress situations are being closed.

When people make a distress call, they are often the ones in distress, and therefore they are unable to give us their exact location. They expect whoever answers their call to know where American Bank is, for example. When a ship is sinking, that is not the time to consult a manual to find out where American Bank is.

The same is true when it comes to a cleanup following a spill. We cannot rely only on the liability that the Conservatives' new bills

place on the shipping companies that use our waters when it comes to cleaning up after a spill. No, we also need to protect ourselves.

• (1705)

With the Conservatives saying that they have improved the Canadian Coast Guard's capacity since 2005, I have to ask a question. If that were true, why did the Auditor General and the Commissioner of the Environment each say, in 2010 and 2012 respectively, that we did not have the ability to clean up an oil spill? The situation has not improved, quite the contrary. I would like to see the government show a real interest in improving our cleanup capacity.

Some 82 million litres of oil are transported through the vast region of eastern Canada, and 25 million litres of oil are transported through the St. Lawrence estuary and the Gulf of St. Lawrence every year, and yet we do not have the capacity to clean up a potential spill.

Once again, although the Conservatives are saying that they are up to the task, on the contrary, the people of eastern Canada know very well that we are not even close. I will use a recent leak as an example. Last year in Cap-aux-Meules in the Magdalen Islands, there was a leak of 100,000 litres, and we had to push really hard to get Environment Canada to issue a statement. We must not forget the recent spill in Vancouver involving 2,800 litres, and probably more.

We fault the government for the fact that the Canadian Coast Guard failed to communicate with local officials in the Vancouver area. The same thing happened in Cap-aux-Meules, where communication capabilities were practically non-existent when 100,000 litres of oil spilled.

With the help of the Canadian Coast Guard and private companies, we were able to put up barriers in an attempt to recover 20,000 of the 100,000 litres. Nonetheless, 80,000 litres dispersed into the water or the ocean. We are not entirely sure.

However, since then, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard have told us that the situation was very worrisome. They are prepared to move forward with a plan of action, but that plan has yet to materialize. We do not know what direction they will take.

Fifty years ago, the *Corfu Island* ran aground near the Magdalen Islands, and we are still finding oil on the beaches today. In September 2014, Fisheries and Oceans Canada was finally prepared to move forward with a plan of action. As of April of this year, we still have no plan of action. That was 50 years ago. This just goes to show that the successive governments of Canada have not taken huge oil spills in eastern Canada seriously on many occasions. There are oil spills there almost every day. Some are small; some are big.

As my colleague from Surrey North said, there are thousands of spills every year, and we see that the cleanup capacity is abysmal.

Business of Supply

When we talk about closing marine communications and traffic services centres, not only are we losing expertise on how to respond to distress situations, but we are also losing people in our regions. Marine communications and traffic services centres are often located in the regions. If we close those centres, people will leave with their families and their knowledge. The regions will suffer tremendously from this attempt to save some money at the expense of fishers, mariners and the environment.

The Rivière-au-Renard Marine Communications and Traffic Services Centre is supposed to close this year. Its services will be provided by Les Escoumins MCTS Centre, which is on the other side of the gulf. It will be a long time before the centre closes because the communications system just does not work.

When the Conservatives tell us that they have made major improvements to the communications system, we need to ask questions. They have been trying to close the Rivière-au-Renard Marine Communications and Traffic Services Centre and transfer its responsibilities to the Les Escoumins centre for two years. However, they cannot do it because the communications system, which was installed at a cost of \$40 million, does not work. Les Escoumins and the other communications and traffic services centres are not operating properly. We have to wonder about how well they are functioning.

• (1710)

I would like to point out that the Conservatives are going to buy an European communications system. Perhaps it is time that they invested in Canadians, not just in technology but also in the health and safety of people in their environment.

[English]

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am trying to reconcile some discrepancies between what government members say and what seems to be the truth of the matter.

When the Kitsilano base was open, it dealt with something in the order of in excess of 300 incidents on an annual basis, which is a little more than one a day. The response time was something in the order of five minutes for all levels of incidents. In this instance, the response time, the notification time, was 37 hours. There seems to be a bit of a discrepancy between five minutes and 37 hours. As a consequence, the response does not seem to be quite the world-class response that members across the way seem to think was operative here.

How is it that 37 hours becomes a world-class response, but five minutes is not?

• (1715)

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, that is a question that should be posed to members on the government side, because I do not work with the same math they do, and I do not think my hon. friend works with their math either. Perhaps the Conservatives should go back to using slide rules, because clearly the software they are using is not working properly.

We should be looking at creating real standards. When we adopted legislation recently in this House regarding the responsibility that

polluters pay, it was a step in the right direction. However, the problem is that we are solving a problem after the fact.

What we are trying to bring forward here today is that the government is not giving that ounce of prevention that is worth a pound of cure. That ounce of prevention is precious. The Conservatives do not seem to understand that all they are doing is passing the buck to future generations, who will be paying through the nose for all of the bad legislation that the current government has brought forward.

The Conservatives need to stop closing emergency response centres. They need to stop laying off scientists. They need to actually invest in the environment. They need to look back at the bills they have adopted in this House that have seriously curtailed our capacity to protect the environment. They have to start taking what they say for real and actually put some real emphasis on protecting the environment, the environment upon which the Canadian economy depends.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech. In fact, our country does extend from coast to coast. The incident we are currently discussing took place on the west coast. However, my colleague described very well the incidents that took place on the east coast.

He clearly explained that one of the stakeholders is not at the table, and that is the government, which has a responsibility to protect the public. I would like him to speak more about the government's role in protecting the public, enacting regulations and better protecting Canadian coasts.

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, who asked a very relevant question.

It is important to remember that the government likely has no greater responsibility than to protect the public and put rules in place so that people know that they can count on the government in case of an emergency. This government is doing the opposite. It has tried multiple times to dismantle the Quebec City marine rescue sub-centre; the marine traffic centres; scientific institutions, such as the Maurice Lamontagne Institute; and protections that people expect.

The government has to stop thinking that it is enough to take action after the fact, or to have the capacity to deal with problems after they occur. Canada is a 21st century country and Canadians expect us to use the technology, knowledge and expertise our country has to protect against foreseeable incidents. We know that there are going to be spills and distress situations at sea.

Unfortunately, the Conservative government is ignoring that knowledge. It is disregarding it. It is time that the government took that knowledge seriously.

[English]

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time today with my hon. colleague, the member for Sarnia—Lambton.

Business of Supply

I am very pleased to have this opportunity to participate in today's debate pertaining to the Government of Canada's robust marine safety system and environmental response capacity. All of us agree on the importance of the safety of those at sea and protecting the marine environment.

I will be speaking today to the role of Environment Canada in our nation's emergency response system. Emergency preparedness is a shared responsibility and we all have an important role to play in preventing or acting to mitigate the impacts of an unforeseen event. That is why emergency response planning and coordination of efforts among all levels of government, whether it be federal, provincial or municipal, is so vitally important in dealing with potential disasters.

Environment Canada's responsibilities relating to emergencies include administering and enforcing environmental emergency regulations under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999. The aim of these regulations is to reduce the frequency and consequences of uncontrolled, unplanned, or accidental releases of hazardous substances into the environment.

The recent oil spill in English Bay, British Columbia, where fuel leaked from the vessel *Marathassa*, highlighted the importance of having a coordinated approach in handling environmental emergencies. The Canadian Coast Guard, in partnership with its federal, provincial and municipal partners, coordinated a robust response to the pollution of English Bay. As part of the unified command, the Canadian Coast Guard, Transport Canada and Environment Canada, along with their provincial counterparts and response agencies, worked together to quickly and co-operatively contain and remove the pollution. The team worked tirelessly on the subsequent cleanup and their efforts have been successful. In fact, according to the commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard, within the first 36 hours, 80% of the recoverable fuel in English Bay had been removed.

Interestingly, when I listen to my colleagues across the way, I listen in vain for any numbers, any measurement of the environment, and what is going on in the environment. I notice how my friends, the NDP and the Liberals, never talk about the environment itself. All they talk about is symbolism, because to both of those parties, the environment is a political football and nothing else. They never look at what is actually going on in the environment. Personally, all I care about is what is happening in the environment itself.

I want to point out to my friends across the way that the environment is about measurement and numbers. According to the numbers, there is no evidence that shellfish and groundfish in the area of the *Marathassa* incident posed any health danger and DFO is taking due caution in the interest of public safety until all sampling confirms that there is zero risk to public health. Furthermore, recent water samples from Siwash Rock, Sandy Cove, English Bay, and the waters surrounding the MV *Marathassa* had hydrocarbon levels below laboratory detection limits and meet all federal-provincial guidelines.

I know that my friends opposite are scared of numbers and never use numbers, but on our government's watch, most of Canada's environmental indicators for water quality, air quality, and

biodiversity have improved and continue to improve. All that counts are the numbers.

I will briefly speak to the motion before us today as it relates to the Coast Guard response.

The commissioner of the Coast Guard has been abundantly clear that the Kitsilano station would not have made any difference in the response. As well, it is important to note that the marine communications and traffic services centres' modernization will actually improve the safety of mariners through state-of-the-art technology.

Furthermore, on the Kitsilano station, the commissioner of the Coast Guard said, "I would like to respond to speculation in the media and confirm that the Kitsilano station never provided these types of environmental response operations, and its presence would not have changed how we responded to this incident". The parties opposite want to recreate an edifice which quite frankly had nothing to do with this incident. That proves that in terms of the environment, the parties opposite only care about spending money and building buildings, and the environment does not matter at all. To me, it is the environment that counts, and under this government, Canada's environment has improved markedly.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize the dedicated efforts of everyone who is involved in protecting the waters and the coastline off English Bay, particularly all those who came to the rescue of affected wildlife. Our government believes in and strongly supports the polluter pays principle and that taxpayers are not going to be on the hook for this marine response operation. The owners of the *Marathassa* were responsible to take action to mitigate any damage caused by their ship, and they will be held accountable for damages and cleanup costs incurred as a result of this incident.

• (1720)

Previous speakers have gone into greater detail about how the three federal departments worked together in this particular instance to contain the risk posed by the fuel spill, and nothing more needs to be said about that.

Instead, I would like to speak briefly to Environment Canada's responsibilities in such emergencies, and discuss its role in the protection of migratory birds and species at risk under its protection during such incidents.

In the case of oil spills such as the one that occurred in English Bay, Environment Canada's role is to provide immediate support to the lead agencies and responders. It does that through scientific and technical advice on how best to deal with specific types of environmental emergencies. As was elaborated on by my colleague earlier today, this was done through the National Environmental Emergencies Centre.

Business of Supply

The NEEC operates 24/7 to provide its critical support to responders. It supports all levels of government, as well as industry, by providing scientific advice such as weather forecasting, containment trajectory modelling and determining the fate and behaviour of hazardous substances. The centre also provides environmental sensitivity mapping, supports the establishment of cleanup priorities and advises on the protection of sensitive ecosystems and wildlife such as migratory birds. This program is an effective tool in helping emergency response agencies and industries take immediate and effective action to mitigate the potential impacts to the environment and human health of any pollution incident.

Unfortunately, the impacts of environmental emergencies such as marine pollution are often first felt by our wildlife. Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service is the lead authority for setting emergency response priorities, standards and guidelines in order to protect sensitive migratory birds and species at risk. We take this responsibility very seriously.

