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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, January 28, 2016

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, January 28, 2016

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1005)
[English]

RCMP'S USE OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT JUSTIFICATION PROVISIONS

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table today, in both official languages, the 2014 annual report of the RCMP's use of the law enforcement justification provisions. This report addresses the RCMP's use of specified provisions within the law enforcement justification regime, which is set out in sections 25.1 to 25.4 of the Criminal Code. This report also documents the nature of the investigations in which these provisions were used.

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SECURITY INTELLIGENCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table today, in both official languages, the 2014-15 annual report of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, as required under section 53 of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act.

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[Translation]

COMMUNICATIONS SECURITY ESTABLISHMENT

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) and on behalf of the Minister of National Defence, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the Communications Security Establishment commissioner's 2014-15 annual report.

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[English]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.) moved for leave to

introduce Bill C-4, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code, the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act, the Public Service Labour Relations Act and the Income Tax Act.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

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CANADA-UNITED KINGDOM INTERPARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-United Kingdom Interparliamentary Association respecting its participation in the bilateral visit to London, England as well as to Edinburgh and Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom from January 17 to 24, 2015.

* * *

•(1010)

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK ON POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER ACT

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-211, An Act respecting a federal framework on post-traumatic stress disorder.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce my private member's bill, seconded by the member for Barrie—Innisfil, who served as a firefighter for 33 years. This private member's bill would put in place a national framework on post-traumatic stress disorder for first responders, firefighters, military personnel, corrections officers, and members of police forces such as the RCMP. These are individuals who wake up every single day with the knowledge that when they go to work they may have to put their lives at risk to support and protect Canadians and their country.

It is my sincere hope that with this private member's bill, the men and women who are our silent sentinels know that they are not alone in this and just as they fight to protect our nation there is someone fighting for them. Heroes are human too.

Routine Proceedings

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

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PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-212, An Act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act (members who cross the floor).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand in the House to introduce a bill that would deal with the issue of floor crossing, with great thanks to the hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona.

Elections are about voters expressing their democratic choice. There is an issue of democratic accountability to voters and floor crossing betrays that trust. We have a history in my riding of Vancouver Kingsway where David Emerson crossed the floor from the Liberals to the Conservatives. In the last Parliament, we saw Eve Adams cross to the Liberals and Bruce Hyer cross to the Green Party. The only people who have the right to determine who represents them in the House of Commons are the voters of those districts.

This bill would not prevent floor crossing. It would require a member who crosses the floor to sit with another caucus to obtain the consent of the electorate who ultimately put them here. It would preserve the ability of the member to leave the caucus and sit as an independent as an important check against party oppression.

I think every member in the House should have no problem supporting a bill that supports the basic democratic right of citizens of Canada to choose who represents them in the chamber.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

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CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-213, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (voting age).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand in the House to introduce a bill that would widen the franchise of this country by extending the privilege of voting to Canadians aged 16 or over, with great thanks to the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

The history of the franchise in this country is one of expansion. At one time only men could vote, only men with property. Women could not vote, first nations could not vote, and people had to be 21 years of age. Studies show that individuals who begin voting early in our democratic process are more likely to continue voting for the rest of their lives. We know that voter turnout is generally anywhere between 50% and 65%. Therefore, this is an important initiative to get young voters engaged in our process.

Young voters often work and pay taxes, and yet they have no representation as to how those tax dollars are spent. Voter promotion could be organized through our public education system and start off the process of engaged citizens early on in their lives. Examples of countries that do extend suffrage to 16-year-olds include Austria, Brazil, Scotland, Argentina, and Ecuador.

I would urge all members of the House to empower young people to get their important voice expressed in the chamber so that their

perspective on Canadian life can be fully expressed in our democratic process.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

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IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-214, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (appeals).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am once again honoured to rise in the House to introduce an act that would amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, to give a right of appeal to people who apply for permanent residence in this country and have that application denied with no substantive right of appeal, with great thanks to the hon. member for Hochelaga for seconding this.

The principles of justice include a substantive right to appeal. People who are seeking to obtain permanent residence in this country often have their decisions decided in a very impersonal administrative manner, with no real right of appeal. I support the government's attempts to try to clean up 10 years of abuse and ignoring the immigration system in this country, where thousands and thousands of cases of injustice have occurred under the Conservative watch.

I will work with the Liberal government to improve that system, to bring in a faster and fairer immigration system. One way we can do that is to make sure that people who apply for something as important as permanent residence have the right decision made and if a wrong one is made, they have the ability to correct that.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

●(1015)

[*Translation*]

PETITIONS

THE ENVIRONMENT

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

The first petition is about pesticides, specifically neonicotinoids.

[*English*]

The Auditor General's report and the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development recently found that the Pest Management Regulatory Agency has not been keeping track of the science on these.

Business of Supply

The petitioners from across Canada, including from Ontario and British Columbia, are calling on the government to act in the interest of protecting bees as pollinators, following Europe's lead, and ban these substances in Canada. I would suggest the petitioners' case is even stronger given the commissioner's report.

JUSTICE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is in response to legislation presented in the last Parliament.

The petitioners' concerns remain valid, to reject legislation that leads to mandatory minimum sentencing and the construction of new prisons. The petitioners point out that mandatory minimums do not work, have been shown around the world not to work, and challenge and interfere with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

PUBLIC MONUMENTS

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to present 10 petitions signed by hundreds of constituents from Cape Breton and throughout Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Alberta.

These petitioners are calling on the government to endorse the proposed Mother Canada monument so that the Never Forgotten National Memorial Foundation can proceed with construction at Green Cove, Nova Scotia to honour the 114,000 veterans who gave their lives overseas in defence of this great nation.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—ENERGY EAST PIPELINE PROJECT

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC) moved:

That, given this time of economic uncertainty, the House: (a) recognize the importance of the energy sector to the Canadian economy and support its development in an environmentally sustainable way; (b) agree that pipelines are the safest way to transport oil; (c) acknowledge the desire for the Energy East pipeline expressed by the provincial governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and New Brunswick; and (d) express its support for the Energy East pipeline currently under consideration.

She said: Mr. Speaker, thank you for reading that important motion. I will be sharing my time this morning with the member for Beauce.

I am very happy and proud not only to be able to stand and speak to this motion but to be part of the Conservative Party, the opposition that stands up for those in Alberta, stands up for those in western

Canada, stands up for jobs right across this country. That is what this motion is meant to do, certainly to encourage the government to do the same thing. However, we as Conservatives want Albertans and Canadians to know that we will always stand up for their interests, will stand up for Canadian resources, and will stand up for Canadian oil. I am very happy to be able to speak to this.

We really had hoped, when we first put this motion together, that there would be a chance the Liberals might support it, and we would be very pleased if they would support it, not only with their vote but, even more importantly, with their actions. Sadly, yesterday, it became very clear that the government does not understand the importance of the energy sector to Canada's economic strength. The government does not understand that investment and confidence come directly when Canada has a government that is certain of its policy and when there is stability in its policy, which then translates into stability and predictability for sectors like oil and gas.

The government does not seem to understand that when it chooses to ignore the jobs and economic opportunity that come when Canadian energy has the same access to market that the energy of the United States and other countries has, the jobs and opportunities grow. The government's ideological opposition to the fundamental infrastructure that oil needs to access markets safely, frankly, is disturbing. Its ideology is putting Canada at an unfair disadvantage. Liberals are intent on undermining the National Energy Board and intent on putting roadblocks in the way of pipelines being built in the near future.

I wish there was better news today. I wish there was better news for Albertans. I wish there was better news for Canadians overall. However, sadly, the manner and the pattern that the government is showing is very worrisome. It is a pattern of disregard and what would appear to be undervaluing of the natural resources sector, specifically the oil and gas sector in Canada. The decisions Liberals are making and the actions they are undertaking are showing that undervaluing of the energy sector and the oil and gas industry in Canada.

Liberals are undervaluing the men and women who work to get our resources out of the ground and the men and women who work to get our resources to market. Those are both things that we can be very proud of in Canada. The men and women who are working in the oil patch in Canada can be proud because here in Canada we have the most sustainable, clean, responsible way of extracting natural resources, not only because of the strong regulations that our government put in place but because Canada is a country of freedom, of equality, where women's rights, gay rights, human rights, religious freedoms, and labour laws are strong and rigorous. That means that Canadian oil is taken out of the ground and exported in a way that all Canadians can be proud of; and on this side of the House we are immensely proud of that.

There is a worrisome pattern that has developed very shortly after the arrival of the new government. First of all, the Prime Minister made some comments in Davos that maybe were meant to be clever but really were very telling. He said we do not want to be known as a resource country but rather as a country of resourcefulness. At this point in time that is not the watered-down message that Canadians are looking for and not what the natural resource sector is looking for. That was worrisome.

Business of Supply

Earlier on, even before that, right after the election, the government announced a moratorium on tanker traffic in northern B.C. The effect of that was a severe body blow to the northern gateway pipeline; again very disturbing. Recently, the government is refusing to stand up for energy east, refusing to make the statement that in principle it would support pipelines. It is worrisome, because Liberals are not afraid to stand up for other types of infrastructure or support other types of infrastructure in principle. However, for some reason, they have a very difficult time saying that pipelines are a good thing for Canadian oil.

Now, just yesterday, they announced another layer, another process, another roadblock in the form of additional approvals. This time it would appear that approvals would be by the ministers themselves.

• (1020)

The announcement they made was really very short. It was a two-pager background—well, it was really a page of background, not even two pages. We have a number of questions, to which we are hoping we can get answers, with respect to the announcement that was made yesterday. There was a bit of confusion as to whether the new assessments by Environment Canada would include upstream. We understand it will include upstream. However, there was confusion as to whether downstream would be included. There needs to be some clarity on that.

There was talk about a ministerial representative who would be part of this environmental assessment; so we understand the bureaucracy, the department, would be doing a parallel environmental assessment. However, there would be what appears to be political representation. There are some large concerns we have about that, and I would think industry would also have them. There are also concerns about what role the proponents would play in that assessment. Would they have any input? Would they be able to look at it, or would it be just a parallel process?

The government's saying it wants to provide certainty in a very uncertain time actually has caused more uncertainty and more questions.

Yesterday's announcement certainly did not give any kind of glimmer of hope, as we have termed it, for those in the oil and gas industry.

I think we should highlight the economic benefit that oil and gas brings to Canada.

Natural resources alone produce 20% of nominal GDP. That is the entire natural resources sector. About half of that comes directly from the energy sector, so about 10% comes directly from oil and gas. That is in comparison with about 6.7% GDP that comes from agriculture. My riding in southern Manitoba has strong agricultural producers. We understand agriculture's importance, and none of us shy away from defending it. We produce the best food in the world here in Canada. When we were in government, we were so proud to open up markets and support our agricultural sector, which is about 6.7 % of GDP.

Gas and oil is more than that. It is about 10%. We should be just as proud to say that we produce the best oil in the world in the most responsible way. We should be supporting oil and gas, just as we

support agriculture. On this side of the House, proudly, we do. We stand up for the sectors both in the Prairies and in western Canada.

There are 1.8 million jobs in the natural resources sector, with about 300,000 in the energy sector, specifically. We know a lot of those jobs are in certain regions, such as Alberta, and New Brunswick would benefit greatly from energy east. They are looking for energy east to be built. The mayors, the municipal leaders, have spoken about how important it is. We know, economically, the jobs that are created right across the country.

Safety is something that has been talked about by the government. It has talked about how important it is to have public support and to have public confidence in the safety process. It almost seems that when it says there is public confidence, it has created its own narrative. It is a bit disturbing because the more the government says it, obviously, the more it is repeated.

However, the evidence actually is not there that there is some huge outcry that the public does not support pipelines. We know there are certain interest groups that do not support pipelines and never ever will support pipelines. In fact, many of them sit on the opposite side, on the government, where they said they do not think that natural resources should be extracted and there should be no more pipelines.

Let us talk about a reasonable, balanced approach and talk about pipeline safety.

First, let me just state this, to put it into perspective. We believe that all infrastructure projects should be developed in a responsible way. All infrastructure projects have assessments that they need to go through. Most infrastructure projects have to have some community involvement.

I live in Ottawa, as many of my colleagues do. The LRT is being built right now and there is a lot of noise going on, and the LRT folks are still consulting with the community to talk about the impact that the LRT is having on the people who live right downtown. However, nobody would say that, as a government, they are never going to support rapid transit because not all of the consultation has been done. That is ridiculous.

• (1025)

Of course governments support the idea of rapid transit, and of course governments should support the idea of pipelines and Canadian pipelines being built. Therefore, infrastructure requires a regulatory oversight, community involvement, and all of those important things.

For some reason, though, the Liberal government can support all kinds of infrastructure but it cannot support pipelines. We need to be on the same playing field as our U.S. partners. The U.S. is lifting exports. It is building pipelines. It is not talking about a carbon tax. We need to get behind oil in Canada. We need to get behind energy east and support the jobs that it creates and the economic opportunity.