Under the Migratory Birds Convention Act and Migratory Birds regulations, Environment Canada has a legislative responsibility for the conservation and protection of migratory birds throughout Canada. As part of its mandate, Environment Canada collects and maintains data on all migratory birds, especially those at risk in areas impacted by marine pollution. It conducts surveys of affected areas, while assisting in the rescue and treatment of affected migratory birds or species at risk. It also offers scientific advice to responders when a critical habitat for a species at risk has been affected.

We are committed, as our record shows, to the protection of Canada's wildlife and to support Environment Canada's key roles in this type of emergency, gathering samples and analysis of affected wildlife for possible legal prosecution of polluters. Environment Canada's enforcement branch is there to ensure that companies and individuals comply with all pollution prevention and conservation rules of environmental and wildlife protection acts and regulations.

I have just skimmed the surface of some of the programs that Environment Canada offers in the protection of our environment, the health of our citizens and sustainability of wildlife. We all have a role to play in reducing the frequency of environmental emergencies and mitigating potential impacts should they occur. Our government remains fully committed to working with its provincial and territorial partners as well as industry to ensure that we will continue to have a strong, effective and coordinated response in the event of any future environmental incidents. We will continue to work diligently on prevention to ensure that these incidents do not occur in the first place.

In closing, I would like to again offer my thanks to all those who have dedicated their time and effort to the successful operation at English Bay. Canadians can be very proud of the strong protection of our shores.

• (1725)

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is really funny to hear that side of the House. The member just said that the Conservatives would do all they could to ensure that incidents like this did not happen again. They are happening, and they are happening under their watch. Exactly what we had said was going to happen when they started cutting the Coast

Guard and attacking the environmental legislation is happening now. It is happening because of the cuts you are doing because you are not doing the proper oversight.

The Deputy Speaker: Order please. The member knows to address her comments to the Chair and not to individual members.

Mrs. Carol Hughes: Mr. Speaker, you are not doing it, they are.

It is very troubling for us on this side of the House, who have been listening to Canadians, to the scientists and the environmentalists who are saying that we have to be very careful when we are dealing with changes to the environment and with these types of cuts, irresponsible cuts with a lack of transparency on that side of the House.

We have noticed that the Coast Guard officials have said that most of the beaches are now open, but yet people still have to be concerned about these tar balls that might be down there. Could the member tell me if it is safe or is it not safe?

• (1730)

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Mr. Speaker, that is a typical rambling, scattered question on the environment, with nothing but hyperbole and speculation.

It is the numbers related to air quality, water quality, biodiversity, fish and wildlife that count. On the other side, they never cite the numbers because the numbers are too good.

Under our watch, in 2010 the sockeye salmon run to Fraser River was the record in history. Lo and behold, in 2014, on the Fraser River again, the sockeye salmon run surpassed the run in 2010. That was a remarkable achievement, done under our watch.

After listening to the members across the way wailing away about things they know nothing about, the only thing that counts is the improvement in the numbers on the environment to the air quality, water quality, fisheries, biodiversity, and almost every one is improving.

In terms of taking the precautions in English Bay, the government is being very prudent in ensuring that everything is absolutely safe before that area can be used again. That is just smart.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member professes to love the environment and love data. Here is data for him. Between 2009 and 2015, the transport budget for marine safety was cut from \$82 million to \$57.5 million. The environmental emergencies response program was cut by 34% over the last seven years. In the last number of years, 55 scientists were fired from DFO's marine contaminants program in 2012. This is how a five-minute response becomes a 37-hour response.

Business of Supply

I love the hon. member's rich fantasy life. He is entitled to his opinion, but he is not entitled to the facts. These are the facts. These are the data. Could he respond to how these facts translate into a world-class response to a contaminant in English Bay?

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for giving me this incredible opening. The numbers that he cites are dollar numbers. The only numbers that count are the numbers on the environment, air quality, water quality. I know the idea of actually spending government money and generating real environmental results is foreign to them because for both parties opposite, spending money is an end in itself. If we can spend less money and get greater environmental improvement and protection, this government will do that. In fact, we are balancing our budget and because we are such prudent fiscal managers, Canadians in all walks of life will be receiving tax benefits very soon. That is smart and good government.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for sharing his time with me. I appreciate that.

I am pleased to rise today to take part in today's debate. I fully understand the members' concerns about the marine safety and oil spill response. My riding also is surrounded by water, not the salt water of the east coast or the west coast, but the fresh water of the Great Lakes. Any spills in the marine venue are extremely important to all of us across the country.

Let me reassure all members of this place that Canada has one of the strongest marine safety regimes in the world. Canada exceeds international standards and Canadians can be proud of our strong marine safety track record.

I understand the members' concerns regarding marine safety and I also know how essential safe shipping is to ensuring Canada's economic prosperity. The simple fact is that Canada is a trading nation. We depend on doing business with other nations to ensure that we can maintain our high standard of living and that Canada can continue to grow. Trade accounts for more than 60% of our annual gross domestic product. One in every five Canadian jobs is directly linked to exports. This trade is what drives Canada's economy, keeps Canadians safe and healthy and allows us to enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world. Marine shipping is a critical part of that.

In 2012, total marine freight traffic in Canada reached 475 million tonnes, which is up 1.9% from the previous year. In 2013, marine transportation services carried freight valued at \$205 billion in support of international trade. However, let me be clear. Marine shipping must be done safely and in an environmentally responsible manner. I am proud to say that Canada already has a robust marine safety system, a system that meets or exceeds international standards. This is thanks to an extensive range of prevention measures, our strong regulatory and oversight regime, work with our international partners and efforts by the shipping industry.

The cornerstone of Canada's marine safety regulatory regime is our comprehensive safety requirements for all Canadian and foreign-flagged vessels operating in Canadian waters. These requirements cover vessel construction and equipment, such as navigational systems, inspections and enforcement powers, and pilotage to ensure

that licensed pilots are on board vessels when in sensitive or busy waterways.

Recognizing that Canada has a strong marine safety record, we need to be prepared to take advantage of new trade opportunities as global markets and trade patterns change. As we pursue our trade agenda, we need to ensure that Canadians and the environment continue to be protected. Our government is committed to the continual improvement of marine safety and Canada's marine oil spill preparedness and response regime. That is why our government is taking action to put in place a world-class tanker safety system.

While a few of my hon. colleagues have spoken to this topic earlier today as it related to the Coast Guard, I would like to take a few moments to review the broader initiative and how it is improving marine safety for shippers.

As one of our first steps, the government appointed the independent tanker safety expert panel to identify how we could build and strengthen Canada's marine oil spill preparedness and response regime so we could be ready for the increased trade and marine shipping. We have listened. We listened to the panel. We listened to Canadians, the provinces, industry, aboriginal communities and environmental organizations.

Based on the advice of the expert panel and Canadians, our government is putting in place a world-class tanker safety system. Once fully implemented, this comprehensive suite of initiatives will address ship-source spills of all petroleum, whether it be cargo or marine fuel, by preventing marine oil spills from happening in the first place, cleaning them up quickly and effectively, and ensuring that polluters pay.

● (1735)

Our government is taking action to increase tanker inspections so that each and every foreign tanker that enters Canadian waters is inspected the first time and annually afterward; expand aerial patrols under the national aerial surveillance program to deter potential polluters; identify any marine incidents early and monitor response operations; conduct leading-edge research to build our knowledge of how petroleum behaves, how petroleum interacts with marine environments and how oil can be cleaned up; and implement the incident command system which is an internationally recognized emergency management system to help coordinate response efforts with multiple partners.

Business of Supply

In addition, we are modernizing Canada's marine navigation system by taking a leadership role in implementing e-navigation. This will provide real-time marine safety information to vessel operators to help avoid navigational hazards and marine accidents.

As part of modernizing Canada's marine navigation system, the federal government is investing in state-of-the-art navigational technologies and services so that Canada can remain a world leader in e-navigation.

Our government is also providing up to \$20 million to support Ocean Networks Canada's smart oceans initiative. This funding will enable Ocean Networks Canada to transform oceanographic data that it collects into navigational safety information that will help vessel operators and others avoid navigational hazards and prevent marine accidents and predict and warn of natural hazards.

It will also improve overall marine situational awareness near Port Metro Vancouver, Campbell River, Kitimat, the Douglas Channel and Prince Rupert.

Our government is also establishing area response planning in four areas across Canada, including the southern coast of British Columbia, which includes English Bay and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Area response planning will facilitate multi-jurisdictional response planning based on a thorough area risk assessment. Area response planning would emphasize the sharing of information, inclusiveness and collaboration among stakeholders, aboriginal groups and governments. Through area response planning, response plans would be tailored to address the risks and conditions that are specific to a certain area such as the regional geography, vessel traffic and environmental sensitivities, while still maintaining the capacity to respond to a worst-case scenario.

We will also be expanding the response tool kit for oil spill cleanup by lifting legal barriers to using dispersants and other alternative response measures when they will have a net environmental benefit.

We will also be conducting and supporting research and development on new oil products, the pre-treatment of heavy oil products at source and a range of response techniques so that we will be equipped to respond quickly and effectively.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not reiterate this government's commitment to the polluter pay principle. We will continue to take actions to ensure that Canadian taxpayers are not on the hook to pay for costly cleanups in all modes of transportation.

By implementing a world-class tanker safety system, our government will continue to meet its commitment to protect Canadians and the environment, while responsibly transporting our natural resources and supporting our trade agenda for the benefit of all Canadians.

• (1740)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to know if the member agrees with her colleague from South Shore—St. Margaret's who claimed that after the cleanup there was less than a third of a litre of oil left in the water.

The second thing I would like to ask is if she agrees with her other colleagues who said that the Kitsilano Coast Guard base never did any pollution control. I would like to cite the former commander Fred Moxey's statements from last week when he said very specifically, "On-site of the station there was 750 feet of boom, on the pollution patrol boat there was 1,000 feet, and up at Fisherman's Wharf, in addition, we used to store a container with another 750 feet of boom."

The other side is now asserting they never did pollution control. Why would they have all these booms at the station if they were never doing pollution control?

Does the member agree there was only a third of a litre left, because I think there is a lot of evidence around, in the form of oil, that would contradict that? Second, does she think the Coast Guard station never did pollution control?

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Mr. Speaker, as for a third of a litre of oil remaining, I believe he said, it is not my decision to take that measurement. I do not know what it is. I am responding to and taking the word of the experts who are on site and making those determinations.

As far as the Kitsilano station goes, we have a lot of documentation and information that the Coast Guard experts have given us. They have been crystal clear that there is no change in the Canadian Coast Guard's response with the closure of that Kitsilano station. They have been very clear that the Kitsilano station was not an environmental response station and never provided these types of environmental response or operations. The assistant commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard has stated that the Kitsilano station would not have made "an iota" of difference to the response to the *Marathassa* leak.

We need to pay attention to the experts. We need to state the facts. We do not want to be playing politics with this operation. It is a very serious situation.

When the assistant commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard says that the station was never manned with environmental response experts and would not have been called upon for environmental response in this scenario, we need to heed that remark. We need to move on from this. If there were issues in the response and notification, those are things that will be reviewed by a panel of experts. The decisions to change them, if there are any decisions, will be made on that basis.

Business of Supply

• (1745)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to be able to participate in this debate. As a member for a riding in the southern Vancouver area, I certainly appreciate the official opposition supporting and calling for the reopening of the Kitsilano Coast Guard base. I want to point out to my friend opposite from Sarnia—Lambton that we have also lost Environment Canada's environmental emergency bases that were located across Canada and that we have lost the marine contaminant program within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

There has been a significant curtailing of capacity to handle environmental emergencies. I will just share briefly with the House that when I was a lawyer in Halifax years ago, there was an emergency at the dockside with a container ship where toxic chemicals had spilled into one another. It was an Environment Canada staffer from the environmental emergencies office that has since been closed on the east coast, as we have lost ours on the west coast, who showed up to take control of the operation and make sure that people were properly protected.

There is no longer a command centre to respond to oil spills. It is far too ad hoc. I ask my hon. friend if she would not agree that Environment Canada should have a leadership role when a spill takes place.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Mr. Speaker, we know that there are protocols in place for those who respond when spills do take place. Those protocols have been put in place with conversations and the co-operation and collaboration among a great many people. It is not just the federal government that is responsible. The provincial governments, municipal governments and local safety response people all take part in setting up what those protocols should be. If there are issues with the way the protocols were handled and how they performed, those people who are the experts in the field will examine them.

I know for a fact that these protocols are extremely important. In my role as a municipal politician for many years in the riding of Sarnia—Lambton, I was heavily involved with putting protocols in place with the collaboration between all of the levels of government. I know for a fact as a local politician that it is extremely important to have that voice at the table.

This will happen if there are issues that were not followed and if the protocols need to be changed. I am quite confident that the experts will recommend that it happens and that it will happen.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to this opposition day motion to protect British Columbians from environmental destruction and future oil spills.

I would first like to thank the member for New Westminster—Coquitlam for his tireless work on this topic and bringing this very important motion forward.

Every year I help the Wildlife Rescue Association of British Columbia secure positions on the Canada summer jobs program. It is a very good program. It trains young people about wildlife and does a lot of good for our province. The association is headquartered in my riding, and to date it has helped save almost 100,000 animals from harm.

Last week the volunteers and workers at the Wildlife Rescue Association were busy cleaning oil off ducks and euthanizing them because they had been caught in this spill that the Conservatives are trying to dismiss as nothing, completely cleaned up and handled by some kind of world-class response system. That is simply not true. This has had a real impact, both psychologically and physically, on the people in metro Vancouver. It showed up in Burnaby. It showed up in ducks coated in oil that had to be cleaned off. Some of them had to be put down.

I would say this marks a watershed moment for us in metro Vancouver. We have to decide what kind of metropolitan region we want to be. We have to decide what metro Vancouver is going to be.

One of these visions is pleasant and one is not. I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to picture yourself sitting on a beach in Honolulu which is a city region with about a million people. It has a very busy port, one of the busiest ports in the United States. When picturing yourself on the beach in Honolulu, think about having a nice time, vacationing, probably with a non-alcoholic beverage, enjoying the sunshine.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like you to picture yourself on a beach in Shanghai. Shanghai has not really achieved the balance between port traffic and livability. These are really the kinds of duelling visions that we face in metro Vancouver, whether we want to become more like Honolulu, which is destination place where people live, work and play next to the shore, or some place like Shanghai where they cannot enjoy the waterfront and it is only dedicated to port traffic.

While you are envisioning those two things, I will let you know that I will be splitting my time with the member for Halifax.

Metro Vancouver is caught between these two visions. I think the government on the other side is on a collision course with how most people in metro Vancouver envision themselves, their future and their children's future. The government, supported by the Liberals, is trying to ram giant crude oil pipelines through our province with no real public consultation. There is a farcical NEB process where even if someone's house is slated for expropriation, they cannot even send a letter to the National Energy Board.

The government has no regard for public safety and no regard for how the pipelines will affect how we enjoy the outdoors. This spill in English Bay is a real wake-up call for people in British Columbia, because it brings clearly into focus the fact that it could have been way worse than it was. It makes people think about whether this is the kind of future they want for the place they live.

It is really a harbinger of what our region could be, and I would say it is pushing us more towards the Shanghai-Rotterdam version of what we want metro Vancouver to be rather than the Honolulu vision.

The plan for the region is to build a giant new crude oil pipeline that will take bitumen from Edmonton to Burnaby and put it on ships, with one tanker a day leaving the port. Now the spill in English Bay was not a crude oil tanker cracking up. It was a brand new ship that just sprung a leak, and 2,700 litres of a very toxic substance was released.

Business of Supply

We have been hearing nonsense from the other side, that only a third of a litre is left to clean up. There was more than a third of a litre on the ducks that are sitting in Burnaby recuperating. We have heard nonsense about a world-class response system. We have heard nonsense that the cuts have not made a difference. They have. Everybody in Vancouver, everybody in British Columbia knows they have.

The government has gotten itself into a lot of trouble. It has been cutting, cutting. It has gotten caught with its pants down. Who pays for it? The people in metro Vancouver.

● (1750)

I clearly support this motion, which is to reinvest and reopen the institutions that have been closed down, because as much as we get from this side about public safety, the Coast Guard centres and the marine response centres are for public safety. It seems bizarre to me that they could talk about moving from one oil tanker a month to one oil tanker a day coming through the port of Metro Vancouver but could reduce the capacity to respond to an emergency.

This is a crucial motion to support, which is to reopen the Kitsilano Coast Guard station, reopen the recently closed the Ucluelet marine communications and traffic services centre and that we definitely halt the plan to close the Vancouver and Comox Marine Communication and Traffic Service Centres.

I have to say that the Prime Minister is not a very popular guy on the west coast. I think it is because of actions like this. It is because the interests of large oil companies are being put ahead of the people in British Columbia. Kinder Morgan, for example, if it managed to get its pipeline built to the west coast, would transport close to one million barrels a day of crude oil. None of it is for us. None of it is for refinement. None of it is for Canadians' use. It is simply to ship to overseas.

The pipeline would make about \$5 million a day for this company, yet it would only create 50 long-term jobs for the entire country. It would most likely, as admitted by the president of Kinder Morgan and other pipeline companies, be built by temporary foreign workers. The advantages are very slim. Yet we see in English Bay what the risks are, and we know that in Burnaby this could be much worse.

The spill in English Bay was only 10% of the spill we had from a Kinder Morgan pipeline in Burnaby in 2007. That pipeline ruptured. There was a court case. Kinder Morgan was found guilty of causing the spill. We had 270,000 litres run through our neighbourhoods and into storm drains, with half of it running into the Burrard Inlet.

It is a joke that this was some kind of world-class response for cleanup. The Western Canada Marine Response Corporation was right beside the spill. It was literally a stone's throw away from where this oil went into the Burrard Inlet. I went for a tour, and they were boasting, because they got 15% of this oil. It still washes up on the beaches on the shoreline of Burnaby.

The Conservatives and Liberals are playing with fire. They are putting local communities at risk. The Conservatives are making it even worse by making cuts to the Coast Guard and the response capacity in these areas.

We have to do more. First of all, we have to make sure that British Columbians have a voice in these projects. They have been almost completely shut out. In the protests in my riding, 125 people were arrested, because they are not being heard in these processes. Again, the Conservative government is just ramming these things through. Now, of course, with the falling oil prices, who knows where that has left our economy, but I think the disregard for local citizens is astounding.

An Auditor General's report recently noted that Canada is not prepared to deal with even a moderately sized oil spill. This was not even a moderately sized oil spill. This was a small spill of 2,700 litres. It was caught by a sailor who happened to notice it. It took 12 hours for the City of Vancouver to be notified. Volunteers were cleaning up before there was any kind of federal response.

This is not FEMA in the U.S., and it is not something we can be proud of. This is something we should be ashamed of, and the shame falls on that side of the House. The Conservatives have done a bad job and are continuing to do a bad job, and it is even going to get worse. I very much fear for my region, my city, and my constituents if this is allowed to continue.

● (1755)

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): What is shameful, Mr. Speaker, is the NDP's continuing attack on the families and workers of Canada's natural resource industries.

The oil sands in Alberta generate 575,000 jobs, and so his disingenuous comment about 50 jobs is pure nonsense. We are talking about real people and real families. Getting our oil to tide water is critical. Our economy loses some \$20 billion per year, which could pay for a lot of social programs if we got the world price for oil. However, in his next breath, the member was complaining about the low price of oil. Which is it?

Again, another speech from the NDP in which no numbers were put out. There was all of this rambling about the environment and where it is at. The member lives in Vancouver where the Fraser River goes through. In 2010 there was a record sockeye salmon run, and in 2014 an even higher sockeye salmon run under this government's watch.

This government is doing what needs to be done to create a sustainable economy, high growth, high-paying jobs, and high environmental quality. How does he square this?

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Mr. Speaker, it is always nice to be lectured by a climate change denier and to get lectured on not having any facts.

This is a disgraceful show, once again, and it is the attitude personified here. We have a plan to ram pipelines through British Columbia, and members who know better are standing up and saying that this is the right thing to do. It is a disgraceful show.

Business of Supply

• (1800)

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I asked the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette how he squares a cut from \$82 million to \$57 million in the transport budget for marine safety, a cut of 55 scientists from DFO's marine contaminants program, a 34% cut in another contaminants program, and instead of a five-minute response time a 37-hour response time. He said that just showed the great efficiency of cutting money out of programs so that we now have a world-class response with respect to the environment, et cetera.

The hon. member loves to have data. Because of the hon. member's status as a legitimate scientist, I am interested as to how these cuts have affected Environment Canada and the response times for spills

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Mr. Speaker, the member knows that science has been under attack in Canada, with over 4,000 federal scientists and researchers laid off and over \$1 billion cut from the budgets. I hope he will be supporting this motion tonight, because it is an important one.

My question for the member is this. How can his leader support the Kinder Morgan pipeline? He has stated a number of times in the paper that he hopes it is put through, which is disappointing to the people in my riding and in British Columbia.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech and for his presentation defending his constituents in Burnaby—Douglas.

I am also aware of the work that he does as the science and technology critic. It is all interrelated. With its ill-considered cuts, the Conservative government is destroying Canada's ability to adapt to climate change and better protect the environment.

I would like the member to elaborate on the fact that cuts to Environment Canada and Statistics Canada are increasingly weakening our country's environmental protections.

[*English*]

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for the work she has done to support science in this country, which has been a lot. It is very much appreciated.

The cuts are astounding. Over 4,000 scientists and researchers have been laid off. Most of those researchers were working for Environment Canada or other agencies or departments that employ biologists to monitor such things as the environment and water. The other is \$1 billion in cuts from federal government scientific research. I think the plan on the other side is to wish that it will all go away. However, what English Bay showed us is that it will just get much worse.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Burnaby—Douglas for sharing his time with me but also for bringing what he is seeing on the ground there to the House of Commons. It is really important that he talked about the 12-hour response time and about the fact that volunteers are out there in English Bay trying to save the wildlife, the marine birds. It is really important to have those first-hand accounts from ridings across Canada brought here to this House.

We all have expertise. We may not all be scientists, but we have the expertise of living in our ridings and understanding what is impacting the areas where we live, work, and play. I really want to give some credit to my colleague, the member for New Westminster—Coquitlam, for bringing the motion forward and for his expertise on this issue.

The member for New Westminster—Coquitlam has been a tireless advocate for the protection of our waterways, and he has worked for years to raise public awareness about rivers and watersheds in British Columbia.

The member for New Westminster—Coquitlam has made 14 marathon swims, covering 3,200 kilometres of British Columbia's rivers, lakes, and the ocean. He also swam the 1,400 kilometre length of the Fraser River to draw attention to the environmental impact on rivers. There is not a more authoritative voice in this House than his, and I am really pleased that he brought the motion forward, because now he is bringing attention to the lack of protection for British Columbia's coasts when it comes to spill response capacity.