Business of Supply

•(1030)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, the regulation, development, and support of natural resources is very important to my province of Alberta. The Conservatives are now raising this concern that export and interprovincial pipelines are not being built in Canada, yet during their 10-year tenure we did not see any being built. My concern is for the rising unemployment in my province. Apparently, there was a billion dollars earmarked by the former Conservative government for infrastructure, which was not delivered, yet we have the highest unemployment record since 2008, reported to be nearly four times higher for labourers and lower-paid workers than for higher-paid workers. Overall, we have lost more than 30,000 natural resource jobs. These layoffs did not just start this month; they did not start after the federal election; they started about a year and a half ago. Where was the Conservative government when it decided not to spend the dollars that would create good jobs in Alberta and across the country?

Hon. Candice Bergen: Madam Speaker, I am thankful for that question because it once again gives me a chance to correct the record.

Four major pipelines were built between 2006 and 2015 when we were in government. Let us be clear: no taxpayer dollars went into those major pipelines, rather it was all private money, and that created jobs in the private sector.

I will name those four major pipelines. If anybody tries to undermine the value of these pipelines that went across Canada, I would again say it is just an undermining of the industry. There is the Enbridge Alberta clipper pipeline, which produces 450,000 barrels per day. There is the Keystone pipeline. For everyone's information, there actually was a Keystone pipeline that was built, and for the minister's information, it went right through Manitoba, and one went through my riding in Manitoba. There is the Kinder Morgan anchor loop pipeline, which was a little more local. Then there is also the Enbridge reversal pipeline. Therefore, 1.25 million more barrels of oil a day, out of about 4.3 million barrels of oil, is getting pumped through this country through pipelines that were built under the Conservative government.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was unable to be in the chamber for all of the member's speech, and she may have addressed this topic, but I certainly am concerned about some of the expectations we have of the Liberal government and what it will do for the people who are employed in the energy industry in my province. At a time when our province is already hurting, what we are hearing from that side will be very damaging to our economy and to many jobs for many workers in my province. Throughout my riding, when going into some of the restaurants and the retail stores, I am hearing concerns about the impacts of the job losses and the plans that are being made by the Liberal government, which could cost more jobs and cause people to go out of business. Obviously, it is a concern shared by, I think, many of my colleagues from Alberta on this side.

I would like to ask the member if she could comment on the interim measures for pipeline review that were put in place yesterday. My view on it is that the Liberals are taking a process that works well, is streamlined, and allows a decision to be made one

way or the other on a pipeline project, and they are trying to lengthen it and create further delays, which obviously is problematic for the industry and for jobs. They are also politicizing it. They are making it a political decision on behalf of their government. I think that is wrong, and I want to hear the hon. member's comments on that.

•(1035)

Hon. Candice Bergen: Madam Speaker, we are incredibly concerned that this is going back to 10 or 15 years before approvals happen, which means that approvals will not happen and that this will be political.

Albertans are suffering as a result of low oil prices and a low Canadian dollar. We need to get pipelines built. They would be infrastructure for Canadian natural resources. Jobs would be immediately ready. Billions of dollars are ready to be invested. We need to do this not only for Alberta but for all of Canada, and the Liberals need to show leadership and courage on this file.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, today it is my pleasure to speak to a subject that means a lot to me and to support my colleague's motion. The motion is well written. It urges us to recognize the importance of the energy sector to the Canadian economy. It is a fact that the energy sector accounts for over 10% of Canada's economy. Businesses in that sector create wealth in Canada, and we must support them.

The motion also states that pipelines are the safest way to transport oil. Being from Quebec, I can assure my colleagues that Quebeckers agree, particularly since the worst tragedy involving transportation of oil by rail struck Lac-Mégantic, Quebec. Quebeckers know that using pipelines to move oil is much safer. We have been doing it for years, and with safe, modern pipeline construction technology, it is entirely feasible to develop this economic sector while keeping the environment safe.

Our motion also states that a number of governments are in favour of safe pipeline projects that comply with Canadian laws, including the governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and New Brunswick. Quebeckers also agree, despite the opinion of the mayor of Montreal, who indicated a few days ago that he opposes the project, before even hearing the National Energy Board's position and recommendations.

Business of Supply

Since taking a stance, the mayor has made all kinds of comments. For instance, he said that Montreal, with its four million residents, has a larger population than Saskatchewan, with its 1.3 million residents, and therefore Montreal has the right to say no to such a pipeline project. It is ridiculous to take such a position, and I am very disappointed in the mayor of Montreal, since he does not represent the opinion of Quebecers. I agree with many people in western Canada who are outraged by the position of the Montreal mayor and the Prime Minister, who went and added another approval process, one that is really just political. The process that was already in place adhered to all the rules and was independent. This government is trying to politicize part of the energy sector, something no one does with other methods of transportation, such as public transit. There are independent processes, and politics do not interfere with them.

Last week, I travelled to western Canada and stopped in Vancouver, Calgary, and Winnipeg, and I took the opportunity to meet with people there. The topic of discussion was economic development in Canada. We talked about what can be done to build a strong economy. One important thing we talked about was developing pipelines in Canada.

We know that this government unfortunately wants to run a deficit of over \$20 billion. That is the latest figure that we have. The government does not want to elaborate, but we are heading toward a \$20 billion deficit. The government says it wants to stimulate the economy by borrowing money that we do not have. As things stand now, 10%, or 10¢ out of every dollar that Canadians pay in taxes, is used to pay the interest on the debt. That is equivalent to the entire budget for the Minister of National Defence. The government wants to run an even bigger deficit and add to the debt in order, in its view, to stimulate the economy. This will not stimulate the economy. It will sedate it.

We have the energy east pipeline project, in which the private sector is going to invest more than \$15 billion. That is not Canadian taxpayers' money. It does not come from taxes paid by Canadians. It comes from the private sector. We know that wealth is created through private sector investment, not through government spending. The private sector is going to invest \$15 billion to develop Canadian energy and gain access to other markets. Day after day, this government keeps standing in the developers' way. It is very disappointing, especially coming on the heels of an election campaign during which the government said it wanted to engage in consultations and adopt policies in favour of economic development.

• (1040)

I would also like to talk about the financial impact of these projects on the Canadian economy. Canadian municipalities collect more than \$600 million in property taxes from pipeline companies.

Furthermore, these companies paid \$1.1 billion in corporate taxes in 2014. They pay significant amounts in taxes to the Government of Canada, and they make more than \$25 million in community investments.

The investment will help those who work in pipeline construction, people working in oil refineries in Montreal and New Brunswick, and also the people in the different communities.

Delays in project approval mean that Canada does not have access to a new market for its natural resources and could result in up to \$70 million a day in lost economic activity.

What is the government waiting for to move forward and support my colleague's opposition motion in support of Canada's economic development?

The government might say that we have to protect the environment. I would like to say that our government, the former government, made legislative changes to protect the environment and develop natural resources responsibly.

We made changes to the National Energy Board's decision-making power so that it can make recommendations to the government about whether to approve or reject a project. Politicians will have the last word, and that is as it should be. That is important.

We also shortened the time frames for project approval. In the past, it could take up to four or five years for a project to be approved. Now, projects must be approved or rejected within 15 months. What is more, anyone who is interested in expressing their opinion on such projects can do so by submitting a brief, and that is what is now being done.

We therefore made sure that the Canadian public, Canadian and Quebec stakeholders, can submit briefs to the National Energy Board and are given the time they need to present their concerns.

We also revised the scope of the review so that it focuses on the project under review rather than on alarmist theories put forward by people who are advocating for a kind of development without having access to various resources. It is important to point that out.

In other words, the National Energy Board is completely independent and will make recommendations. The government should support this motion because Canadians and people in various provinces, particularly Quebec, want it.

Like other Canadian provinces, Quebec receives equalization payments, which come from the western provinces. I thank those people. I wish that Quebec and New Brunswick were rich and did not need equalization payments. However, in order for that to happen, we need to stimulate the economy. The construction of the energy east pipeline will support economic development and benefit every province of Canada.

We need to support this motion and let the industry know that, yes, we are in favour of sustainable economic development.

• (1045)

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his speech and on his election.

I have a question for the member. How can he say that the government has been standing in the way?

He knows very well that for the first time in Canada's history, the government is massively investing in green infrastructure to protect the environment and create jobs. The government is doing the impossible to stimulate our economy.

I urge the member to do his homework and to think about the best interests of Canadians, because the government will do everything in its power to protect the best interests of Canadians. That is the kind of government we have here, in the House.

Hon. Maxime Bernier: Madam Speaker, my colleague is talking about government investments, but that is wrong. These are not government investments; they are government expenditures made on the backs of future generations. I must point out that the government does not create wealth. The private sector creates wealth. The private sector is prepared to create wealth and to invest \$15 billion to build a pipeline that will benefit the economy across Canada.

This government is dragging its feet. Yesterday, it established another environmental assessment process, in addition to the National Energy Board's process. Canadians are sick and tired of studies and processes. There is already a process and it is being followed. We must let the National Energy Board do its job and then look at its recommendations. In the meantime, we know that energy east can address any concerns the industry and the public have about the pipeline, because it will do so in accordance with Canadian laws and regulations.

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his remarks. I would like to comment on his remarks as well as on those of his colleague, the member for Portage—Lisgar.

The member for Portage—Lisgar just stated in this place that providing opportunities for impacted communities or first nations to have a say in decision-making on pipelines is a roadblock to decision-making. The member for Beauce just claimed that his government implemented measures to protect the environment. That is astounding.

It is well known across this country that one of the significant things the Conservative government did was completely shred a history of environmental legislation, such as the Navigable Waters Protection Act, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, and the Fisheries Act, through a process that denied the opportunity to Canadians to have a voice.

Surely the major roadblock to decision-making on critical infrastructure has been the Conservatives' actions; they refused to provide a social licence for major projects.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Maxime Bernier: Madam Speaker, I completely disagree with my colleague's comments and her conclusion because the facts are the facts. Based on the facts, I can say that 99.99% of the oil transported by federally regulated pipelines arrives at its destination without incident. It is the safest way to transport oil and gas.

I would like to tell my colleague that our government's environmental record is good. We fostered both environmental protection and economic development. That is what we did. Air quality indicators improved in Canada. Our air quality improved and

Business of Supply

our economy advanced because we have new technology and because respect for the environment is integral to the projects that today's entrepreneurs are undertaking.

● (1050)

[*English*]

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was delighted to hear my colleague refer to the improvements made in our responsible resource legislation with regard to improving both the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's processes and the National Energy Board's processes, which did not diminish but actually made more effective both the hearings and the consultations. We put more money into budgets to enable more people, more appropriate groups, to consult.

I believe that the Prime Minister and the minister know what the right answer is for the safe transportation of oil, but I fear that with their potential consultations, they are procrastinating unnecessarily. Could the member comment on that?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Maxime Bernier: Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague, and the government's position on this is a real shame. I hope that the opposition members will take the time today to reflect on this and support my colleague's motion. That would be a good sign for Canadians, industry, and people who want to protect the environment and Canadians' safety.

[*English*]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise in the House today to join in the debate over the energy sector in our country, about regulation, about pipelines and to say in the first place that I was saddened that in both of the speeches from the official opposition, there was no reference at all to indigenous peoples and to the consultations with indigenous communities. I am sure we will have a chance to debate that omission later on, but for me, it was significant.

Our government does recognize the importance of the energy sector in Canada and to the Canadian economy, and we wholeheartedly support its development in an environmentally sustainable way. As the Prime Minister said earlier this week, we have a duty to ensure that there is a process by which pipeline proponents can demonstrate that their projects are in the public interest and can earn public support.

That is why I was pleased to announce, with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change yesterday, our interim approach to guide decision-making on major resource projects already in the regulatory review process. The interim approach is a critical first step toward the more permanent and comprehensive solution we have promised for reviewing major resource projects in the future.

Business of Supply

Before I talk about our government's vision for resource development, I think it is important to stop here and acknowledge the very difficult recent past with some of our country's leading energy producers. I do not have to tell anyone in this chamber that low oil prices, difficult decisions on capital spending, and even tougher decisions about personnel have taken their toll. Behind all the statistics of rigs silenced or projects deferred, are people, people in communities not only in western Canada, but right across the country, who have borne the brunt and face uncertainties. In Alberta alone, more than 63,000 jobs were lost in the first eight months of 2015, and that number is growing. This has rippled across the financial, retail, and service industries. These struggles are real. We understand them.

That is why we have put in place an interim approach to provide certainty around how the principles that will guide decision-making for major resource projects already under regulatory review. That is why we will modernize the National Energy Board. The faster we restore public confidence in the regulatory process, the sooner we will see broad-based support for the large-scale energy projects.

Our government believes there is every reason for Canadians to be optimistic about the long-term future of our energy sector. There is reason to believe that Canada can be both a major energy producer and a world leader in combatting climate change. There is every reason to believe that we can achieve a brighter future based on a clean environment and a strong economy going hand in hand, a future built on innovation and adapting to changing times, a future with greener ways to extract and develop our fossil fuels, a future with more ways to get our energy to market at home and abroad, a future that makes greater use of renewable sources of energy, a future where energy efficiency plays a more prominent role, and a future where we invest in clean technologies and green infrastructure, and a future where we engage Canadians on how to generate the energy we need while preserving the planet we cherish.

Our government is committed to doing both. Our government believes that we can remake our energy sector to be stronger and more sustainable than ever before, that we can make decisions and take actions that will reset the course of our economy and create opportunities for generations to come, and that we can engage in nation building by creating a visionary energy strategy that enables Canada to lead in the fight against climate change and truly position us as a global leader in a low carbon economy.