I want to thank him for bringing forward the motion to reverse the government's cuts to marine safety, oil spill response, and environmental cleanup capacity in Vancouver and elsewhere on the coast of British Columbia.

• (1805)

[*Translation*]

The New Democrats want to protect the coast against catastrophic spills and to restore the Coast Guard's ability to effectively respond to spills or other emergencies. The NDP led the charge when it was announced in 2012 that the Kitsilano base would be closed, and we will continue to fight to protect the marine environment and the economy that depends on it. Marine safety and environmental protection have been severely tested after 10 years of terrible management on the part of the Conservatives. The oil spill in the port of Vancouver is just one example of the scope of the damages. That is why my colleague from New Westminster—Coquitlam and the NDP are urging the Prime Minister to listen to the public and take action immediately.

The Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development said the following in his fall 2010 report:

Emergency management plans are not all up to date

The Canadian Coast Guard lacks a national approach to training, testing its plans, and maintaining its equipment

Procedures for verifying preparedness of the Canadian Coast Guard are not in place

Responses to ship-source spills are poorly documented

There is no national regime for ship-source chemical spills

Business of Supply

In an interview with the *Toronto Star*, former environment commissioner Scott Vaughan said, “We know that there’s a boom in natural resources in this country and I think what we need now, given the gaps, given the problems we found, is a boom in environmental protection”.

[English]

There are huge gaps in our oil spill preparedness but also in our knowledge about the potential impacts of the spill on the west coast.

If we go back to the spill in English Bay, the most recent spill, Vancouver Aquarium CEO John Nightingale says that there is a major gap in understanding Vancouver’s coastal environment, because there is no long-term monitoring of the local ecosystems. He says that if the goal of the cleanup efforts right now is to restore the harbour to the state it was before the leak, that cannot be done, because there is no solid foundation with respect to what the harbour was like in the past.

Why are we in this situation? It is because of cuts, cuts, cuts, with no regard for their impacts. The Kitsilano Coast Guard station was cut and closed. The Ucluelet marine communications and traffic services centre was closed. If we look at other cuts and our understanding and research of the impacts on water, we will remember the Experimental Lakes Area, the ELA. It was shuttered by the government. This was one of the world’s—I will say “is” because it continues to exist, no thanks to the government. It is one of the world’s most influential freshwater facilities. It is a unique Canadian facility for groundbreaking freshwater research, the only one of its kind in the world. It is an outdoor lab where the whole ecosystem can be studied. It is where research on environmental problems is carried out.

In 2012, the government announced that it would close the ELA. Thanks to the International Institute for Sustainable Development, the Experimental Lakes Area was saved, but the government made it loud and clear at that moment that it does not care about evidence; it does not care about science, and it does not care about the environment. Time and time again, the Conservatives demonstrate this, like when they slashed funding at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, DFO, which left the Bedford Institute of Oceanography caught short.

The BIO exists on the east coast of Canada. It is in the riding of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour. When those cuts were made, it resulted in the loss of oil spill expert Kenneth Lee. This research centre was established in 2002. It was established to coordinate DFO research into environmental and oceanographic impacts of offshore petroleum exploration, production, and transportation.

While the centre did not end up closing, Kenneth Lee, the oil spill expert and director of the centre for offshore oil, gas and energy research, was forced to leave Canada. He took a job in Australia. This is a man who is internationally respected. He was a Nova Scotia-based, Canada-based scientist working for the federal government. He is a leading expert on the use of chemical dispersants when it comes to cleaning up oil spills. He helped with the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. He co-chaired an International Maritime Organization working group that established guidelines for marine oil spill bioremediation. He received the prestigious Prix d’Excellence from DFO for research on environmental issues

associated with offshore oil and gas activities, as well as other awards. This man has so many awards and yet he received a letter stating that his job would be affected as a result of the cost cutting, thanks to the federal government. We had all of this expertise and we lost it. We lost him. Now he works in Australia and we do not have him here in Canada.

• (1810)

[Translation]

New Democrats share the concerns of British Columbians, who are worried about the environmental, social and economic damage the Conservatives have caused in Canada.

Ten years after they took office, the Conservatives still have not done anything about climate change, and nothing will change if the Liberals are elected. The NDP is the only party that has a plan to protect the environment, stimulate the economy and protect the coastline from dangerous spills. We are committed to helping British Columbians fight against ill-advised projects.

The Conservatives are ignoring or attacking those who are most concerned about British Columbia’s coastline, such as first nations, fishing organizations, community organizations, environmental organizations and the tourism industry. That is unacceptable.

[English]

Instead of isolating first nations, instead of demonizing people who care about the environment, the government should work with Canadians on these issues, but we know that the Conservatives do not care about these issues. It all started in 2012 with that giant omnibus budget, members will remember quite well, when we saw the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act not amended but repealed and replaced with something wholly inadequate. We saw the slashing of the Navigable Waters Protection Act and the Fisheries Act, and of course, cuts across the board at Environment Canada.

The track record of the government speaks volumes. This is a motion we need to support. The government should come on board and actually reverse some of the cuts, especially as they concern the west coast and the Coast Guard station on the west coast, because we know that it cannot handle a response to these oil spills.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the actual “cleanup” of this particular oil spill or toxic spill.

At 5 p.m. on Wednesday, a 911 call went out. The Coast Guard tells us that it had its cleanup boom in place at midnight. Then it changed it to say that it had the cleanup boom in place at 2 a.m. Then it changed that to say, right now, that it had the cleanup boom in place by 5:53 a.m., because it could not find the source of the spill. The person on the sailboat who made the 911 call the evening before at 5 p.m. said it took them 15 minutes to identify the source of the spill as the particular vessel that we were talking about.

Is this a world-class response? if we are to believe any of these stories, the slowest it took was seven hours to find the craft and put the boom in. Then it was nine hours. Now it is 13 hours. How do we trust and believe a Coast Guard that keeps changing its story when a vessel could find it in 15 minutes?

• (1815)

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I think it likens to the analysis of the Keystone Cops. It is pretty bumbling. We really cannot trust the government when it comes to believing anything it has to say. I would point her to the former director of the Kitsilano Coast Guard station, Mr. Moxey, who said plain and simple that what the Conservatives are saying is not the truth, and he is willing to swear an affidavit to that. I would believe him over the Conservatives any day.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

[English]

The question is on the motion.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1840)

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

(Division No. 375)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Angus
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bellavance
Benskin
Blanchette
Boivin
Boutin-Sweet
Brison
Byrne
Casey
Charlton
Choquette
Cleary
Côté

Andrews
Ashton
Aubin
Bélanger
Bennett
Bevington
Blanchette-Lamothe
Borg
Brahmi
Brosseau
Caron
Cash
Chicoine
Christopherson
Comartin
Cotler

Crowder
Cuzner
Day
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault
Eyking
Freeman
Gameau
Genest
Godin
Groguhé
Harris (St. John's East)
Hughes
Jones
Kellway
Lapointe
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leslie
MacAulay
Marston
Mathysen
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Mourani
Murray
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Papillon
Pilon
Quach
Rankin
Regan
Saganash
Scarpaleggia
Sellah
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Toone
Valeriotte

Business of Supply

Cullen
Davies (Vancouver East)
Dewar
Donnelly
Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter
Freeland
Fry
Garrison
Giguère
Goodale
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hsu
Hyer
Julian
Lamoureux
Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Liu
Mai
Masse
May
McGuinty
Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Mulcair
Nantel
Nicholls
Pacetti
Péclet
Plamondon
Rafferty
Raynault
Rousseau
Sandhu
Scott
Sgro
St-Denis
Stoffer
Tremblay
Vaughan — 120

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anders
Armstrong
Barlow
Benoit
Bernier
Blaney
Boughen
Breitkreuz
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Calandra
Carmichael
Chong
Clement
Daniel
Dechert
Dreeshen
Dykstra
Falk
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Galipeau
Gill
Goguen
Goodyear
Gourde
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes
Hillyer
Holder

Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson
Aspin
Bateman
Bergen
Bezan
Block
Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Butt
Cannan
Carrie
Clarke
Crockatt
Davidson
Devolin
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Eglski
Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Gallant
Glover
Goldring
Gosal
Grewal
Hawn
Hiebert
Hoback
James

Business of Supply

Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Barlow	Bateman
Kenny (Calgary Southeast)	Kent	Benoit	Bergen
Kerr	Komarnicki	Bernier	Bezan
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake	Blaney	Block
Lauzon	Lebel	Boughen	Braid
Leaf	Leitch	Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Lemieux	Leung	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Butt
Lizon	Lobb	Calandra	Cannan
Lukiwski	Lunney	Carmichael	Carrie
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie	Chong	Clarke
Maguire	Mayes	Clement	Crockatt
McColeman	McLeod	Daniel	Davidson
Menegakis	Miller	Dechert	Devolin
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)		Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Moore (Fundy Royal)		Dykstra	Egliniski
Nicholson	Norlock	Falk	Fantino
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon	Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Opitz	O'Toole	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Paradis	Payne	Galipeau	Gallant
Perkins	Poillievre	Gill	Glover
Preston	Raiitt	Goguen	Goldring
Rajotte	Reid	Goodyear	Gosal
Rempel	Richards	Gourde	Grewal
Rickford	Ritz	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Saxton	Schellenberger	Hayes	Hiebert
Seeback	Shea	Hillyer	Hoback
Shipley	Shory	Holder	James
Smith	Sopuck	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Sorenson	Stanton	Kenny (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Storseth	Strahl	Kerr	Komarnicki
Sweet	Toet	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Trost	Trottier	Lauzon	Lebel
Truppe	Uppal	Leaf	Leitch
Valcourt	Van Kesteren	Lemieux	Leung
Van Loan	Wallace	Lizon	Lobb
Warawa	Warkentin	Lukiwski	Lunney
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to	MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Sky Country)		Maguire	Mayes
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks	McColeman	McLeod
Williamson	Wong	Menegakis	Miller
Woodworth	Yelich	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)	Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Yurdiga	Zimmer — 150	Nicholson	Norlock

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

COMMON SENSE FIREARMS LICENSING ACT

The House resumed from April 2 consideration of the motion that Bill C-42, An Act to amend the Firearms Act and the Criminal Code and to make a related amendment and a consequential amendment to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: Pursuant to an order made earlier today and on Thursday, February 26, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the second reading stage of Bill C-42.

● (1850)

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

(Division No. 376)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Aspin

Allen (Welland)
Angus
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bellavance
Benskin
Blanchette
Boivin
Boutin-Sweet

NAYS

Members

Andrews
Ashton
Aubin
Bélangier
Bennett
Bevington
Blanchette-Lamothe
Borg
Brahmi

James
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lebel
Leitch
Leung
Lobb
Lunney
MacKenzie
Mayes
McLeod
Miller
Nicholson
Norlock
O'Neill Gordon
O'Toole
Payne
Poillievre
Raiitt
Reid
Richards
Ritz
Schellenberger
Shea
Shory
Sopuck
Stanton
Strahl
Toet
Trottier
Uppal
Van Kesteren
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer — 150

Brison
Byrne
Casey
Charlton
Choquette
Cleary
Côté
Crowder
Cuzner
Day
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault
Eyking
Freeman
Garneau
Genest
Godin
Grogueh
Harris (St. John's East)
Hughes
Jones
Kellway
Lapointe
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leslie
MacAulay
Marston
Mathysen
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Mourani
Murray
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Papillon
Pilon
Quach
Rankin
Raynault
Rousseau
Sandhu
Scott
Sgro
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
St-Denis
Stoffer
Tremblay
Vaughan— 121

Brosseau
Caron
Cash
Chicoine
Christopherson
Comartin
Cotler
Cullen
Davies (Vancouver East)
Dewar
Donnelly
Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter
Freeland
Fry
Garrison
Giguère
Goodale
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hsu
Hyer
Julian
Lamoureux
Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Liu
Mai
Masse
May
McGuinty
Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Mulcair
Nantel
Nicholls
Pacetti
Péclet
Plamondon
Rafferty
Ravignat
Regan
Saganash
Scarpaleggia
Sellah
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Toone
Valeriote

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

RAIL SERVICE

The House resumed from February 2 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Motion No. 550 put forward by the member for Sydney—Victoria.