This commitment was made crystal clear yesterday when the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and I jointly announced our government's interim approach as the first step toward restoring public trust in the way Canada reviews and assesses major resource projects. The minister outlined the interim principles that will guide the way forward.

• (1055)

No project will return to the starting line. Public input will be sought and considered. Additional information will be gathered for projects undergoing an environmental assessment, such as direct and upstream gas emissions associated with the projects. Environmental impacts will be understood and minimized, and decisions will be made based on science, facts, and evidence.

These interim measures are intended to ensure that environmental, economic, and community-based perspectives meaningfully inform government decision-making on major resource projects and better serve the public interest, because this is what is needed to instill public trust and restore Canada's international reputation. The Prime Minister has said, "Canada has to start demonstrating real action and not just words in order for the world to understand that we are serious and committed to developing our resources in a responsible and sustainable way".

The issue is not whether to responsibly develop Canada's wealth of natural resources. There is no question that resource industries make vital contributions to our country. Developing our resources has traditionally been and remains a truly nation-building exercise.

Natural resources make up roughly 20% of our GDP. Whether we talk about oil and gas, potash and minerals, forestry, mining, or hydroelectric power, Canadians understand this. They recognize the importance of these industries to our communities and to Canada's economy. They also know that the livelihoods of thousands of families are dependent on the energy sector in particular, that it creates jobs and spurs investments that benefit all of us in Canada, and they want to see an end to the suffering in communities across the country hit hard by the downturn in commodity prices.

Canadians know too that there has to be fairness for indigenous peoples by fully engaging them in the environmental assessment process—not just because there is a constitutional duty to consult, which there is, but because there is a unique opportunity to share with indigenous communities the economic benefits of resource development in Canada. There is little disagreement about any of this. The problem is that Canadians have lost faith in the way Canada has been assessing major resource projects in recent years. Canadians realize that there cannot be a trade-off between energy development and environmental stewardship, because they know the two are linked. As I said yesterday, if we are to attract the investments we need to sustainably develop our energy resources, then we have to further engage Canadians, conduct deeper consultations with indigenous peoples, and base decisions on science, facts, and evidence. Without the full confidence of Canadians, none of these projects will move forward, and that is in no one's interests.

Canadians also know that we can take advantage of both energy development and environmental stewardship without sacrificing growth and prosperity, thanks in large measure to the ingenuity of industry leaders harnessing our technological innovations—and, may I say, particularly in the province of Alberta. However, they need renewed confidence in the way we evaluate major projects like pipelines. Voters made it abundantly clear during the recent election that they want their elected representatives to listen to Canadians, to consult with them, and build new processes that reflect their concerns and respond to their priorities. That is precisely what we intend to do.

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We are going to do things differently to attract the necessary investments to sustainably develop our energy resources and build the infrastructure to move them to market. We are going to do the right thing so that Canadians can get behind important resource development projects. That is why we are committed to modernizing the National Energy Board, to provide the reassurance Canadians require as well as the predictability industry needs to ensure sustainable resource development.

I can assure the House that no proponent with a pipeline project undergoing an environmental review will have to go back to the starting line. We have laid down firm markers with the interim measures released yesterday, providing investors with confidence about the timelines that will govern their project decisions in the near and medium terms. In two cases, we believe that there is more work to be done so that the environmental assessment process aligns with the principles announced yesterday.

● (1100)

Let us look first at the proposed Trans Mountain expansion project from Edmonton, Alberta to Burnaby, British Columbia. This project is already deep into the regulatory review process. In fact, closing arguments are being heard in Burnaby this week, and they will conclude next week in Calgary. The National Energy Board is then scheduled to deliver its recommendation report to the government in May.

Based on the five principles of our interim approach, the Government of Canada intends to carry out additional consultations with indigenous peoples and appoint a ministerial representative to meet with communities along the pipeline route so that their views can be taken fully into account. Participant funding will also be made available to indigenous peoples to support these consultations.

As the Minister of Environment and Climate Change explained yesterday, we will also have an assessment of the project's direct and upstream greenhouse gas emissions, which will also help inform our national climate change framework with provinces and territories.

To accomplish all of this, the government intends to seek an additional four months for the Government of Canada's legislative time limit to render a final decision. That would give us until December 2016 to decide whether the project is in the public interest. We think this is a fair and balanced solution, one that is rooted in these principles and that shows that Canada can deliver resource projects in a way that is consistent with the expectations of Canadians.

For the proposed energy east pipeline project, which would transport Alberta and Saskatchewan oil across the country as far as New Brunswick, we will again make reasonable adjustments to the review process to ensure their alignment with the principles.

As I said yesterday, our government intends to work more closely with indigenous peoples to build the kind of relationships that can serve as the basis for proper consultations. I also intend to appoint up to three new board members on a temporary basis to the National Energy Board to engage communities and indigenous communities along the proposed pipeline route.

Again, the Government of Canada will assess the direct and upstream greenhouse gas emissions and impact on climate change associated with the energy east pipeline project.

To do all of this, I intend to seek an extension of six months to the legislative time limit for the National Energy Board to review the project and three months for the Government of Canada to make a final determination.

As I said yesterday, I am optimistic that with these measures we can begin to rebuild the public's trust while maintaining certainty for industry and ensuring a thorough process that is fair, transparent, and responsible.

This is a positive first step on our path to fully restore Canadians' confidence in our environmental assessment processes. The government looks forward to moving ahead expeditiously with the review of Canada's environmental processes, seeking early views from Canadians. My hope is that all hon. members will actively engage in this important effort.

Canadians want to see our country again playing a constructive role on the international stage, and acting sustainably here at home, tackling climate change, creating greener ways to extract and develop our fossil fuels, and leading on clean energy. They expect us to make decisions based on evidence. Canadians expect us to build the infrastructure that is essential to getting our energy to markets at home and around the world in a manner that fits within today's environmental imperatives.

Above all, Canadians want us to work together as governments, communities, and as people; together, because the challenges ahead of us are too big to tackle on our own; together, because that is how Canadians have always worked best; and together, because we can solve problems better and faster if we see each other as partners.

Our government is committed to making that happen.

● (1105)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, today we are hearing some really bad news: more uncertainty, more conditions and an even longer timeline for a project that is ready to go.

I do not understand this Liberal government, which is so eager to spend taxpayers' money that it does not have, in order to supposedly stimulate the economy and boost spending while very quickly increasing the deficit and the debt. It is appalling that the Liberals want to stop the energy east project, which is in line with current legislation.

On top of that, the energy east project proponents are being asked to be whiter than white. They are being asked to take into account greenhouse gas emissions that could be released while the pipeline is being installed, and yet other industrial sectors are not asked to do the same. People who want more buses on the road are not asked to do the same.

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The oil sector is the only one being required to assess the impact of its future projects in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. It is shameful and unfair. It is disrespectful, considering what the oil sector has done for the environment and for Canada's economic development.

A double standard is being applied to that industry, which promotes sustainable development and respects the environment.

As I said earlier, 99.9% of the crude oil and petroleum that moved through a pipeline over the past five years did so without any spills. What more could you ask for?

[*English*]

Hon. Jim Carr: Madam Speaker, it is very important, as we have discussed over these last number of days in the chamber, that any process will require a broad section of support among Canadians.

I am very pleased to report to the House that even since we made our announcements yesterday, many expressions of support for our proposals have come in from the industry, from provincial administrations, and from respected think tanks that are all saying the same thing, that these projects will not be built unless there is public consultation and community support across the country. That is what we intend to do. The reviews over the last 24 hours are very encouraging.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, the environment commissioner's revelation that the National Energy Board has been failing to ensure compliance with the conditions that it provides around pipeline approvals over the last 10 years is extremely worrying to my constituents and to all Canadians. Hundreds of conditions, for example, were given on the Enbridge pipeline, but we now have lost faith in the ability for those conditions to be implemented and enforced.

Therefore, what confidence can Canadians have in future National Energy Board decisions? What concrete measures will the Liberal government put in place to ensure that we can rely on the work of this regulatory body?

Hon. Jim Carr: Madam Speaker, the hon. member will know from our campaign commitments and the mandate letter from the Prime Minister to my department that modernizing the National Energy Board is a very important priority. It is not simply a matter of the words of reform or modernization; it is based in principles, and those principles will be part of our review.

The report that was tabled this week by the commissioner, with whom I spoke, asked the National Energy Board to tighten up its monitoring in a number of different ways to help rebuild the confidence of Canadians. The chair of the National Energy Board has said that he has already begun this process, and we will monitor that.

However, members should know that in addition to the interim principles that were announced yesterday, there will be long-term reform of the environmental assessment process and of the National Energy Board itself.

I would invite all hon. members to join with us on this side of the House as we look at regulatory practices from around the world to ensure that the Canadian one is the best of them all.

● (1110)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, as to the opposition motion before us today, I want to go on the record as saying it is quite bizarre to hear from the opposition benches that the current government is ideologically driven in changing environmental reviews after the horrors of Bill C-38, the omnibus bill, that, as my hon. colleague from Edmonton—Strathcona has already pointed out, gutted the Fisheries Act and repealed the Environmental Assessment Act, which, up until that point, would have required a greenhouse gas assessment as part of an environmental review of any pipeline project.

The motion today makes a rather large leap, which is not factually correct. It claims that the energy east pipeline is for the purpose of transporting oil. Words matter. The pipelines, whether energy east, Kinder Morgan, or Keystone, were all for the purpose of transporting a raw product, not even crude, bitumen mixed with diluent. Would the minister consider the importance of being precise in our language, that when we are talking about exporting a raw product to bypass Canadian jobs and Canadian refineries, we ought to say so?

Hon. Jim Carr: Madam Speaker, the member is the best example I could ever imagine of clarity and precision.

I have one comment on the accusations of ideology and politicization of this process. I am sure I heard the hon. member for Beauce say that politicians should have the last say. Is that politicizing the process? Ultimately, who is left accountable for the decisions that are ultimately made? It is the politicians who will be accountable. Whether it is the responsibility over the regulatory process or parallel processes that we ourselves initiate, at the end of the day the government will make a decision for which we will be held accountable to the chamber and to all Canadians.

As always, I look forward to working with the hon. member about the precision of language, what is being transported, the environmental impacts of what is being taken through these lines, which all should be factored into a robust environmental assessment, which, in turn, becomes part of a complex set of issues that will be facing the government when it is time to make a decision.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to speak quickly about confidence. Members opposite in the government talk a lot about the confidence Canadians have in their plans as we move forward. Industry has no confidence in the Liberal government.

I and three of my colleagues attended one of the largest natural resource forums that I held in my riding of Cariboo—Prince George last week. Over 900 industry professionals from the resource sector were there. The government's absence was heard loud and clear. The message we heard was that Canada was now looking to be closed for business. The sound that we hear over the government patting itself on the back is the turning on of that closed for business sign.

I would like to invite the member opposite to come to my riding of Cariboo—Prince George, and together we will meet with industry professionals. He will hear first hand their lack of confidence in the government.

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Hon. Jim Carr: Madam Speaker, I would love to join the member in his riding. Canada is a magnificent place and we should all get to each other's ridings whenever we can to understand and respect its diversity and beauty.

Respecting that diversity is part of what these issues are all about, because there will be diverse opinion. As previous ministers of natural resources have said, and as I said yesterday, nobody expects everybody to be happy with any decision that this government takes. It is by its very nature controversial. Our challenge as a government is to ensure that at the end of a robust process many Canadians will think that they have had a chance to be heard and that the decision is reasonable and in the national interest to which we will be held accountable.

There have been expressions of support from industry even within the last 24 hours. I had the pleasure of sitting down with industry leaders in Winnipeg and Halifax. Next week I will be sitting down with more in Vancouver. Remarkably, around the same table, were industry leaders, indigenous leaders, environmental—

• (1115)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry but the minister's time is up.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to energy-related issues. When we talk about the energy sector, it is very important to talk about value-added production, something we have lost sight of for years now in Canada with regard to natural resource development.

We always want to take part in substantive debates in the House, and that is why I will be proposing an amendment to this motion at the end of my speech.

[*English*]

I think I am one of a few members of Parliament in the House who has actually been knee-deep in oil. I used to be a worker at the Shellburn refinery in Burnaby, British Columbia. It is one of the refineries that has closed across the country.

I remember the first time we had a briefing from the safety supervisor. The safety supervisor said two things: to never, ever go into the tanks alone, to always go in with a partner. This was the tank farm adjacent to the Shellburn refinery. The second piece of strong advice, in fact a mandatory requirement to follow, was to always check safety equipment before going into the tanks, ensuring oxygen tanks were full, the regulator was working, and the mask was not broken. Those are all important things.

The safety supervisor was putting so much emphasis on that because we had to respect oil as a substance and the impacts. The reality was, for any workers going into those tanks, if our safety equipment malfunctioned, we would be dead within seconds. We know when we look at the energy sector around the world that safety regulations have to be very carefully followed. We have to respect the substance, both for the economic potential and the danger it

imposes if it is mishandled. Having those safety regulations in place is something about which we feel very strongly.

At the same time, when we are talking about energy projects, we need to ensure the process is credible. That is really the fundamental question we are talking about today. The question of how we evaluate major resource projects to ensure our environment is protected and companies are able to obtain social licence is absolutely critical. The hard reality is that after a decade of Conservative government, that ended last October thankfully, Canadians have simply lost faith in the federal environmental review process. At the same time, pipeline projects have not moved ahead.

It is the Conservative members right next to me, the very sponsors of this motion, who are responsible for that lack of action. Those are the Conservatives who, when in government, systematically dismantled laws protecting our air, land, and water, burying these attacks in budget bills, gutting the Navigable Waters Protection Act, the Environmental Assessment Act, the Fisheries Act, and the National Energy Board Act. We all remember these various modifications.

It was the Conservatives who placed arbitrary limits on public consultation, shutting Canadians out of the project review process. We were having National Energy Board hearings in my city of Burnaby, British Columbia where the large meeting hall was completely empty because the public was banned from participating in the process.

It was the Conservatives who actually injected more politics into the review process by giving cabinet the ability to overrule National Energy Board decisions. We have seen the impact of these changes with thousands of Canadians being denied the right to participate in pipeline reviews, growing public unrest, and mounting legal battles.

What is the result? In western Canada, where I come from, we have an expression. I was born and bred in British Columbia but my mother was born in Alberta. My brother lived in Manitoba for some time. Of course, as New Democrats, our spiritual home is Saskatchewan, with the first social democratic government in North America, under Tommy Douglas. That expression encompasses the approach of the Conservatives on energy, and that is, "All hat and no cattle". What we have seen under the Conservatives, simply, despite their protestations to the contrary, is not a single kilometre of new pipeline constructed with the entire process taking place under the Conservatives. What we have seen is 28 court challenges to the National Energy Board or Governor in Council decisions in the last two years alone. Therefore, the Conservatives did create jobs in the energy sector and they were for lawyers.

• (1120)

I have no objection to that, but the reality is that when we look at the overall results, and I did listen carefully to my colleague from Portage—Lisgar, who talked about a number of projects for which the process had already started before the Conservatives came to power, the one project approval they have tried to hang their hat on is a pipeline reversal, which is not new pipelines.

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The Conservatives on energy have been all hat and no cattle. Instead of speeding up the pipeline review process, the changes the Conservatives brought in broke public trust and meant that the projects ultimately did not move ahead. There was no social licence. In fact, the Conservatives damaged the process so badly, and my colleague from Edmonton—Strathcona spoke to this earlier, that the environment commissioner was forced to sound the alarm that companies' emergency plans are out of date, board oversight is full of holes, and the public does not have access to information about pipeline safety.

Perhaps most troubling, the commissioner found that the National Energy Board is not even verifying whether pipeline companies are living up to approval conditions. In the same way that safety has to be manifest and followed, such as the safety regulations at the refinery that I worked at, pipeline companies need to live up to their approval conditions.

This report comes five years after yet another damning audit that found many of the same problems. The Conservatives have left our pipeline review process in shambles, and thankfully, last October, Canadians clearly rejected their approach. That is why it is particularly inappropriate for the Conservatives today to try to use the House of Commons to get around the need for a credible, thorough, and open National Energy Board review process. They are the architects of the very problem we are discussing today.

Now, it is clear that Canadians voted for change on this issue. The Liberals on the campaign trail told Canadians that they thought the Conservatives' process was broken, and I agree with them. In fact, we have been saying it for a long time already. For the last decade, New Democrats were sounding the alarm that the Conservatives were dismantling our environmental laws, while the Liberals were standing by and letting those omnibus budget bills pass.

As we saw during the campaign, some of this could be about where they are getting their advice. Everyone will recall the incident involving a certain Dan Gagnier, Liberal Party campaign co-chair, trusted adviser to the Prime Minister, who also happened to be working for pipeline company TransCanada, advising them on how to lobby the incoming Liberal government. That certainly was not the high standard of ethical behaviour Canadians expect.

Nevertheless, by the time the campaign rolled around, even the Liberals were saying that the environmental review process was broken, so broken that it had to be redone. The Prime Minister came to my province, to Esquimalt, British Columbia, on August 20 of last year, and when asked if his National Energy Board overhaul would apply to Kinder Morgan, he said, "Yes, yes, it applies to existing projects, existing pipelines as well". He also said: "we're going to change the government and that process has to be redone".

The government did change, but the rest of that sentence has not come true. This promise to British Columbians was repeated by the new Liberal member for Burnaby North—Seymour and by the member for North Vancouver, who is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. He said that the Kinder Morgan process would have to satisfy a new, rigorous review, but instead, yesterday, the government rolled out a vague and ad hoc addition to the existing Conservative review process. It is just

putting window dressing on top of what is a profoundly unstructured review process that does not lead to social licence.

Unfortunately, we just heard comments now from the Minister of Natural Resources, though he gave a good speech, saying that ultimately, what is going through is the former Conservative government's review process rather than the new review process the Liberals committed to British Columbians and all Canadians in the campaign.

● (1125)

[*Translation*]

It should also be said that yesterday's presentation was done so quickly that the documents were not even available in both official languages, which illustrates how hastily and poorly things were done.

[*English*]

The announcement yesterday does not change any laws. Reviews will go ahead under existing Conservative legislation.

This interim process will simply be layered on top of the Conservatives' broken process, and it comes with a whole host of unanswered questions.

How will this process determine what is an unacceptable climate impact?

How will the long-term GHG impacts of the products being transported be accounted for?

How does the government expect to fulfill its obligation to meaningfully consult first nations in such a short time frame?

What does the system look like, and what happens to the feedback and commentary from first nations?

Why is there no funding available for general public consultation?

What about projects that fall outside the current limited scope of any NEB reviews? How will they receive a meaningful examination?

How can this process possibly repair the damage the Conservatives have done when it does not address the gutting of the Navigable Waters Protection Act or the removal of fish habitat protection?

How can this be real change when cabinet can still, behind closed doors, overturn a "no" decision from the National Energy Board?

Canadians and industry deserve answers, and they deserve a government that lives up to the promises it made during the campaign for a truly new process.

I want to be clear. Demanding a robust, credible process means much more likelihood of leading, eventually, to a "yes".

Canada's natural resources are a tremendous gift, and managed properly and sustainably, are important drivers of our economy. The energy sector employs millions of Canadians and contributes greatly to our national and regional economies. I know this personally, first-hand.

We all agree that it is important to get Canadian resources to market. Properly managed, a west-east project could mean better prices for producers, improved energy security, and help creating the value-added jobs we need and the value-added jobs we have lost. However, we need to ensure that any potential project is evaluated in a way that protects the environment and builds public confidence that we are getting it right.

These conversations do not need to be divisive. Strong environmental assessments and meaningful community consultations are the bedrock of sustainable development. It is ultimately the responsibility of government to ensure that this conversation brings Canadians together around solutions. In this, the Prime Minister should be looking to the work that Alberta premier Rachel Notley has done: a game-changing climate change agreement bringing together environmentalists, industry, and first nations; a phase-out of coal pollution in plants by 2030; a GHG cap on oil sands emissions; and a ramp-up of investment in renewable energy, green infrastructure, and public transit.

This is a powerful example of what can happen when discussions are focused on solutions, not rhetoric. This motion, unfortunately, fails that test.

For New Democrats, the bottom line is this. We need a review process with integrity that brings credibility and public confidence to the examination of proposed projects.

That is why I would like to move the following amendment to the motion by the member for Portage—Lisgar. It is seconded by my very distinguished colleague from Edmonton Strathcona: that the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the words “New Brunswick; and” and substituting the following: “(d) express its view that pipeline reviews must be credible, thorough, open, and free from political interference”.

• (1130)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty to inform hon. members that an amendment to an opposition motion may be moved only with the consent of the sponsor of the motion.

Therefore, I ask the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar if she consents to this amendment being moved.

Hon. Candice Bergen: No, Madam Speaker, I do not.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is no consent. Therefore, pursuant to Standing Order 85, the amendment cannot be moved at this time.

Questions and comments.

The hon. member for Mount Royal.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member on his comments. I note that he mentioned the multiple provinces his family has links to. I know that the hon. member has been listening

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to question period in recent days and to the debate in this House, where people have named different provinces in this country and argued that a unity crisis would be caused if the pipeline was not approved, because Alberta would want to secede or Quebec would want to secede. I want to ask the hon. member what his feeling is.

Does he not feel that this country is strong enough, in terms of its unity, that a pipeline project could be approved or not approved and this country could still stay together, united? What we should be really looking at is whether the economic environmental criteria are really reflected in whether a project should go forward as opposed to whether we will have a national unity crisis if it does not.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I think what unites all Canadians is the idea of having a fair process in place. What unites all Canadians is the idea that when a major project is going through an approval process, Canadians can have their say and first nations can have their say and we will all be aware of the environmental problems that need to be taken into consideration and what the economic benefits are. All Canadians from coast to coast to coast believe in those principles.

What happened over the last 10 years is that we saw a complete gutting of that process of trust and of putting it in Canadians' hands and ensuring proper public consultation.

There is probably no more vivid an image of how badly the Conservatives destroyed the public consultation process than the hearings taking place in Burnaby, British Columbia, where in a room the size of this place, only the witness giving testimony is allowed to come in. The public is barred. The public is not allowed to hear that testimony. The public is completely thrown out of the process.

I think what we have is a crisis of confidence by the public. It was started by the former Conservative government, and we are asking the new Liberal government to take that into consideration and open it up so that the public can come in.

Sadly, last night, the window dressing that was announced does not allow for that public consultation. I hope that the Liberals will revise it and open up that important public consultation, because that is the key to our democracy.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened intently to the member's speech, and I noticed that he mentioned Premier Notley, who is the premier of my province. Many of my constituents are out of work right now, which is directly related to the policies being introduced by that provincial premier.

The member mentioned public transit and how wonderful a plan it is. I agree that it is a very important thing to do. My riding happens to be in a location where the southeast LRT is being built. Unfortunately, my constituents are still waiting for an announcement from the provincial government.

I wonder if the member would maybe call his provincial colleague, Brian Mason, the minister responsible for this infrastructure project, and convince him to make a public announcement supporting the southeast Calgary LRT.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I am not sure that is relevant, but I will say that the Conservatives gutted the economy in Alberta.

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Earlier there was a Conservative who said that we should treat energy the same as agriculture. In the agriculture sector, under the Conservatives in Alberta, farmers had the lowest number of farmer seats in the entire country. The Conservatives drove down the energy sector and drove down the agriculture sector, so I guess they are treating them equitably.

For the Conservatives now to come back and say that the NDP has not fixed everything they broke is like a pyromaniac who comes back after burning down a house and asks why the house is not rebuilt. The NDP government is going to have to rebuild what the Conservatives broke.

What the NDP has done, I think in a very effective way, is bring together first nations, industry, and environmentalists and has actually had a groundbreaking agreement among all Albertans. I think, as a member of Parliament from Alberta, the member should be very proud of that accomplishment, which is the first time we have seen that reaching out right across the Alberta spectrum. That is an important initiative and should be supported by Alberta MPs.

• (1135)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, listening to the Conservatives, it is flabbergasting. The net result of 10 years of their government is that they managed to do the impossible. There was a dual failure. They managed to not only gut environmental legislation in this country but also came up with a complete failure in terms of energy projects. To hear the member from Manitoba stand up and talk about the pipelines they got built is entirely disingenuous, because all Canadians know that the Conservatives failed to get a single pipeline built that would get any product to tidewater. That is what this issue is about: not internal pipelines but getting product to tidewater.

The hon. Minister of Natural Resources did talk about accountability, and I applaud him for that, but I want to raise the issue of accountability to Canadian voters.

The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster is quite right that the Prime Minister, during the election, stood and promised Canadians directly that Kinder Morgan would go through a new, credible environmental process. That was a specific, explicit promise to Canadians. Now the Liberal government is backing away from that promise. That is not accountable, in my view.

I think I speak for most Canadians when I say that we want the same thing. We want to see value-added production in our energy resources in Canada, and we want to see a transition to sustainable energy in this country so that we can deal with climate change. That is a very real concern for people.

I want to applaud the premier of Alberta, who has managed to bring consensus from all industry groups.

I would ask the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster for his view on how we can deal with climate change and responsible energy development in this country.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Vancouver Kingsway for his question, and if I get carried away, I know you will shut me down. It is not a filibuster. It is just that what he is asking is quite exciting and interesting.

He talked about value added. He talked about the accomplishments of the Alberta government, which is very new but has done surprising, effective things, bringing people together. This is the first time we have seen this in many years, perhaps since the time of Peter Lougheed, where we have seen an Alberta government, in such an effective way, bringing people together from all sides: environmentalists, first nations and industry. He is absolutely right to point out the accomplishment of what is still a very new government that has been so effective in starting to rebuild after the catastrophe that occurred under the Conservatives.

He talked about value added. The refinery I worked for shut down, and we have seen this right across the country. We need policies that actually encourage the value-added production and jobs that come with it, rather than exporting raw logs, raw bitumen, and raw minerals. That is what we have seen.

Finally, on green energy, the potential is enormous. We are seeing a worldwide clean energy boom, and I have seen it first-hand in other countries. There have been national governments that have made those investments. Germany has created hundreds of thousands of new jobs. Canada can do the same if we see leadership from this new government. We have not seen it thus far, but I am hoping that it will follow NDP advice and put in place a plan that will actually put Canadians back to work.