I find it rather interesting that we are talking about a motion that deals with what we ought to have done, but it does not actually include anything that says how we should have done it. Be that as it

Private Members' Business

may, it would have been helpful if the member had actually put in some of the amendments we tried to get through the agriculture committee that talked to how to make the system work, because ultimately, it is about trying to make the system work.

I do applaud the member on his efforts at least to hold the government to account to some degree, but it would have been nice if it actually had some real teeth in it. Something we had talked about was that it should have the fines that were there in the first place.

If we had done that, perhaps it would have been doing something rather than what the government eventually did in a sort of clandestine way when they literally changed the numbers. What was supposed to be a fine per incident turned out to be a fine per week, which I found rather unusual and slightly disheartening.

We helped the government with the legislation. I know that the other side has a hard time believing we help with these things, but when it comes to Bill C-30, we did help with that legislation. We tried to move it along swiftly, because we understood the plight of prairie farmers coming out of the winter of 2013. It literally was a bumper crop. It was stuck on the Prairies, because according to the railroaders, it was too cold for them to move grain. The rail system seems to not work in a Canadian winter. It was almost as if somebody had brought some folks up from Florida, with no offence to the good folks from Florida, and transplanted them into Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba in the middle of winter, and they did not know what to do because it was cold. The railroaders decided that was an excuse for them not to do what we felt they ought to be doing.

Unfortunately, the folks who suffered the most were the farmers. Ultimately what we saw was the price for them was not as lucrative as it may have been if the grain had actually been moving.

This speaks to the whole sense of how the system operates and how it should operate, and who is responsible to make sure it does operate. Clearly, it was not operating.

Many times we asked the minister in the House why over 40 ships were sitting in the port of Vancouver waiting for grain that was stuck on the Prairies. It was costing literally thousands of dollars a day.

The port manager at the port of Vancouver said that they were like car jockeys, except the problem is they were working with big ships. They are brought out of anchor, put at the dock, and when they find out there is no grain being delivered, the ship has to be moved off the dock because another one wants to come in. He said that every time an anchor is pulled up and a vessel comes in, it is a \$10,000 move. That is a heck of a lot more money than someone who jockeys cars for a living, which might be \$10.

Those were issues facing the farmers. That cost ends up going back through the system, and it is the farmers who pay, because they get less for their grain. At a time when they should have been getting a good price, in fact one might say they should have been getting a great price, they were getting less because the system was not working.

Private Members' Business

There are farmers who fill their own hopper cars, what the trade calls producer cars, which is simply a small railroad somewhere owned by a group of farmers who got into a co-op and decided to pool their resources. They get the short-line railroad and bring the cars down to the main line. When they put in orders for producer cars, they were not seeing any. They were being told that they should just truck their grain to an elevator. The problem was the elevators were full. The elevators were saying not to truck it to them because they had no space.

It ends up being stored. Many farmers had contracts. The government was always good about talking about forward contracts, that if they were forwarded out, they could make some money. The problem was they had forward contracts, but that time would come and go, and they could not move anything, because there was no room in the elevator. The elevators were still full because the railroaders were not getting an opportunity to move the grain, because of the cold winter, they say.

• (1855)

Ultimately, the folks who paid in all of this were indeed the farmers on the prairies.

We saw the order in council come through, and then Bill C-30 came forward. We tried to work with that. We tried to push some amendments on what the fines should be like. We actually agreed with Premier Brad Wall. We thought we should double the fine. The government proposed \$100,000. We thought it should be \$200,000. We actually agreed with the Premier of Saskatchewan. Many people out there would probably not believe that we would agree with Premier Wall on that particular issue, but we did.

We also pushed forward a number of amendments on how we could have some sort of transparency in the system so that farmers could follow whether the ship was in port, whether the grain was moving, where it was stuck, what the final price was, and why the farmers got a particular price when they sold to the elevators.

Many of us in the agricultural field know that there is a set price for grain travelling west to the port of Vancouver. The railroads charge a set price, so it is easy for farmers to calculate if they know the final price at the port destination. Farmers can calculate how much it cost to send it to the elevator, how much it cost for the elevation of it, and how much it cost to transport it.

Some reports, one of which came from a professor at the University of Saskatchewan, said that the farmers were basically losing \$160 per tonne because of the way the system had plugged up. That being the case, the opportunity for farmers to take a bumper crop and turn it into a bumper financial crop was wasted because of what happened with the railroads.

The motion talks about making sure that this does not happen again, but what we need to see is that the government makes sure it does not happen again. We need a system of fair rail and a system that allows those who ship to make the railroads accountable.

I talked about agreeing with Mr. Wall, but I suggested in an amendment at committee that we should have open rail. Two companies in this country do not want open rail, Canadian National and Canadian Pacific, which I find ironic, because they do not mind asking the United States for open rail. They do not want to see

competition. We actually think that if we had competition in the system, if we had transparency in the system, like they do in the U. S., where they can actually tell what the grain price is at the port of Seattle, farmers would know if they were not getting a fair price. It would give them more leverage and more information, and information in the marketplace is important when they make those final decisions to sell now or sell later or to contract it. Ultimately, we have seen a system that does not function well for farmers.

Another amendment we pushed was to make sure that now that we have to move a million tonnes, it will be fairly distributed. What we saw justified our fears. The railroads figured out how to turn it around fast. Basically they chose the elevators closest to the western port of Vancouver, and the rest, who were further east, suffered.

Many of us who have kids or grandkids who like Cheerios will remember that the Cheerios factory was going to shut down. Why did that happen? It was because the oat farmers in this country supply all the oats needed in the United States to make Cheerios. However, there were no trains moving north-south. They tried to take the shortest route back and forth through the western corridor and did not run north-south at all.

I spoke to an oat farmer not long ago. He said that there is still an issue trying to get trains to come and serve them. Clearly this is a government that did not actually get the job done, even though we had Bill C-30. We suggested that they do not sunset the clauses in it. The Conservatives decided that they would sunset the clauses in it.

I would say to the government that if it is to do a rail review, it should not worry about the carrot; it should get out the big stick. If it is to bargain with two railroads, they will bring big sticks, and if the government does not bring a big stick, it will lose.

Then again, there will be an election, and by that time, we will have the big stick, when we sit over there. We will make sure that the railroads deliver service to farmers across the prairies and that they get the service they deserve.

• (1900)

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to state on behalf of our government that we support private member's Motion No. 550. At its core, the motion calls upon our government to take steps to provide an increased level of rail service throughout Canada. It is our government's position that we have already taken important steps toward addressing the various concerns that have been outlined in Motion No. 550.

There are a number of elements to this motion. I would like to address them in the short amount of time that I have today.

Private Members' Business

The motion asks that our government recognize the importance of rail service to Canada's agricultural sector. I maintain that our government understands the importance of the relationship between these two sectors. We have also taken action in recent years to ensure an appropriate framework is in place that will benefit the overall Canadian economy. The vast majority of Canada's agricultural products are destined for export. As such, the agricultural industry is highly dependent on reliable and efficient rail service in order to be able to move this product to export positions across the country. Rail remains the most economically viable form of land-based transportation over long distances in Canada. Overall, an efficient and effective rail transport system is necessary for the prosperity of Canada's economy.

One of my colleagues recited some statistics during the first hour of debate but I think they bear repeating.

In 2013, Canada's railways moved 16.4% of Canada's exports and 8.5% of its imports when measured by value, including \$30 billion worth of automobiles, \$10.6 billion in chemical products, \$9.5 billion in forest products, and \$8.2 billion in metals. Finally, the railways also moved \$3.5 billion in agriculture and food products. As my hon. colleagues know, in 2013-14 the western Canadian crop was significantly higher than the 10-year average. The harsh winter that followed brought difficult operating conditions for the railways. This put significant pressure on western Canada's grain handling and transportation system. To alleviate some of the difficulties that agricultural producers were facing in getting their product to market, our government announced an order in council on March 7, 2014, setting out the minimum volumes of grain that the Canadian National Railway Company and the Canadian Pacific Railway Limited were each required to move to ensure that Canada's grain could move to market in a predictable and timely way while not affecting the movement of other commodities. This measure helped move the extraordinary backlog of grain.

Motion No. 550 also states that the review of the Canada Transportation Act provides an opportunity to rebalance the system and improve capacity and service, and that changes to the legislative frameworks may be needed to ensure a balance of power between participants in supply chains. Our government took swift action last year by introducing the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act to respond to concerns raised by grain shippers to support the movement of Canada's agricultural products to market and also to encourage greater competition between the railways. The legislation was designed to increase supply chain transparency, strengthen the contracts between producers and shippers, provide better accountability in agreements and contracts between shippers and railways, and help ensure the entire grain handling and transportation system is working efficiently and at full capacity.

Last summer, the Minister of Transport also launched a statutory review of the Canada Transportation Act, the CTA, a full year ahead of schedule, to address a range of changing conditions and challenges. The independent review, led by the hon. David Emerson, is currently examining a wide range of issues facing the transportation system in Canada, including those related to the transportation of grain as well as other commodities by rail. Engagement and advice from all interested parties will be essential to this review's success. The review panel will produce its report at the

end of the year, at which time our government will study it and report back to Parliament. The review provides an opportunity to examine whether the current legislative framework meets the demands and needs of stakeholders. However, given that the report is not expected for several months, I think it would be premature to presuppose what the panel's recommendations will be and whether further legislative action will be required to address those issues. Therefore, we should wait to see what the recommendations of the panel are.

● (1905)

Finally, the motion asks that we bring industry stakeholders together to enhance the efficiency of the transportation system and make sure that these stakeholders work together to build a world-class transportation system. Collaboration and partnerships throughout the supply chain remain integral to moving as much grain as possible. The supply chain is complex, an integrated network that requires extensive co-operation on the part of everyone involved to increase its overall flexibility.

As part of our response to the 2011 rail freight service review panel's final report, our government committed to the creation of the Commodity Supply Chain Table. The Minister of Transport launched this table last summer. This brings together participants in rail-based supply chains for Canada's most important export commodities. The mandate of that table is to provide a consensus-based national forum for shippers, railways, and other supply chain partners involved in the movement of commodities by rail to identify and address system issues that would improve the reliability, efficiency, and effectiveness of the supply chain.

Members of the table will work together in a collaborative fashion to examine issues affecting fluidity of commodity movement and improve their knowledge of the supply chain for commodities by sharing information on emerging issues and needs. Stakeholders who have participated in the process so far have provided positive feedback about the commodity supply chain table. The work is being undertaken by both the public and private sectors, and it is very encouraging. Participants are looking forward to the next meetings, which are scheduled for later this year.

Our government is supporting efforts that result in the best possible rail-based supply chain system so that Canada's agricultural sector can remain competitive in domestic, continental, and offshore markets. We will continue to closely monitor the functioning of the rail transportation system and its interaction with the agricultural sector, with a view to ensuring that it continues to support our trade objectives and strong overall economic growth.