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened intently to the member's remarks. Certainly, over the years he is a frequent contributor to debate in the House, someone who speaks very passionately, but from time to time, I would say is prone to hyperbole.

There was something I heard today that I invite the member to clarify. I thought his critique of the record of the Conservative government with respect to the gutting of environmental laws in the last Parliament was entirely fair. One of the things he said, and I would ask him to either clarify or withdraw, is that the Liberals voted with the Conservatives in the budget omnibus bills in the last Parliament. That, quite simply, is not true. I would ask him to either clarify or withdraw that remark.

• (1140)

Mr. Peter Julian: The point I made, Madam Speaker, as you are well aware, is that when we saw the Conservatives running roughshod over the rights of Canadians and making all those changes, it was the NDP official opposition that was standing up to the Conservative government. The member is well aware that the Liberals were almost absent from the last Parliament. They ran a very successful election campaign. I am certainly not reproaching them in any way for that. In the last Parliament, we saw day after day after day New Democrats in this House of Commons pushing back on the Conservatives. Whether it was Bill C-51 or a whole range of other measures, it was New Democrats that provided the opposition.

That is the point and I stand by it, because those are the facts.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Calgary Shepard.

It is my pleasure to rise in the House today to debate the motion put forward by the Conservative Party on the issue of the energy sector and oil pipelines in Canada.

As this is my first speech in this Parliament, I would like to take a moment to thank the people of Chilliwack—Hope for once again placing their trust in me to serve them as their member of Parliament. As none of us would get here without the tireless work of our volunteers, I would like to thank the members of my amazing team in Chilliwack—Hope for their efforts over a very long and difficult campaign. Last but not least, I would like to thank my wife Lisa and my son Maclean for their love and support not just during the campaign but always.

Over the last number of months we have seen the devastating job numbers coming out of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Over 100,000 jobs were lost in the energy sector and related sectors alone. This is not just an Alberta issue, it is an issue affecting all Canadians. I want to share some insight into the effect this is having on my own riding and my hometown. I do not seek to compare the situation in my region with those more affected but want to show members that families are hurting right across the country.

I spoke to the House in the last Parliament about the benefits of the energy sector in Chilliwack. Even though we are 1,500 kilometres away from Fort McMurray and the heart of the oil patch, hundreds of local manufacturing jobs were created by businesses big and small. These are companies that are on the leading edge of innovation, efficiency, and productivity, which is why it was so disappointing to hear the Prime Minister insult the energy sector as not being resourceful when he was gallivanting around with anti-energy celebrities at a Swiss ski hill in Davos earlier this month.

Just a short time ago, Britco Structures, located in the nearby district of Kent, had over 200 employees building housing units that were going into the many work camps utilized by energy companies operating in remote locations in the oil patch. Many of their employees live in Chilliwack. These were family-supporting, well-paying, skilled labour positions. Today, Britco is down to a skeleton crew operating on work-sharing programs in order to ensure that as many employees as possible can try to make ends meet. Nearly an entire workforce has been wiped out by the crisis in the energy sector. They are hopeful that new contracts will be won and they can bring back some of those who have been laid off, but right now it is not a good situation.

Another local success story in my riding is TYCROP Manufacturing, which is a 35-year-old product creation company that specializes in designing, engineering, and building mobile industrial equipment solutions. It is a resourceful company that relies in large part on the oil and gas sector.

I contacted one of the owners of TYCROP Manufacturing last night and he stated, “Rosedale TYCROP has laid off over 100 staff, or roughly \$7 million in payroll affecting Chilliwack and surrounding areas, Hope, Abbotsford, and Langley. We estimate that in excess of another 100 jobs of equal value have been lost by contract supply partners to TYCROP with a similar payroll value. The impact is severe with no new orders in sight. I just checked my email and there were five new layoffs today alone. We could not carry these people any longer. There was nothing for them to do.”

Dozens of highly skilled jobs were lost at IMW Industries in Chilliwack as the market for their compressed natural gas products dried up.

Business of Supply

Hundreds of family-supporting manufacturing jobs have been lost in my riding. However, it is not just highly skilled manufacturing jobs that have been affected.

At Christmastime I spoke with Gordon, the operator of the Slotcar Palace, an old-school toy store in Chilliwack, full of Lego, board games, model tanks, and airplanes, and all sorts of amazing things for the young and young at heart. I asked Gordon how it was going. Unprompted, he told me how the downturn in the oil patch, which is 1,500 kilometres away, was having a negative impact on his small business. Several of his best customers had been laid off and could no longer afford to buy Christmas presents. They had less, and now so did he, and he was worried about what that would mean for him in the short and long term. There are hundreds of stories like that across my riding, and tens of thousands of stories like that right across the country.

Canex Building Supplies, a major building supply operation in Chilliwack, reports receiving dozens of resumés from highly paid labourers returning to Chilliwack from Alberta who are desperate to get an entry-level job in its lumberyard.

● (1145)

I have heard similar stories from extended family members who are fortunately still employed in the oil and gas sector in Alberta: hundreds of applications for single job openings, with all of the applicants hopelessly overqualified; accounts receivables issues, with invoices worth hundreds of thousands of dollars or more not being paid on time, if at all; a massive increase in the use of food banks; a massive increase in property crime.

These are desperate times, which is why it was so callous and outrageous to hear the Liberal Minister of Veterans Affairs from Calgary state in the House this week that the people of Alberta were feeling refreshed and excited. My family members in Alberta are not feeling refreshed. They are feeling anxious. They are worried, they are concerned, and they are looking for some sign of hope that it is going to get better.

That is where our support for environmentally sustainable economic development comes in. That is why our support for the energy sector is so critical. That is where our support in principle for safe, efficient energy infrastructure, like the energy east pipeline, comes in. Approving these projects would send a message of hope to the people who have lost their jobs, and those who worry they will, that there is a better future in the energy sector and that the situation is going to improve, that Canadians will finally start to get world price for the oil that we have been blessed with, that Canadian oil will be used in Canadian refineries, that the companies that are laying off workers will be able to survive and expand their workforces when market conditions improve.

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Conservatives have always been clear: we will only support pipelines if they are safe for Canadians and safe for the environment. When we were in government, we imposed hundreds of conditions on the pipeline projects that were approved. We demanded world-class marine spill response, world-class monitoring, world-class construction, and world-class standards. We did this by investing in world-class science. All independent analyses show that pipelines are the safest way to transport petrochemicals. That is a simple fact. If the new Liberal government actually believes in evidence-based policy making, then the Liberals should approve those pipeline projects that are shown to be safe and should drop their ideological opposition to the energy sector.

Every Canadian is supported either directly or indirectly by this sector. Energy products heat our homes, power our vehicles, and help us move goods and people across the country. The energy sector provides royalties and tax revenues that support our local hospitals and schools. It provides money for infrastructure. It should be valued, cherished, and nurtured not ridiculed, belittled, and berated, which is what the new current government has done to it in such a short time in office.

I want to say a bit about my friends, Jeff and Marcy. They live in Chilliwack, and Jeff works in the oil patch, leaving behind his wife and two kids for weeks at a time. It is a tough trade-off, but one that they have decided to make in order to get ahead financially. Because Jeff has been promoted to a senior position, he has not experienced the layoff that hundreds of his friends and co-workers have. However, he is worried that it could happen, and he told me what that would mean for his family. Marcy would have to go back to work, and could no longer home school their kids, which is what is best for them because of their son's health issues. Extras like the sports and music lessons would be gone. The financial security that they have sacrificed for would disappear. Jeff feels fortunate. While he worries, others are experiencing what he fears.

These are not statistics. These are our friends and neighbours, and the decision that the current government makes will have a real impact on their future.

Canadians know that we do not control the price of a barrel of oil. Those who have been laid off do not expect that by debating this issue in the House of Commons we can suddenly reverse this downward trend. However, what they do expect is that we will be on their side, that we will fight for them, and that we will do everything we can to support the energy industry and the energy infrastructure that supports their families. They need a government, like our previous Conservative government, that supports sustainable, responsible resource development.

Supporting this motion before us today signals our support for the energy sector. It shows Canadians who are hurting that we care and are working for them and for a future when they can return to work, continue to provide for their families, and continue to build this country.

• (1150)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, the former parliamentary budget officer has reported that the Conservatives left almost nine billion budgeted dollars unspent last year.

These dollars could have been spent to support job creation, retraining, the clean energy sector, and economic diversification. Their stance has simply been that we have a one-company town. When I went door-to-door in the last campaign, I talked to many oilfield workers who said that they were tired of the boom-and-bust economy and who wanted some economic diversification. However, the government completely drained the important funds for new energy sectors, such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, and clean-energy dollars budgeted for those sectors that could have created new retraining opportunities and jobs.

The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, in my city of Edmonton, has tripled enrolment in their renewable energy training program. It has a 100% job creation record, when their students graduate.

The Conservatives simply missed the boat for 10 years. They could have invested and provided economic alternatives while the oil price was plummeting.

Even if and when we get those pipelines built, there will be an interim period in which we need to be employing our Canadians. I would like to hear the Conservatives defend why they let that \$9 billion go by when we could have retrained workers in Canada.

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, the unemployed workers in my riding are not crying out for economic diversification; they want a job to put food on the table.

They do not need lectures from the NDP, which the B.C. Premier Christy Clark calls “the forces of no”. The New Democrats say they do not oppose economic development projects, that they do not oppose energy projects in principle, but they oppose every single one of them whenever these come before the House or the Canadian people.

I heard the previous NDP speaker talk about how the Alberta NDP had united Albertans. That is right. They sure have, against the Alberta NDP and in favour of the energy sector.

We will continue to stand up for that sector as the official opposition.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives weakened the environmental assessment process and dismantled legislation to protect our air, land, and waters, such as the Navigation Protection Act, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, the Fisheries Act, and the National Energy Board Act.

How do they have the nerve to move a motion asking the government to promote the energy sector and support its development in an environmentally sustainable way when they did quite the opposite when they were in power?

[English]

Mr. Mark Strahl: Madam Speaker, we have the nerve to bring this forward because we are the only party in the House that is standing up for energy workers in Canada.

What we would not stand for in government was an environmental assessment process that allowed environmental assessments to go on for decades, like for the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, until the project was eventually abandoned.

We brought in stable, predictable regulatory regimes across the country to give certainty to both proponents and those who wanted to make their views known. That was the process. That is how we get investment in the country, by bringing in a stable regulatory regime that people can predict.

That is why the announcement yesterday by the Liberals layering on additional rules and regulations, making these up as they go along for projects that are already in the pipeline, is a devastating blow to certainty and to investment in this country. It is the wrong approach.

We will defend the approach we took when we were in government. We will certainly defend the energy sector, as we are doing here today.

• (1155)

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I hear the hon. member's incredible desire for this pipeline to go through.

Despite his understanding that we promised in our election campaign to implement different types of regulatory reviews and despite the fact the country voted for our government, the member feels differently.

May I ask why the previous government did not get the pipeline approved and built while still in government?

Mr. Mark Strahl: Madam Speaker, we said we believed in a science-based regulatory process, which is what is under way.

While the member is talking about the promises his party made during the campaign, perhaps he can tell us the next time he is on his feet how badly the Liberals will break their promise on the deficit. They said it would be \$10 billion, and now it is \$30 billion.

Some promises are obviously worth a little bit more than others. We wish they would break their promise on things like pulling out of the ISIS fight and maybe keep their promise on the deficit.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, as this is the first time I am standing to speak, I would like to thank the constituents of Calgary Shepard for their confidence and support. I also want to thank my wife, Evangeline, and all of my supporters for allowing me to speak on behalf of them in the House.

As I pondered that privilege, I thought of an old Yiddish proverb, "Speech is difficult, but silence is impossible", and I cannot stay silent as I watch two levels of government raise taxes, start new carbon taxes, and add layers and layers of new regulatory red tape.

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The first duty of good government is to do no harm, and on that side of the House, I do not see that. The uncertainty, lack of clarity, and lack of a plan are harming the economy, but, most importantly, it is leading to job losses in my constituency, my city, and my province.

According to the last survey published by the Human Resources Institute of Alberta, across nearly every employment category, the leading cause of organizational departures right now is termination without cause. For the first time in two years, since this survey started, there are more people in Alberta being terminated without cause than for any other reason, and who are moving on for better opportunity elsewhere. That tells us where the economy is going, and it has gotten worse since the provincial and federal elections. That speaks volumes to the confidence that companies, entrepreneurs, businesses, and people are placing in that side of the House.

The survey also found that 38% of Albertans are receiving severance packages that, on average, last four months. Families in Alberta do not have time for a reset of the regulatory system. They do not have time to wait for energy east and other pipeline projects to be approved. They need jobs now. They need the private sector to regain its confidence now.

The Minister of Natural Resources mentioned earlier that a minimum of nine months would be added to the environmental assessment process. If we think about people losing their jobs today and their severance running out in four months, it means they are going to be eating into their retirement savings, taking on more debt, or moving to another province or country where there are jobs waiting for them. They need work now, and that is why energy east is so important. There is an easy way to get many Canadians back to work and it is to ensure that energy east is approved.