Private Members' Business

• (1910)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to thank all of my colleagues who are members of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food for their work. Every member wants to promote the smooth functioning of the agricultural system and the emancipation of agricultural industries. I would also like to commend the member for Sydney—Victoria for moving this motion, which just received the government's support. I would therefore like to thank her once again for getting the government's support for her motion.

On February 5, I moved a similar motion at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. That motion had the same objectives as those we are talking about today. In fact, I asked the committee to immediately examine the problems that currently exist with the transportation of agricultural products by consulting all of the stakeholders. In that motion, I said that given recent reports on the deterioration of rail service, ongoing problems with the provision of cars to transport grain and the specific impact of ongoing transportation problems in the agricultural sector, we proposed that the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food immediately examine the problems that currently exist with the transportation of agricultural products, establish long-term projections for 2015 and consult all members of the grain supply chain, including producers, elevator operators, grain companies and rail companies.

Unfortunately, the government refused to step up to its responsibilities, and that could happen with this motion too. However, once again, there is good news. I hope that this will change things.

A year ago, I was here to talk about the same problem in the context of Bill C-30, which was designed to resolve the grain transportation crisis farmers were experiencing. I do not need to paint a picture to make the point that the Conservatives' decisions have not solved much of anything in the past year and that farmers are still in the same boat. I am proud to express my support for this motion.

We need to talk about the context and compare the situation to last year. As I said, and as happens so often with government bills, I get the feeling I'm going through exactly what happened last year all over again.

Last year, farmers' growth was hampered by inefficient CN and CP services. At the time, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food said that rail companies were providing adequate service, but thousands of farmers were exasperated by the fundamental flaws in the grain transportation system.

How are things now? About the same. Rail companies delivered over 11,000 orders late. That is about 11% of their orders. Ongoing delays have cost the Canadian economy over \$8 billion. What is more, in the past six months, fewer than half of all orders were delivered on time.

What did the government decide to do? It decided not to renew the requirements that CN and CP transport a minimum volume of grain. We also found out that, after having rejected an offer to purchase from an association of Canadian farmers, the Conservatives offered

up a majority stake in the Canadian Wheat Board on a silver platter to foreign interests. That is another Conservative decision that shows a lack of support for Canadian farmers.

Again, a year later, farmers have lost \$8.3 billion. They have received nothing, apart from compensation under Bill C-30, which puts them back into a similar situation today.

I deplore the fact that there still has not been any compensation for the losses suffered by producers, especially for the crises and problems that occurred in previous years. A responsible government is able to prevent such situations, instead of always finding temporary solutions to these messes.

In other words, Bill C-30 had very little impact in the medium and long term. It simply brought everything back to square one.

We have to ask ourselves: why are we here? For the same reasons that the opposition always has to go over the flawed bills introduced by this government, which, despite the warnings of my colleagues and stakeholders, refuses to listen.

• (1915)

We are in the same situation because in enacting Bill C-30, the government did not listen to all the stakeholders. A number of them were critical of the government for getting rid of the CWB and said that the board was useful when it came to grain transportation. However, the government did nothing about it, and today it is encouraging the sale of the CWB to foreign interests.

The stakeholders were calling for a mechanism to evaluate the performance and quality of rail freight services, but the government rejected that idea.

Today, the stakeholders are claiming that service is still bad. They say they are frustrated by the persistent delays, whereas the government is still saying that everything is just fine.

As usual, things were done too quickly without any plan or long-term vision. The government disregarded our amendments, which took into account all the requests of all stakeholders, not just those of the corporations and the major producers. The government did not implement enough of the necessary sanctions to ensure the efficient transportation of grain by rail.

In closing, the situation is critical because this government mismanaged it and the minister keeps saying that rail companies are doing just fine.

What should have been done and what should we be doing now?

Adopting the proposed amendments would have addressed the root of the problem. My party fought to have Bill C-30 consider the interests of farmers and not just those of major producers.

Our amendments would have implemented mandatory reporting of the price of grain throughout the transportation system, required adequate service in rail transportation corridors and ensured that producers in all affected regions would be consulted about the regulations.

Private Members' Business

That could have prevented the current crisis, but it is pointless to talk about the past. We have a mess in our hands and we have to deal with it.

We have to examine this crisis and take action to establish new communications protocols and new penalties for non-compliance with delivery agreements. We must also ensure that producers have information about exports and ships and establish the mandatory reporting of price throughout the grain handling chain. All producers, even small ones, must have equitable access to rail infrastructure, and we have to think long term by developing a strategy for the future of rail service that will consider the growth of the agricultural sector.

The minister needs to step up and admit that he failed in his obligations. He must admit that he made a mistake by abolishing the Canadian Wheat Board, by supporting the sale of this former crown corporation to foreign interests, by refusing to be transparent about exports and by refusing to bring in performance standards for rail transportation.

In addition, the Minister of Transport needs to impose the fines she promised to impose—\$100,000 per day and not per week—on the companies that do not comply with the agreements.

It is time that the government started listening and started working with all stakeholders in order to resolve the grain transportation issue once and for all. That is why I support this motion and why I will vote in favour of it.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here today to support Motion No. 550 and to speak about our government's ongoing work to provide an increased level of rail service throughout Canada.

Our government has already taken steps to improve rail service for all shippers in Canada and in doing so, has enhanced the competitiveness of the Canadian economy and the economic prosperity of all Canadians.

As part of our government's response to the events last winter that hampered the timely and efficient movement of western grain to market, the Minister of Transport advanced the launch of the statutory review of the Canada Transportation Act by a full year. In doing so, she gave the review panel the explicit mandate to consider the provisions of the act that are relevant to the transportation of grain by rail, while taking into account the broader goal of a commercially based, market-driven, multi-modal transportation system that delivers the best possible service to all users. Many of the provisions that are relevant to the movement of grain also apply more broadly to supply chains for the movement of other export commodities that are dependent upon rail and upon which the success of Canada's exporters is based.

I should note that the review panel will also examine the act to ensure that Canada's rail system has the capacity and adaptability that will allow it and its users to respond effectively to changing economic conditions in both international and domestic markets. This examination includes a look at the major trends on an international and domestic basis that are relevant to the understanding of future demands for transportation capacity in Canada. In

turn, this will help us understand whether existing or planned capacity and performance improvements will respond sufficiently to these needs and can address periodic demands for surge capacity.

As many of my hon. colleagues probably already know, the review panel has been quite active since its launch. It has issued a discussion paper, called for submissions and met with the stakeholders throughout the country, and its work continues. I think my hon. colleagues would also agree that it is important that we let the review panel conduct its work in an independent fashion and await its recommendations.

Our government is proud to work with its stakeholders to build a world-class transportation system.

I am pleased to highlight two initiatives to enhance the collaboration among all participants in Canada's supply chains to address issues and ensure Canadian exports can reach their markets in a timely and efficient way.

The first initiative is to establish a commodity supply chain table last summer by the Minister of Transport. The table provides a forum for shippers, railways, ports, terminals and other partners in the rail-based supply chains to work together on ways to improve the speed and efficiency with which Canada's commodity exports reach their markets.

This important co-operative forum brings together key representatives from Canada's agricultural, forestry, chemical and petroleum product sectors with those from its railroads, ports, grain elevators and shipowners to work together in a collaborative fashion to identify issues and explore potential solutions to the challenges facing Canada's rail-based supply chain.

This table meets twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring. Facilitated by officials from Transport Canada it promotes exchanges on logistical issues affecting supply chains in Canada for bulk commodities that are shipped by rail. It also gives service providers and shippers in these supply chains the opportunity to share information on trends and expected future traffic and commodity movements. In this respect, one of the table's top priorities is to work on the development of performance metrics that will help to increase the transparency and visibility of the system's overall performance and identify areas where improvements may be needed.

The second initiative is our government's Asia-Pacific intermodal performance committee of the national transportation system performance table, which is also managed by Transport Canada. This committee is an initiative that engages the public and private sectors with the goal of improving the efficiency and competitiveness of the supply chain for containers moving through Canada's west coast over the long term.

● (1920)

The committee is composed of a cross section of major transportation, shipping and labour interests operating in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. It uses a monthly scorecard of metrics to tackle supply chain issues that are common to the users and beyond the capacity of single organizations to resolve.

Private Members' Business

I would like to note that this table follows on the success of another forum, the winter contingency planning table. That was established to enhance co-operation between shippers, the railroads and terminal operators at Port Metro Vancouver, and to improve the performance and capacity of the Asian-Pacific gateway by addressing winter-related supply chain issues. Participants at this table share information on forecasts for commodity movements and expected changes to the capacity and infrastructure improvements, as well as discuss specific issues and potential solutions to the problems that arose during the previous winter season.

In summary, the Minister of Transport launched a review of the Canada Transportation Act a full year ahead of schedule in response to problems that emerged in the rail-based supply chain for moving western grain. Its recommendations will provide the opportunity to improve the capacity and service for all of those who rely on the railways to move their products to the market.

This government is taking the necessary steps to build a world-class transportation system which Canadian firms and exporters can rely on to succeed in competitive domestic and international marketplaces. We will continue to listen to all stakeholders in an effort to implement an economic, legal and regulatory framework that reflects the importance of rail service and capacity for the Canadian economy and the Canadian agricultural sector.

• (1925)

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to rise today to finish the debate on Motion No. 550 at second reading.

I have to thank my colleagues, like the member for Welland, for bringing to our attention that most of the Cheerios eaten in the United States come from Canadian oats, and the member for Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, where I went to agricultural college, who spoke in favour of my motion, and the NDP member for Berthier—Maskinongé because she does a lot of hard work with farmers at the agricultural committee, and the member for Yellowhead who also made comments tonight.

The motion is that in the opinion of the House the government should take steps to increase the rail service and capacity, to rebalance the system, to increase effectiveness and efficiency in our transportation system, and to address the imbalance of power along the logistics chain. Finally, it is to work together to build a world-class transportation system, which Canadians did many years ago. We have to continue to make this a great country and move our grains to the markets that are looking for them.

The bottom line is that the grain handling and transportation system remains inadequate and with little ability to cope with volume surges and adverse weather, as many of my colleagues said tonight.

Shippers remain captive with no competitive commercial alternatives and no legal recourse when the system fails. Threatened fines to be paid to the government have no real impact and are no substitute for the damages payable directly to affected shippers and farmers.

These systematic issues are putting Canada's reputation as a preferred trading partner at risk and threatening future investment in

our country. We saw this when boats were sitting in the bay in Vancouver.

We know that the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has recently returned from Japan where he was trying to do damage control and saying that we are back. We should have been there two years ago to make sure that Japanese boats were not leaving the harbour and going to the United States to pick up grain.

The most recent weekly performance update by the Agriculture Transportation Coalition showed that the total unfilled shipper demand remains at over 23,000 cars, with denied orders and railway cancellations being nearly 10,000 orders. More than 3,700 customer orders, approximately 41% of unfilled orders, have been outstanding for four weeks or longer. This is unacceptable.

These issues began in 2007, starting with former Bill C-58. After many reviews and other pieces of legislation, the problem was not solved. Farmers continue to lose money, estimated at \$5 billion a year.

It has also been costly for the national economy and for Canada's reputation, as I mentioned, as a reliable grain supplier. Accountability can only be achieved if performance expectations are well-defined, balanced, measurable, and transparent. Having an efficient and effective logistics system is a critical part of the sector's ability—some have mentioned in the House this evening that the United States has a better system than we do—to maintain and grow high value demand both here at home and abroad.