The total value of the project and its associated natural gas components is \$20 billion. Over the nine-year development, it will create over 14,000 well-paying, highly technical jobs, and will sustain over 3,000 full-time direct and indirect jobs during its operation. The income that work creates will allow families to raise their kids, send them to after-school activities, and save for retirement. That is why it is valuable; that is why it matters.

Over the past few weeks, before I came to Ottawa, I was speaking with my constituents every single day. Many constituents told me their stories. Every single one of them was unemployed, and I want to share the stories of just a few of them.

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Michael, a Canadian of Polish heritage like me, a mechanical engineer, moved to Alberta and sought retraining. He retrained as a petroleum engineer. He has been out of work now for 10 months. His choices are simple: take early retirement and become inactive or move again somewhere else. His job is directly connected to the fate of this pipeline and Canada's ability to build national energy infrastructure.

Another constituent of mine, Susan, is a geoscientist and lost her job recently. Her choices are to move to Sierra Leone or Burkina Faso for employment. Those are the only two places where jobs are available to her. She is not alone. Many of her work colleagues and friends are in exactly the same position. She does not want to leave Alberta, but she is finding that she has no choice. Those are the choices people are making. Their family members have a choice, too: do they follow them or stay in Alberta and take a risk? That is the gamble they have to take. Do they gamble on the current federal government, seemingly intent on sabotaging their future, or leave for work outside of Canada, potentially never to return? We will lose the skill sets and the tax dollars, but, most importantly, we will lose a generation of highly trained professionals who took us a generation to train.

Every year we graduate another cohort of highly trained engineers, geoscientists, petroleum accountants, and on it goes, who have little prospects for employment right now in their home province. Their slice of the Alberta advantage, their chance at realizing their dreams and fulfilling their hopes, may not happen in Alberta. Until very recently, we had immense problems with shortages of the highly skilled workers required for energy development and the construction of energy infrastructure, like pipelines. Supporting energy infrastructure is not about supporting an industry or a sector. It is about supporting Canadian families who work hard to earn a living and raise their families with that income from coast to coast to coast.

● (1200)

The government is creating a negative investment climate because when energy prices do rebound, it will undermine the recovery of the energy sector and the employment it brings. The completion of the energy east project might be put into question just like the Mackenzie gas pipeline was before.

The government's announcement yesterday also added to the uncertainty, to the chance that a consultation might go sideways, or that a court injunction grinds everything to a halt. Why do we want pipelines built? It is because not only are they the safest way to move oil and gas, but primarily because they create jobs for the families that depend on them and the prosperity that results, as well as the quality of life they provide.

A witness at a natural resources committee in the 41st Parliament, the second session, said, "We have fresh water, we have a large community centre for recreation, we have large outdoor recreation facilities, we have all kinds of ball diamonds and soccer fields for families". Those are dollars going back to communities. Those dollars are building communities, building families and allowing them to stay in those communities, perhaps for retirement. That is why it matters.

Do we want a shovel-ready infrastructure project? I hear that so often from members on that side of the House when they talk about what this new infrastructure money will be spent on. It is energy east. It is a shovel-ready project. It is also every other high-flying project that has been proposed, designed by people who care about the quality of their work. They take pride in their craftsmanship. They take pride in the craftsmanship of their trade. They know that energy and the environment are two sides of the same coin.

A study of energy transportation safety by the Senate found that between 2000 and 2011, 99.9996% of the crude oil and petroleum that moved through pipelines did so without spilling. In cases where it did spill, where there was an accident for whatever reason, the pipeline simply stopped pumping whatever material was going through it. That is pride in craftsmanship. That is pride in one's trade. That is pride in one's profession. Debating the pipeline route is fine, but not the technology. It is a proven piece of technology used around the world. We have some of the best people in Alberta, in Canada, who know how to build them safely and responsibly.

Canada has a network of pipelines that extends over 115,000 kilometres and moves roughly 3.2 million barrels of oil and 14.6 billion cubic feet of natural gas every single day. We all depend on it. If we had to move this product by truck it would mean more than 15,000 additional long distance truck trips every single day on Canada's highways and through our communities, with extra emissions, road maintenance, public safety and, of course, the potential for road accidents.

The new regulatory timelines announced by the minister yesterday made me think of another great infrastructure project at the dawn of our Confederation, the Trans-Continental Railway, the Canadian Pacific line to the west coast. Back then it was called a national imperative. Energy east and similar pipelines in the 21st century are our national energy imperative. I am also glad that the rail line was completed over 100 years ago, because today it would be tied up in red tape tighter than a Christmas gift under the tree with its own climate audit in the stockings.

When the Minister of Natural Resources announced yesterday a new and longer regulatory process, he committed not to force projects back to square one. Good for him. What he did not say was that he added an extra 200 squares to the finish line so companies will now have to go even further to get the projects done, to get their jobs going.

Pipelines by themselves do nothing, like a highway without cars or trucks, a seaway with docks and ports but no ships. Pipelines ensure that jobs are created at the very point where the product is produced, in extraction and production. It is the most economical way. It secures the jobs. As a starting point, each well involves \$13 million of direct investment, and 40 to 50 jobs. The oil and gas sector creates hundreds of thousands of good-paying jobs. We need these. These are the highways for the product to keep moving.

This is not about corporate greed. This is not about profit. This is about creating wealth and ensuring our share of prosperity. The residents of Calgary Shepard want to get back to work. They have lived next to pipelines for decades without any issues. They do not feel refreshed like the member for Calgary Centre said earlier in the House. They are worried and concerned and I am too. I support the project because I support the jobs it would create for Canadian families and because it requires zero tax dollars to build.

I urge members on the other side of the House to join me in voting for this motion, join the member for Chilliwack—Hope as well, and vote yes to the motion. It is important for Canada. It is our national energy imperative.

• (1205)

[Translation]

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague opposite.

[English]

My colleague mentioned that the energy east pipeline is shovel-ready. I would like the member to explain how the previous government did not get social licence for this project and the fact that there were five major oil spills in Alberta alone between 2011 and 2015, which again reinforces the concern of Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

[Translation]

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech, 99% of the time pipelines are the best way to move oil to the markets where it will be sold.

I would like to thank the member for her question. However, when our government was in power we created a regulatory framework that was the best in the world. Therefore, I do not believe that we have to apologize for the process we introduced.

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development just released a report indicating that there are serious problems with pipeline safety. She mentioned in particular outdated emergency plans, multiple gaps in the National Energy Board's oversight systems and the public's lack of access to information.

A similar report was released five years ago, when the Conservatives were in power.

Why did the Conservatives do nothing about this five years ago?

[English]

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, I am always reminded of the most important thing in the motion. That is jobs. Families rely on the jobs that are created by the energy industry. When I have to meet week after week with individuals and their family members who are telling me they are having a hard time making ends meet, that they have to go to the food bank, I think of all the decisions that led us to this point. Specifically, since the provincial election in my province there has simply been a downward trend.

The regulatory system introduced by the previous government was top of the line, world class. There is nothing wrong with streamlining regulations when it makes sense, giving companies the

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certainty that they will get approval if they can meet all the requirements. That is what we did, and I am proud of that record.

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague was very kind to the last questioner talking about pipeline safety when there is no perfect way to transport any kind of product. Pipelines are much safer than trains and tractor trailers on highways. In fact, he quoted the statistic of over 99% safety capability of delivering the product.

Earlier, we heard the minister talk about the need for a protracted process, but at no time have I heard anyone from the opposite side actually go through a list of deficiencies of the National Energy Board. Frankly, there have not been any.

I would like to ask my colleague how he feels about the lack of any kind of substance for why they would want to make this process longer and if he has heard from any of his constituents about any concerns with the NEB.

• (1210)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, actually, I have never heard a single resident in my constituency tell me they had an issue with how the National Energy Board was conducting its business or how approvals were being done.

I personally feel that perhaps one of the reasons the Liberals are introducing this new regulatory red tape onto these projects that are already under way is that they fully intend that they not be completed. They do not want to see them done.

I remember June 17, 2014, when the leader of the Liberal Party said that northern gateway pipeline would not happen. One of his first acts when he came to power was to attempt to kill the project with a tanker moratorium. I am just waiting for the other shoe to drop. What are they going to introduce to stop the energy east project? What is the next announcement in a few months, or up to nine months? How many of my constituents will lose their jobs or their homes by then?

What matters is the families, their jobs, the employment, the opportunity, and saving for their retirements. My constituents come first and they are not being looked after by the government.

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform you that I will be splitting my time with the member for Thérèse-De Blainville.

I welcome this opportunity to speak to a motion put forward by the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar. The motion is timely. It comes during a week when the Prime Minister clearly outlined the government's role in looking out for Canada's best interests during pipeline reviews rather than acting as a cheerleader.

The motion comes a day after the Minister of Natural Resources and I announced an interim approach and specific measures to immediately strengthen environmental assessments in advance of a review of environmental assessment processes.

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[Translation]

I am certain that MPs would like to know how we reached this point. First, I will provide some context.

The federal system for project reviews, including energy projects and pipelines, includes environmental assessments, consultation of aboriginal groups and decisions on issuance of permits.

[English]

This system is important for protecting the environment and the safety of Canadians. Meaningful consultations with indigenous peoples are essential. The process must consider the views and concerns expressed by Canadians and affected communities. Achieving these objectives is important for the economy and the environment.

In 2012, omnibus budget legislation, Bill C-38 and Bill C-45, significantly changed the system for project reviews by replacing the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act with CEAA 2012, amending the National Energy Board Act and Fisheries Act, and amending and renaming the Navigation Protection Act. For such important legislation, Parliament did not spend long examining the bills: three months for the first bill and two months for the second one. This motion speaks to important issues that have been affected by the changes made in 2012.

[Translation]

We know that natural resources projects play a vital role in our economy and we recognize how important job creation and economic growth are to Canadians. We believe that it is important and essential to rebuild Canadians' trust in our environmental assessment processes. That is the only way to get resources to market responsibly in the 21st century.

The fact that the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Natural Resources are working together on this sends an important message. It indicates that a healthy environment and a strong economy go hand in hand.

[English]

We know that natural resources projects play a vital role in our economy and that they create jobs for Canadians and grow our economy. We also know that in 2016, projects will only get done if they are done sustainably and responsibly. We believe it is important and essential to rebuild Canadians' trust in our environmental assessment processes. We need to take into account the views and concerns of Canadians, respect the rights and interests of indigenous peoples, and support our natural resources sector. That is the only way to get resources to market responsibly in the 21st century.

Yesterday, we made the first steps toward that goal. The principles we announced will allow the government to make better evidence-based decisions on major projects. These principles will apply to projects currently undergoing a federal environmental assessment until legislated changes can be implemented.

• (1215)

[Translation]

The principles that we announced yesterday will allow the government to make better evidence-based decisions on major

projects. These principles will apply to projects currently undergoing a federal environmental assessment until legislated changes can be implemented.

[English]

The principles are clear. They were part of our platform last fall. Canadians gave us a clear mandate to implement them. Yesterday, we delivered on that mandate. Our goal is to restore robust oversight and thorough environmental assessments of areas under federal jurisdiction while also working with provinces and territories to avoid duplication. Our goal is also to ensure that decisions are based on science, facts, and evidence and serve the public's interests. They are also to provide ways for Canadians to express their views and opportunities for experts to meaningfully participate; and they will require project advocates to choose the best technologies available to reduce environmental impacts.

With these goals in mind, we will be engaging Canadians through an open, inclusive, and respectful review of environmental processes. However a review will take time. Any proposals for legislative change arising out of the review will have to be carefully considered by Parliament. This raises the question of what to do with projects currently undergoing environmental assessments.

[Translation]

Yesterday, we announced the interim approach, including clear principles that the government will follow to make better decisions on major projects. These principles are based on the fact that protecting the environment and growing the economy are not incompatible goals. In fact, our future success depends on us doing both of those things.

[English]

The principles are clear. They were part of our platform last fall. Canadians gave us a clear mandate to implement them. Our interim principles are, first, no project review will return to square one; second, decisions will be based on science and evidence, including information on climate change and traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples; third, decisions will be informed by consultation and input from Canadians, including indigenous peoples and affected communities.

Consultation is, and will continue to be, a driving force of our government in how we approach environmental assessments. As the Prime Minister has said, there is no relationship more important to our government than the one with indigenous peoples. It is time for a renewed nation-to-nation relationship, based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.

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The principles underscore our commitment to work in partnership with indigenous people and to ensure that their rights and interests are respected. Greenhouse gas emissions must also be taken into account in decision-making. Addressing climate change is a key priority for the Government of Canada.

Gathering evidence and facts on greenhouse gas emissions from a variety of sources, including environmental assessment, will further help inform our national climate change plan. At the same time, the private sector has a role to play as a source of dynamic innovation for greener and cleaner technology and practices. Environmental assessments can help promote this innovation. After all, the goal of environmental assessments is to improve the way projects are designed, built, and operated.

I want to emphasize that the interim approach released yesterday and our commitment to review environmental assessment processes are actions that I believe will help restore public trust in environmental assessment processes and the decisions that result.

Canadians voted for a government that understands that the economy and the environment go hand in hand. Yesterday, we gave business people the certainty they need to plan and build and grow, and we provided Canadians with the reassurance they want that their environment will be protected.