This system has a unique duty as one of the bedrocks of the Canadian economy. The success of the railways, handlers, and farmers are interconnected. Shippers of all shapes and sizes need equal access if we are to protect Canada's reputation as an exporter and grow our markets.

The system needs to adapt to the increasing growing capacity of Canadian farmers because with global climate change we are growing more and better products with our innovation. The system needs to be able to accommodate small volume crops.

As we heard, we are not getting our oats down to the United States. There is more than just shipping to Vancouver or Thunder Bay. We have to go north and south. We are also shipping quite a bit to Mexico.

To avoid crises, the next version of the Canada Transportation Act needs to ensure more collaboration, clearer consequences, better rewards, more data sharing, and equitable distribution of car allocations.

Adjournment Proceedings

• (1930)

Since the first reading of the motion in February, I, along with my colleagues from Wascana, Ottawa South, and the member for Winnipeg North have met many prairie farmer groups from across this country here in Ottawa. Also, there were round tables from all of the western provinces. We met with many of them, like the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance, the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan, the Prairie Oat Growers Association and the Canadian Young Farmers' Forum.

We are consistently being told that there is no equity in the treatment of shipping corridors. Whether it is west, east, north or south, for producer cars or short-line rail operators, the grain handling and transportation system remains non-transparent. The Conservatives will not be renewing the requirements of the CN and CP Rail to transport minimum volumes, which just expired. Farmers will have to wait even longer for results.

Unfortunately, there are no substantial improvements to this bottleneck. However, I sense that we have an agreement here. I sense that all members of this House are in favour of my motion. This is for the grain farmers of Canada. This is for the people around the world who want our grain, and this is for the people and the economy of Canada.

I thank all for the support we have tonight and my colleagues who have joined with me this evening.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, April 22, 2015 immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (1935)

[*Translation*]

TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to talk about Uber. First of all, it is important to

know that the people who talk on behalf of Uber in Canada are advertising and public relations people. The company that collects money from customers is called Uber B.V., which is a Dutch company that belongs to Uber International C.V. This company is headquartered in Bermuda, a tax haven that does not have any taxes and guarantees banking secrecy. Therefore, when someone uses Uber they are, quite simply, supporting tax havens. Uber B.V. has no known office in Canada. This company is not registered on any business registry in Canada or Quebec. In fact, this company siphons money from Canada but does not pay taxes. The only way to contact the company's principals is to use email, since there is no known local phone number.

Uber boasted that it was about 30% cheaper than a regular taxi. We should ask ourselves how that is possible.

First, we know that the taxi industry is regulated to ensure the safe and efficient transportation of people. Taxicabs are appropriately insured and regularly inspected. The drivers are known. That kind of oversight generates costs, of course, but it also protects the public. Uber is not subject to these regulations at all, so it is saving money at the expense of client safety.

Second, from a taxation perspective, we have, on the one hand, the taxi industry, which in Montreal is primarily made up of independent drivers who pay all taxes. Through its billing system, the industry reports all of the income earned by its workers and operators. On the other hand, we have Uber, where the application of tax rules is pretty vague. Some say that Uber collects GST and QST on behalf of its drivers, but others say it does not. There are no GST and QST numbers associated with the transactions. Some say that there is no receipt that includes the GST and QST. Confusion reigns.

One thing is certain, however: Uber BV, which operates UberX, is not listed in either Quebec's or Canada's business registry. We also have to ask ourselves this: is Uber BV giving Revenue Canada the names of all the individuals who are bringing in transportation revenues? Will the Canadian government use its laws and regulations to rein in this business, which, in my opinion, is sucking the lifeblood out of Canada's economy? Uber is affecting the lives of Canadians as well as businesses, including the taxi industry, which pays its income tax and creates real wealth in our society.

We must take action. This is crucial. We can no longer accept this kind of situation.

[*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, I listened to my hon. colleague's comments and she really has two issues. One issue is whether Uber is a legitimate company. The other issue is about businesses paying income tax. Quite frankly, it is the responsibility of all businesses and all Canadians to pay any taxes that are applicable.

Participation in the underground economy hurts everyone. We all understand that. It not only undermines the competitiveness of honest businesses that abide by the law, but it also undermines our government's efforts to reduce the tax burden for families and businesses.

Adjournment Proceedings

Uber drivers are required to report all income earned through Uber and to comply with any GST/HST reporting requirements, like all Canadians. It is the responsibility of every driver to understand his or her legal and tax obligations.

Failure to comply with these obligations can lead to serious consequences. Drivers who do not register and collect GST/HST or who fail to comply with income tax obligations as required, may be subject to interest and/or penalties, depending on the circumstances, in addition to having to pay the tax that should have been paid in the first place.

Combatting the underground economy is a priority for our government. Through the implementation of our new three-year strategy, “Reducing Participation in the Underground Economy”, the CRA is taking action to reduce the social acceptability of and participation in the underground economy.

As well, the Minister of National Revenue recently announced a new underground economy advisory committee, comprised of representatives from key industry stakeholder organizations. It is the first of its kind. These measures will protect the fairness and integrity of the tax and benefit system and ensure a level playing field for all businesses and taxpayers, while allowing us to continue to provide tax relief for hard-working Canadians.

The regulation of taxi services falls outside of the CRA mandate. Therefore, the aspect of the question dealing with regulation is not one on which we can actually comment. However, we recognize that the underground economy is an issue of significant concern for our provincial and territorial partners. We are committed to continuing to work closely with the provinces and territories and engaging with other key stakeholders to ensure we achieve our common goals of tackling the underground economy in a meaningful and lasting manner.

Let me be clear. The rules apply equally to all Canadians. Unscrupulous business owners of any business, or in any industry or in any business sector participating in the underground economy and not paying their fair share of taxes will be held responsible, and there will be consequences.

• (1940)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Speaker, I was listening to my colleague's speech. It is clear that he wants to fight tax evasion.

One thing is certain: whether we are talking about Uber, Uber B.V. or Uber International C.V., whatever name this company is giving itself to get around the rules or paying taxes, under the guise of a cool, hi-tech, environmentally friendly carpooling service, it is sucking the lifeblood out of our economy and not producing wealth. It is unfair competition for the taxi industry, which is paying all its taxes and insurance.

My colleague said he did not really know how it worked. I think that the government has to make sure that Uber, Uber International C.V., whatever name it gives itself, is paying its taxes. It is not just Uber drivers who have to pay their taxes, but Uber itself as well. That is important.

[*English*]

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Mr. Speaker, what I said, I thought quite clearly, was that all business entities in Canada were expected to pay any applicable taxes that they would have owing.

The CRA is always working to identify and address underground economy activities wherever they may occur. The CRA's capacity to combat the underground economy is as strong as ever. Its comprehensive, multi-year strategy is building upon years of experience and success, and places great emphasis on collaboration and co-operation between all levels of government, industry and other stakeholders.

It is our government's priority to maintain the integrity of our tax system and to ensure a level playing field for all Canadians. Our actions in that regard are a testament to that commitment.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question I rose on originally remains a persistent problem in this country: cities do not have the resources they need to both build the platform for economic success or even maintain the infrastructure required to sustain a modern economy.

The question, in particular, was around the city of Regina, a city which I visited. I spoke with the board of trade, the mayor, councillors, housing advocates, a long list of individuals who are looking for partnership in Ottawa and instead quite often are subjected effectively to a series of promises that never seem to arrive in these cities. If one were to ask the mayor directly, “Did you get money from the new building Canada fund last year”, the answer would be no. There was federal support from things like the gas tax started by Paul Martin, perfected by others, and added to by the current government, but it is still existing money which builds on a base of funding. It is not money for new infrastructure and it certainly is not money to repair existing and aging infrastructure. This question is pertinent certainly as we head toward the budget tomorrow.

There has also been no money delivered this year from the new building Canada fund. It is back-end loaded. The fund arrives in 10 years' time. That money is needed now by the cities. The cities are pleading with the federal government to get the money moving, but because of the delay in the budget and because of the way in which the program is currently structured, the money is not going to arrive this year either. This means we have now lost two construction seasons not due to the promise of infrastructure funding, but the design of the system and the delivery of the funds themselves.

Adjournment Proceedings

My question is a very simple one. Is there going to be a stop to the money being back-end loaded? Is there going to be an annual amount of infrastructure funding delivered to cities in a predictable and robust way that allows them not only to do multi-year planning but to do annual construction build-out so they do not have to wait 10 years for the government's promises to arrive in their cities? In Regina, the needs are very clear. It needs \$30 million for a new transit facility. It needs millions for highway overpasses to facilitate a modern economy, which is starting to struggle without being diversified and they need to diversify. It needs \$67 million for the railroad revitalization program, a major redevelopment of the downtown core, which would boost the city's capacity to raise taxes and to part with Ottawa.

Is money going to arrive on an annual basis, and if it is, how much is coming this year and how much is coming next year?

• (1945)

Mr. Peter Braid (Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in fact, the new building Canada plan was announced in budget 2013. It has been open for business since March 2014. The timing of this year's budget, tomorrow, has absolutely no impact on the rolling out of the most significant investment in infrastructure in Canada's history.

Our Conservative government's support for public infrastructure has never been stronger. Whether it is in roads and bridges, public transit or water systems, we understand that investments in infrastructure are key to building strong, safe and prosperous communities.

Since 2006, in fact, we have dramatically increased the average annual federal funding for thousands of provincial, territorial, and municipal infrastructure projects across the country. We are building on Canada's historic investments with \$75 billion for public infrastructure over the next 10 years. This includes, of course, the \$53 billion new building Canada plan that I mentioned.

As Canada's largest and longest federal infrastructure plan, the new building Canada plan provides predictable and flexible funding so that municipalities from coast to coast can address their most pressing infrastructure priorities and plan for the long term. Our new building Canada plan ensures support through a number of different funds.

The federal gas tax fund supplies almost \$2 billion in funding per year. Since 2006, our Conservative government has extended, doubled, indexed, and made the gas tax fund permanent. We have also expanded its eligible categories so that it covers a wider range of types of projects. Further, municipalities can pool, bank, and borrow against their gas tax funding.

Another major component of the plan is the new building Canada fund, made up of a national infrastructure component for projects of national significance, and the provincial and territorial infrastructure component, which has dedicated funding for provinces and territories. Under the provincial and territorial infrastructure component, each Canadian province and territory receives a base amount plus a per capita allocation over the 10 years of the program.

Not only are the new building Canada plan programs well under way, as I mentioned, but significant funding in public infrastructure

continues to flow from the original plan that we announced in 2007, and other federal programs to support infrastructure projects across the country.

Canadian municipalities, including Regina, Saskatchewan, and Sydney, Nova Scotia, have unprecedented ways in which they can put this federal funding to work in their communities. Through the plan, Saskatchewan will benefit from more than \$1 billion in dedicated federal funding, including almost \$437 million under the new building Canada fund, and an estimated \$613 million under the federal gas tax fund.

Nova Scotia will also benefit from more than \$1 billion in dedicated federal funding, including more than \$426 million under the new building Canada fund, and an estimated \$580 million under the federal gas tax fund.

While Regina and Sydney can count on their federal allocations through the gas tax fund, we will be pleased, of course, to consider investing in projects that both Regina and Sydney deem to be important, just as we will for all municipalities under the new building Canada fund. Municipalities must identify their infrastructure projects, and provinces must prioritize them.

Our government is committed to creating jobs, promoting growth, and building strong, prosperous communities across this great country.

• (1950)

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Mr. Speaker, that was more or less the answer I received the first time, and that is problematic.

For example, in Nova Scotia, one city alone, Cape Breton Regional Municipality, has a \$450 million need for a new water plant. That need was driven by changes that were decided upon in this House. When federal water standards were changed, obligations were downloaded, or side-loaded as cities often describe it, onto the regional municipalities.

The amount of money for the province is equal to the need of one single municipality. That shows how inadequate the funding is. Not only that, the money that is being talked about does not arrive for 10 years.

The question is very simple. Will the budget tomorrow, and the plan of the government, make that money an annual amount, and make it predictable to cities? Is it sufficient to get things like the water plant in Sydney, Nova Scotia, built, or are they going to have to wait 10 years?

The subsequent question is, where is the money for the repair of existing infrastructure? We have heard the plans for new infrastructure, but repair is just as critical.

Adjournment Proceedings

The final component to this, which flows from many of these projects, is the issue of housing. Housing is not an eligible category under the infrastructure program. As a result, wait lists across the country are magnificent. There are 200,000 people in Toronto alone waiting for housing.

I will give a quick recap. Is the money going to be annual? Is it going to be more than is currently announced? Is housing going to be eligible?

Mr. Peter Braid: Mr. Speaker, it is very simple. Support is provided as projects are approved. As municipalities commence work, expenses are incurred and those receipts are submitted. It is a very simple and straightforward process.

As I mentioned, the Conservative government's support for public infrastructure has never been stronger. Since 2006, our government has dramatically increased the average annual federal funding for thousands of provincial, territorial and municipal infrastructure projects across the country. We are building on these historic

investments, with \$75 billion over 10 years, including the \$53 billion new building Canada plan. Canadian municipalities have unprecedented ways in which they can put this federal funding to work in their communities.

I might also add that our investments in public infrastructure under our Conservative government are three times greater than the previous Liberal government.

Our government is committed to creating jobs, promoting growth and building strong, prosperous communities across the country.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Order. 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 7:53 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Monday, April 20, 2015

Business of the House

Mr. Armstrong	12719
Motion	12719
(Motion agreed to)	12719

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Intern Protection Act

Bill C-636. Second reading	12719
Mr. Armstrong	12719
Mr. Cuzner	12720
Ms. Nash	12722
Mrs. McLeod	12723
Mr. Dubé	12724
Ms. Liu	12726
Division on motion deferred	12727

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Business of Supply

Opposition Motion—Coastal Water Protection

Mr. Donnelly	12727
Motion	12727
Mr. Julian	12729
Mr. Kamp	12729
Mr. Julian	12729
Mr. Kamp	12731
Mr. Lamoureux	12731
Mr. Donnelly	12731
Mr. Kamp	12731
Mr. Donnelly	12733
Mr. Lamoureux	12733
Mr. Warawa	12733
Mr. Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	12733
Mr. Donnelly	12735
Mr. Vaughan	12735
Ms. Fry	12736
Mr. Donnelly	12737
Ms. Murray	12737
Ms. Murray	12738
Mr. Cullen	12739
Mr. Easter	12739
Mr. Cullen	12740
Mrs. Hughes	12741
Mr. Lamoureux	12742
Mr. Rankin	12742

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Budget

Mr. Fortin	12744
------------------	-------

Lawrence Rosia

Mr. Barlow	12744
------------------	-------

Zénith Awards

Mr. Dionne Labelle	12744
--------------------------	-------

Mark Reeds

Mr. Miller	12744
------------------	-------

Canadian Coast Guard

Ms. Murray	12744
------------------	-------

Richmond Hill Volunteer Achievement Awards

Mr. Menegakis	12745
---------------------	-------

Rachel Thibeault

Ms. Borg	12745
----------------	-------

Science and Technology

Mrs. McLeod	12745
-------------------	-------

Victims of Crime Round Table

Mr. Norlock	12745
-------------------	-------

Beatification of Élisabeth Turgeon

Mr. Caron	12746
-----------------	-------

Islamic State

Mr. Trottier	12746
--------------------	-------

Public Service of Canada

Ms. Boivin	12746
------------------	-------

Taxation

Mrs. Ambler	12746
-------------------	-------

Equal Pay Day

Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North)	12746
------------------------------------	-------

Ukraine

Mr. Maguire	12747
-------------------	-------

Taxation

Ms. Sims	12747
----------------	-------

Taxation

Mr. Hayes	12747
-----------------	-------

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Budget

Ms. Leslie	12747
------------------	-------

Mr. Sorenson	12747
--------------------	-------

Ms. Leslie	12747
------------------	-------

Mr. Sorenson	12747
--------------------	-------

Ethics

Ms. Leslie	12748
------------------	-------

Mr. Calandra	12748
--------------------	-------

Mr. Julian	12748
------------------	-------

Mr. Calandra	12748
--------------------	-------

The Environment

Mr. Julian	12748
------------------	-------

Ms. Raitt	12748
-----------------	-------

Finance	
Mr. Brison	12748
Mr. Sorenson	12748
Taxation	
Mr. Brison	12749
Mr. Sorenson	12749
Employment	
Mr. Brison	12749
Mr. Poilievre	12749
Ethics	
Ms. Péclet	12749
Mr. Calandra	12749
Mr. Angus	12749
Mr. Calandra	12749
Mr. Angus	12750
Government Services	
Mrs. Groguhé	12750
Mr. Calandra	12750
Mrs. Groguhé	12750
Mr. Poilievre	12750
The Budget	
Mr. Caron	12750
Mr. Poilievre	12750
Manufacturing Industry	
Ms. Nash	12751
Mr. Poilievre	12751
Mr. Cullen	12751
Mr. Poilievre	12751
Canadian Coast Guard	
Mr. Donnelly	12751
Mrs. Shea	12751
Taxation	
Mr. Garneau	12751
Mr. Poilievre	12751
Citizenship and Immigration	
Mr. Garneau	12752
Mr. Poilievre	12752
Canadian Coast Guard	
Ms. Fry	12752
Mrs. Shea	12752
National Defence	
Ms. Michaud	12752
Mr. Kenney	12752
Mr. Harris (St. John's East)	12752
Mr. Kenney	12752
Public Safety	
Mr. Garrison	12752
Mr. Blaney	12753
Ms. Doré Lefebvre	12753
Mr. Blaney	12753
Mr. Sweet	12753
Mr. Blaney	12753

Food Safety	
Mr. Allen (Welland)	12753
Mrs. McLeod	12753
Ms. Brosseau	12753
Mrs. McLeod	12753
Seniors	
Ms. Boutin-Sweet	12754
Mrs. Wong	12754
Ms. Mathysen	12754
Mrs. Wong	12754
Ethics	
Mr. Easter	12754
Mr. Calandra	12754
Mr. Easter	12754
Mr. Calandra	12754
National Defence	
Mr. Bevington	12755
Mr. Fantino	12755
Northern Development	
Mr. Bevington	12755
Mrs. Aglukkaq	12755
Child Care	
Mr. Daniel	12755
Ms. Bergen	12755
National Defence	
Ms. Jones	12755
Mr. Fantino	12755
Canadian Heritage	
Ms. Papillon	12756
Mrs. Glover	12756
Health	
Mr. Wilks	12756
Mrs. McLeod	12756
Marine Transportation	
Mr. Hyer	12756
Ms. Raitt	12756
Canadian Coast Guard	
Mr. Andrews	12756
Mrs. Shea	12756
Consumer Protection	
Mr. Bellavance	12757
Mr. Holder	12757
Presence in Gallery	
The Speaker	12757
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS	
Chief Electoral Officer	
The Speaker	12757
Government Response to Petitions	
Mr. Lukiwski	12757

Committees of the House**Status of Women**

Ms. LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard).....	12757
Mrs. Sellah.....	12757

Procedure and House Affairs

Mr. Preston.....	12757
------------------	-------

Ways and Means Motion No. 18

Mr. Duncan (Vancouver Island North).....	12757
Motion.....	12757
(Motion agreed to).....	12758

Committees of the House**Procedure and House Affairs**

Mr. Preston.....	12758
Motion for concurrence.....	12758
(Motion agreed to).....	12758

Petitions**Impaired Driving**

Mr. Dreeshen.....	12758
-------------------	-------

Automobile Industry

Mr. Masse.....	12758
----------------	-------

International Aid

Mr. LeBlanc (Beauséjour).....	12758
-------------------------------	-------

Poverty

Mr. Butt.....	12758
---------------	-------

Anaphylaxis

Mr. Butt.....	12758
---------------	-------

Automobile Industry

Ms. Nash.....	12758
---------------	-------

Wolfe Island Ferry

Mr. Hsu.....	12758
--------------	-------

Agriculture

Mr. Calandra.....	12759
Mr. Vaughan.....	12759

Impaired Driving

Mr. Shipley.....	12759
------------------	-------

Sex Selection

Mr. Shipley.....	12759
------------------	-------

CBC/Radio-Canada

Ms. May.....	12759
--------------	-------

The Environment

Ms. May.....	12759
--------------	-------

CBC/Radio-Canada

Mr. Hyer.....	12759
---------------	-------

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lukiwski.....	12759
-------------------	-------

Questions Passed as Orders for Returns

Mr. Lukiwski.....	12760
-------------------	-------

Request for Emergency Debate**Canadian Wheat Board**

Mr. Martin.....	12763
-----------------	-------

Speaker's Ruling

The Speaker.....	12763
------------------	-------

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**Business of Supply****Opposition Motion—Coastal Water Protection**

Motion.....	12763
Mr. Opitz.....	12763
Mrs. Hughes.....	12764
Mr. Lamoureux.....	12765
Mr. Gourde.....	12765
Ms. LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard).....	12766
Mr. Lamoureux.....	12766
Mr. Sandhu.....	12767
Mr. Lamoureux.....	12768
Mr. Toone.....	12768
Ms. LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard).....	12768
Mr. Garrison.....	12768
Mr. Leef.....	12770
Mr. Vaughan.....	12770
Mrs. Hughes.....	12771
Mr. Maguire.....	12771
Mr. McKay.....	12772
Mr. Côté.....	12773
Mr. Leef.....	12773
Mr. Garrison.....	12774
Mr. McKay.....	12774
Ms. Sims.....	12775
Mr. Keddy.....	12776
Mr. McKay.....	12776
Mr. Toone.....	12776
Mr. McKay.....	12778
Ms. LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard).....	12778
Mr. Sopuck.....	12778
Mrs. Hughes.....	12780
Mr. McKay.....	12780
Mrs. Davidson.....	12781
Mr. Garrison.....	12782
Ms. May.....	12783
Mr. Stewart.....	12783
Mr. Sopuck.....	12784
Mr. McKay.....	12785
Ms. LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard).....	12785
Ms. Leslie.....	12785
Ms. Fry.....	12786
Motion negatived.....	12788

Common Sense Firearms Licensing Act

Bill C-42. Second reading.....	12788
Motion agreed to.....	12789
(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee).....	12789

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**Rail Service**

Motion.....	12789
Mr. Allen (Welland).....	12789
Mr. Armstrong.....	12790
Ms. Brosseau.....	12792
Mr. Eglinski.....	12793
Mr. Eyking.....	12794

Division on motion deferred 12795

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Transportation

Mrs. Mourani 12795

Mr. Keddy 12795

Infrastructure

Mr. Vaughan 12796

Mr. Braid 12797

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>