In 2016, that is the responsible thing to do and the only way we will ensure both our collective prosperity and our future. I am very pleased to read some reviews of yesterday's announcement of interim principles. Adam Scott of Environmental Defence said that to have all of the material in hand when making the decision will make for a better and higher-quality, informed decision.

Shannon Phillips, Alberta environment minister, said that she and I have had ongoing conversations about our role with respect to climate leadership; the importance of access to tidewater. She said we have in our initial meeting talked about environmental assessment processes, and so there have been conversations along the way. She said the federal government works productively and collaboratively with them, and they appreciate that respectful relationship.

Mark Cooper, TransCanada spokesman, said:

We support a strong and clear regulatory framework that helps Canadians see our commitment to building and operating oil and gas pipelines in the safest and most environmentally sound way possible.

● (1220)

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the minister to her position and wish her well in negotiating the precarious course between protection of the economy and protection of the environment.

With regard to consultation with Canada's indigenous people on these very important resource projects, I would remind her that our former Conservative government invested significantly larger amounts of money to enable the research, the preparation, and the intervention of Canada's indigenous peoples to comment and to offer their input on these projects, but I would hope the minister and the Minister of Natural Resources agree that the crown's responsibility to consult does not mean automatic acquiescence or surrender to

ideological opposition on issues of safety, of economic security, and of principle.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, we heard from indigenous leaders that the changes that were made to the environmental assessments had a direct impact on the ability of indigenous people to provide comments about the environmental assessment project for particular processes. That is why we are committed to rebuilding the confidence of Canadians, ensuring that indigenous peoples have the ability to work collaboratively, and provide real consultation and real input in the environmental assessment processes.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the minister on her appointment. We look forward to working closely with her in developing a robust environmental regime, one that we once operated under.

In the minister's initial remarks, which she seemed to reverse later on, she spoke of the announcements made yesterday as affecting major resource projects. In fact, they are very limited to just two specific ongoing reviews of two pipelines. The reason I raise this is because we need reform of far more than just the environmental assessment process.

The problem with the reforms put in place by the Conservative government was that they removed the very triggers for federal environmental assessments. They also removed the regulatory powers that the agencies could use when the environmental assessment recommendations were put in place by permit or regulatory power. Therefore, this will also affect the interests of not only impacted communities but of first nation and Métis people. Could the minister speak to this issue?

What I have heard from first nations, of course including in the Truth and Reconciliation report and UNDRIP, is that they want far more than just a say in the development of a pipeline by some external proponent. They are asking for respect for their rights and title, their voices heard, and benefits from resource development on their lands. How are the minister's announced reforms going to address this much bigger issue?

● (1225)

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her congratulations. I am certainly honoured to be in this position.

However, I would correct one thing. The interim principles apply to all projects that are under review under the environmental assessment process. Therefore, they go beyond the two pipeline projects.

In terms of our relationship with indigenous peoples, we have been very clear. We believe in a nation-to-nation relationship based on respect. We understand our obligations to consult and, where applicable, accommodate.

Business of Supply

We will be undergoing a full review of the environmental assessment process. We absolutely agree that the major changes made by the Conservative Party through omnibus bills were simply not acceptable to Canadians. We know that in the 21st century, if we want to get natural resources to market, we need to ensure that it is done in a responsible and sustainable way.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ramez Ayoub (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the energy sector is essential to Canada's prosperity. We know that a pipeline is a safe and effective way to transport key resources from one coast to another. The federal government is being frank and honest with Canadians about the challenges posed by the 21st-century economy. This is a process that brings together effective environmental assessments and a long-term vision for our prosperity.

This vision for the energy sector requires that the provinces and territories and aboriginal communities work together. Gone are the days of divisiveness over energy and pipelines.

After a decade during which the former government put ideology ahead of job creation, we will make decisions based on job creation, prosperity, and a sustainable future. Today's leadership will help create economic opportunities.

Our world has been through a significant transformation. With the advent of information technology, access to information is becoming the norm. Canadians demand transparency in how the government is run. Canadians demand a government that is committed to addressing the problems that have a significant impact on our daily lives.

We will keep our promise to include communities, environmental agencies, and aboriginal peoples in a dialogue addressing our needs for a sustainable, secure economy.

This is about leaving a legacy to future generations. This is about a commitment to our country and future generations, who will not make the distinction between innovation and natural resource conservation. They will look at our decisions as the first critical steps to a greener, more prosperous future where Canadian businesses are leaders in designing and producing green technologies used the world over.

That future was completely sidelined by the Conservatives over the past decade. They did not tap into the innovation and entrepreneurial spirit in the green technology and natural resource extraction sectors. How many potential jobs were sacrificed for the sake of their ideology?

As far as our NDP colleagues are concerned, the vision they are offering our constituents depends on the language they are using in their speeches. The hon. member for Outremont supported energy east in Alberta, but last year when he was in Quebec, he said he opposed the project. What changed? Was it the language, the region, or his policy? His personal politics certainly changed.

The energy sector is very important to Canada's future prosperity. We cannot sacrifice our country's future on the altar of ideology and political games. Canadians expect us to make decisions based on fact and to listen to them. If their perspectives are excluded from studies of major projects that will have an impact on us all, they will know.

That is where we are coming from. That is why we believe that pipeline proponents are responsible for showing that they have considered all of the risks their projects entail. Only once they have done that will they be allowed to go ahead with their projects. It is easy to see that our country has been hit hard by falling oil prices, tough investment decisions, and even tougher decisions to lay workers off.

Behind the statistics and the postponed projects are individuals, people all over the country. People in communities, not just in western Canada but across the country, are coping with difficult economic conditions and facing an uncertain future.

Quebec lost a lot of jobs during the first six months of 2015, and that had an impact on the financial, service, and retail sectors. These struggles are real, and there is no magic solution. However, there are a lot of positive steps we can take.

• (1230)

That is why our government is focusing on support for the rapid development of green technology and investments in green infrastructure in order to ease the burden on those who have been affected by job losses in the energy sector. That is why we have put forward a process to restore people's trust when it comes to the principles that will guide decision-making on major resource-based projects that are already being assessed. That is why we are modernizing the National Energy Board. Restoring trust in the regulatory system will increase general support for large-scale energy projects. The government believes that Canadians should be optimistic about the long-term future of the energy sector.

The energy sector is becoming increasingly important in Canada and Quebec, but this prosperity means that we need an effective environmental management regime for the future. At the same time, investments in green infrastructure are key to our collective prosperity. We need to ensure that Canada is a leader in the necessary process of transitioning our economy to a green economy. Future generations need us to do so. We cannot and we must not disappoint them.

[*English*]

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government talks about its investments in green infrastructure, investments in getting Canadians back to work, and the loss of confidence that Canadians have had in the projects as we moved forward.

I have been very vocal in saying that the government's plan to invest in transit does not create jobs in ridings such as my riding of Cariboo—Prince George, where the economy was built on the backs of forestry, mining and gas workers. The government has completely forgotten about these small communities and is, instead, busy taking selfies and patting itself on the back.

Business of Supply

What will the government do? Will the member stand up for the small communities, such as Prince George, Williams Lake, Quesnel, and Vanderhoof in my riding of Cariboo—Prince George and support our party's motion to put the focus back on promoting sound business practices and building the economies of the small communities in our country?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. The answer is quite simple. Of course we are thinking about all jobs in Canada, whether in small communities or large urban centres. What matters is the economy. What matters are jobs, including large-scale and small-scale jobs in every sector. However, in order to create jobs in the energy sector with such undertakings as the pipeline project, we need to make sure that all the safety and environmental criteria are considered. Before making a final decision, we need to make sure that we listen to the scientists, the studies, and the public, considering the environmental and economic impacts involved. We need to listen to those people. My colleagues and I are here to represent them.

•(1235)

[*English*]

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, specifically, what are the deficiencies of the National Energy Board? We have not heard that. Many people across the country who are watching this debate right now are concerned about their jobs. They are wondering why the government would take this track of protracting the whole process longer. Therefore, could he give us a list of the NEB deficiencies?

Also, will he support the motion?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. What is at stake with the pipelines is job creation. We must ensure that the environment is protected and that Canadians support the process. The environment, jobs, the economy, these are all intertwined. All the criteria will have to be studied by the National Energy Board, which really needs to clean house, revise these regulations and be more transparent with respect to its regulations and its findings.

[*English*]

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments by the member opposite with respect to his toeing the party lines and his government's lines, but he has failed to answer my colleague's question.

Have the Liberals heard first-hand where the NEB has fallen down or fallen short? Who are they consulting with? Clearly the message has not been heard. Industry is waiting and projects have delayed timelines. People in my riding are losing jobs and they would like to know if this party and this member will support our motion. He should answer the question.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his question.

I will support job creation, as will my government. It will also support an economy that protects natural resources and the environment.

This will all come together as a concrete package when we take action. We will support any program that creates jobs in an environmentally sound way and that is acceptable to Canadians.

[*English*]

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be on my feet again. It seems to be happening quite a lot as a representative from Alberta to have to protect the interests of the people of my province from the transgressions of the current Liberal government. I am happy to split my time with the hon. member for Durham, giving me about 10 minutes on this.

I am not going to take the normal tack that has been taken by some of my colleagues here today. I was a member of the natural resources committee for a number of years in the last Parliament. I am very proud to talk about these issues as they pertain to my province.

One of the most interesting witnesses we ever had in front of the natural resources committee was a professor. His name was Pierre Desrochers, University of Toronto. He came with quite an unorthodox deck that he gave to us at that meeting. He gave a very historical, appreciated, and informative recap of the value that fossil fuels have played in the earth's development.

Just imagine going back a couple hundred years, what life must have been like. We do not talk about these things here, but the average lifespan for somebody in the 1800s was about 30 years of age. The average man was about 5.5 feet tall, about 145 pounds. They often died from things like disease or working so hard, subsistence living.

There was no quality of life, other than just basically working from sun up to sun down to provide for the necessities of life. We did not have advanced scholars; we did not have advanced medical facilities; we did not have teachers or doctors; we did not have any of these kinds of professions, because we were basically just eking out a living.

What did that do to our environment? The Liberals are opposed to these pipelines because they are claiming that this is bad for the environment. What was it like for the environment when people were living a subsistence living? People would basically try to grow food or earn a living off every square inch of the earth's surface that they could. That meant all sorts of marginal land, along the edges of cliffs, lakeshores, and oceans. It would all be used to try to grow food.

Forests would be cut down. Vast tracts of forest were cut down to burn wood for fuel, for cooking, or heating, or whatever else was necessary at that time.

Business of Supply

He gave us some maps. If we go back and take a look at what these things looked like, there was less forest in 1920 in the United States than there is today. Actually because of the advancement of fossil fuels and the use of fossil fuels for things like transportation and heating, we live a much cleaner, much healthier, much more environmentally sustainable life than we could have ever imagined. We now live well into our 80s. Our size, our nourishment, the amount of technology from fossil fuels, has grown, including the fuel that goes into the input of agriculture. This is not just the input of driving the tractor, but the actual inputs like the creation of fertilizer that we can apply to our crops to grow far more food than we ever had.

That is not the biggest thing. The biggest thing is the advancement in transportation, Mr. Desrochers said. People used to only be able to eat food that could be grown within their local communities. While that sounds like a romantic idea, and there are lots of people pushing that agenda from all corners of this House at certain times, the reality is that if there was a bad crop or a bad year on the farm when people were living a subsistence living, they were in danger of dying.

This was not all that long ago. Imagine what it was like 200 years ago to move a ton of grain 50 kilometres when all they had was a couple of horses. Imagine how much grain would be needed to feed that horse just to move that grain.

In the late 1800s, I believe it was 1898, in New York City, regional municipal planners got together for their first-ever meeting. The issue of the day was not about where they would build sewer lines or pipelines or water lines or anything like that, it was what they were going to do with horse manure. That was their transportation mode.

Enter fossil fuels. We have coal now that we can burn in ships. We are not relying on the trade winds or sailing ships to trade. We can move food anywhere we want in the world, anytime we want. When one region of the world has a drought, another region of the world has tremendous crop successes. We see this now. We take it for granted. We have forgotten how this actually happens. Now we can transfer food from Australia to Southeast Asia. We can transfer food from North America to China. We can transfer food from Africa to Europe, or from Europe to Africa for that matter, in the form of aid.

Where would the planet be right now if we could not actually airlift or move food quickly, by ship or cargo planes or whatever the case might be, with the technological advances of the petrochemical industry?

• (1240)

I do not know if anybody has been in a cockpit of an airplane lately, but it is not made out of wood. Where would we be without the advancements in fossil fuels?

These are the things that we have so much taken for granted and forgotten, as we have these debates about what is a social licence. I know where I can apply for my driver's licence. I know where I can apply for my fishing licence. If I am lucky, I might even be able to get a marriage licence. However, I do not know anywhere we can apply for a social licence. This is just a manufactured term, trying to create an agenda on one side of the issue to stop something that

makes complete sense; to stop the industry and to stop things that improve our quality of life.

God forbid that we did not have fossil fuels in our lives. Where would we be? What would we be able to do? Nothing. There would not be politicians in this room debating it, because we would be out scratching a living off rocks.

I do not know of any other fuel or any other technology right now that allows us to do long-range transportation. Is there anything else that we could put in an airplane to make it fly? Are they going to put a battery-operated commercial airline in the air and get on it and go over the Pacific? I am not doing that. I am pretty happy with that airplane burning carbon fuels to get me across the ocean. That is absolutely fantastic. That is a modern advancement.

Did members know that the air quality in Toronto 100 years ago was worse than the air quality in Beijing today? Most Canadians do not know that. It is true. What were they burning 100 years ago to heat their homes in Toronto? It was some of the dirtier carbon of the day. They were burning wood and coal.

These are the things, as we have advanced through our society, burning garbage or whatever waste they could, that we have advanced from over time. Right now China is going through the same thing. This is just industrial revolution all over again. It is just happening at different times in different countries around the world. China will advance. Certain countries are so advanced over Canada. Here we are in Canada, one of the most technologically advanced countries in the world, and other countries that are still in or just coming out of third world status have better communications systems than we do. They got to skip the whole part where we dug our lines and buried them in the ground. They went right to radio telecommunications and satellite communications in their country, on cellphones not made out of wood.

I have nothing against wood. I have nothing against our other natural resources. I even prefer wooden hockey sticks, but that is a different issue altogether.

My point is that fossil fuels have done more to make us wealthier and healthier. The wealthier we are, the healthier we are. In a country where people are living under the poverty line, where the per capita GDP is less than \$5,000 per year, are those people living as long as we are? Are they as healthy as we are? Can they afford the same quality of food as we can afford? Absolutely not.

The fossil fuel sector creates wealth. Wealth creates health. Not only do we live longer because we can have better food and all the other things that go along with that, but we have freed up a massive amount of our population to move to our urban areas to pursue education, to study, and to create a powerful centre of innovation and technology so we can have advancements. We can solve our problems with technological improvements.

We do not need to politicize something that is so uncontroversial. Saying they want to go through their day without fossil fuels is like saying they can get by without eating bread. It does not make any sense. They would never say that. Why would they say they could get through their day without using a bit of carbon or using some fossil fuels from time to time?

Business of Supply

Those happiest about the advancement of fossil fuels were the whales. Let me explain. Prior to the invention or refinement of kerosene, the major source of oil in the world was whale oil. I am listening to the Liberal Party blubber on and on about these environmental issues when the advancement of the fossil fuel industry actually probably saved the whales on the planet. I thank Shell. I thank Nexon. I thank all those companies for the great environmental work that they do.

● (1245)

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful when we have the opportunity to be entertained in this chamber. I have to say that I was very entertained by some of the things the member said.

I have a question that relates to what the hon. member said with respect to the air quality in Toronto 100 years ago versus the air quality today in Beijing. The hon. member made the statement that the air quality in Toronto 100 years ago was worse than the air quality today in Beijing. I wonder what scientific studies were done 100 years ago on the air quality in Toronto that the hon. member is actually relying on. Could he perhaps furnish me with a copy of the scientific proof and studies? It would be interesting to see.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, let me catch the hon. member up. I have had the privilege and pleasure of not only working in the oil and gas sector, but I have also had the privilege and honour of getting an education, three of them, as a matter of fact. The biggest education I have ever had is becoming a member of Parliament, talking to common-sense folk who vote Conservative in Alberta.

He wants to go back and take a look at studies that have been done. I just referred to one by a professor from Toronto, who appeared before the natural resources committee. All the information I presented here is in the paper coming right out of the committee report. The study was done in 2014, in the spring. He is free to go to the committee for information and read it for his own edification. He might even become so enlightened that he will jump ship and come over here with the common-sense people in the House.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have strayed a bit from the text of the motion and covered a few different areas. I would like to comment on two of the items that the member mentioned.

First, he was going on and on about the health benefits of our oil infrastructure, and I certainly agree that the technological advances of the oil industry have certainly made some amazing things happen, but I would like him to comment on the incredible costs our society is now burdened with. My riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford is now seeing record droughts during the summers. It is directly linked to climate change, which is directly linked to the burning of fossil fuels. That has a health effect on people in my community.

Second, I think we need to be very careful when we talk about social licence. His comments are straying dangerously close to a paternalistic attitude that got the previous government into quite a lot of trouble.

I would like the hon. member to talk about social licence and offer his comments to the many first nations in Canada who have stood up against this review process. I would like him to clarify what his comments mean to them.

● (1250)

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, here we go, fomenting more division across the country with comments and questions like this. It is really unfortunate that my hon. colleague would actually go down this path.

Social licence is simply about putting a political lens on it. That is just politically correct jargon that people are using these days. If he wants to use the words “social licence”, he can go ahead and use the words “social licence”. I am going to stick to science and the technology that the National Energy Board and other engineers and technologists actually have to make sure that pipelines are built. I am an environmentalist, too. I love the environment. I love fishing, I love hunting. I am a farm boy from Lacombe, Alberta. I do not want a dirty environment any more than anyone else does, but I understand the value of the energy sector and building a pipeline from Alberta to the east coast of Canada, the west coast of Canada, or to the Gulf of Mexico. It is good for Alberta, which is good for Canada.

If the hon. member ever wants to doubt me, he can simply go back and look at the various financial documents that have been tabled in budgets in the House for years and years, and he will see who are the net contributors to and net recipients from the civil program called equalization. I am a proud Albertan and happy to be a net contributor, to the point of \$4,000 per capita by the average Albertan over the last 10 years. Per year, Albertans pay more into the confederation than we receive back in benefits in Alberta.

Not only that, but people enjoyed the best quality of life in Alberta because of the energy sector. We had a government, even though it was Conservative, that spent more on things like health care, education, and roads per capita than any other government before. I will not apologize for the fact that Canada is blessed with abundant natural resources. Some of them are non-renewable. Let us use them. It improves the quality of our lives.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour for me to rise in the House to speak on any important matter of debate, and this is such an important matter. Ironically, we are a few months away from the 60th anniversary of a similar debate on pipelines that rocked the House at the time and led to an election and a change in government.

Ironically at the time, it was the Liberal Party that was advocating for a pipeline to be built across Canada and it was Prime Minister Diefenbaker who was looking at options on whether it could go through the United States or how that government would proceed. However, I think everyone involved knew the importance of that project to Canada and its economy. It was the way it was being implemented in the nation's interest.

Business of Supply

We are back here today because my hon. colleague, the natural resources critic of the official opposition, brought this debate to the House. In debates like this I also think of a quote that a mentor of mine once related to me. I have not been able to find the attribution, but one of my political mentors when I was living in Nova Scotia was the late Henry David MacKeen, who was very close to Robert Stanfield, the leader of the official opposition and Conservative leader in Ottawa. Stanfield once said that it is far easier to unite one part of Canada against another part of Canada than it is to unite all of Canada. Sadly, we are having this debate today because our new Prime Minister seems to have forgotten that point and the role of the nation's leader in guiding our economy.

The Prime Minister speaks regularly about diversity, which I like him doing. Diversity is our strength, but diversity is more than just our peoples. It is our geography and our economy. Those three things are linked, because it is the geography of regions, whether it is Atlantic Canada with our fishery or western Canada with our resources, that the people of those regions and all of Canada benefit from the economy involved. That is the diversity of our country, the second largest in the world. That needs to be the focus of the Prime Minister of Canada, not pitting one region or industry or sector against another, because by doing that we are dividing Canadians.

Our economy is diverse. We sometimes hear voices in the media suggesting that we are only an oil and gas exporter, that that is all the previous government focused on. People who say that have no clear understanding of our economy. The resource economy is very important to Canada, but it represents about 8% of our GDP and not all of it concentrated in a few provinces. Petrolia, Ontario was where oil was first produced in Canada. It is no longer produced there, but almost \$1 billion in manufacturing jobs in southern Ontario are attributable to the resource sector in western Canada. There are as many manufacturing jobs in southern Ontario attributable to the resource sector as to auto assembly. The success of that region and part of our economy benefits all.

Canada receives \$17 billion through all levels of government as a result of the resource industry. This diversity is what has helped us weather the global recession of 2008-09 better than any of our main allies. It was that economy that helped as Ontario, Quebec, and other provinces' economies slowed. Now the Canadian way would be to embrace the diversity of that economy, and as resource prices are depressed, hopefully other aspects of our economy from high-tech, to manufacturing, to agriculture, to fisheries, can help take up some of the slack. That is what a family does. That is what a confederation does. We cannot pit one industry or one sector of our economy against the other, because that pits Canadians against each other.

The resource industry is much more than just the trees, the minerals, or the oil and gas. We have innovated in this sector probably better than any other country. From exploration, to extraction, to processing, these are high-tech knowledge-based jobs that help us also mitigate environmental damage. Millions of dollars are being spent on that.

• (1255)

For a number of years I had the pleasure of working in Toronto in the so-called Bay Street area. The Toronto Stock Exchange and Bay Street would not exist in the form they do today were it not for our

resource sector. In fact, our exchange remains one of the best places to raise capital for mining exploration in the world. That is what put us on the map.

There are a lot of Liberal MPs from Toronto. If we were to look at the office towers in Toronto, those jobs would not be there if we were not a global centre for mining finance. The capital markets and banks that have fed off of that for generations have now placed us as one of the best and strongest G7 economies in the world. There are jobs in every part of this country and resources coming to all levels of government because of the resource sector. To demonize that sector or pit it against another is an abdication of leadership.

In the last year, both before and after his election, the Prime Minister made comments that make it appear to many that he plays favourites among the sectors. Because sectors, geography and our people are so closely linked, picking favourites pits one part of the country against another. We saw this when he said that parts of Ontario need to move past their manufacturing heritage. The auto industry in Canada grew up from Oshawa, a part of which I have the honour of representing. There are still thousands of jobs in the auto assembly and auto parts industries in my area and tens of thousands in southern Ontario that we cannot move past. The Prime Minister should be asking how we can secure and expand these employment opportunities. Not every community across the country can pop up a BlackBerry or an OpenText or a Hootsuite. Those are tremendous innovators. However, one should not pick those innovators over our resource sector, not as the Prime Minister.

In case the Prime Minister does not know, we are resourceful now. However, he said in Davos that resources were in our past, as if the Canadian innovations in the in situ work in mining, oil, and gas were not an example of resourcefulness, as if mitigating the water use in the oil sands was not resourceful, and as if raising capital for mining operations or exploration around the world was not resourceful or meaningful. The role of the Prime Minister should not be to pick favourites. He should be a champion for all.

I worry about the tone he is setting, even in his early days as the Prime Minister of Canada, which is one that other levels of government are following. The mayor of Montreal, his former parliamentary colleague, appears to think that it is okay, when he knows full well the opportunity that energy east holds for New Brunswick and western Canada, and that the National Energy Board is seized with that matter to ensure that energy east is in the national interest, alongside environmental, aboriginal, and community concerns, which, writ large, have developed into the concept of social licence. The Prime Minister has set a tone that is allowing division to start in our country.

Business of Supply

The Prime Minister of Canada should not be a traffic cop for other levels of government but a dispassionate referee, when there are tens of thousands of jobs on the line and we, 60 years later in the House, are having another debate on pipelines and how they are in our nation's interest.

I will end with a quote from 2014 with respect to energy east by Frank McKenna, a tremendous Canadian and prominent Liberal leader, who said:

Our country has always had its regional differences, and the Energy East pipeline is not going to change that by itself. That said, following the National Energy Board's due diligence and further input from various parties (including First Nations and environmental organizations), I would hope that one thing becomes abundantly clear. The Energy East project represents one of those rare opportunities to bring all provinces and regions of this country together to support a project that will benefit us all, and that is truly in the national interest.

• (1300)

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member went beyond the establishment of a plan, which is something I am sure many members across have advocated for with respect to this project. I agree that the outcome with respect to the economy can be recognized and realized, as the member has outlined in his comments.

However, does the member not believe that looking through a lens of a triple bottom line process, including economic, social and environmental, the dialogue we should have with members across the country, working together to make a plan, can come to fruition? Does the member not think that should be taken into consideration as part of the overall plan before the country moves forward with such a project?

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what the National Energy Board does through the prisms he discussed.

The concept of social licence has grown out of Canada's robust regulatory regime, which in its early days dealt with property rights and environmental concerns. However, in the last generation, the last 25 years, with decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada, like *Delgamuukw* and others, it has involved consultations. All of those things together become social licence. The concept actually comes from a regulatory process, and it is the right of the government to enhance and build upon it if it wants.

However, my concern is the Prime Minister's abdication of leadership in the national interest. He is not a traffic cop between mayors. He has to tell Canadians why energy east is so important.

I would put it in the context of the member for Niagara Centre if over a century ago there was such nimbyism or parochialism around the Welland Canal. It was an important route that travelled through a lot of towns and boroughs to allow commerce in the region and was of national interest at that time. I am sure the member would agree that it is a boon to his riding. This is even bigger. For a province like New Brunswick, which is struggling, it is critical for its future.

• (1305)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for my hon. colleague. I served on the trade committee with him, and I thank him for his measured speeches.

However, in listening to the speeches of his colleagues from the Conservative Party, they have been uniquely confusing. They talk

about the need to have pan-Canadian co-operation and to not be divisive. Yet all I hear, speaker after speaker in his caucus, is the most inflammatory, divisive language being used, bringing up how one province supports another, and constantly putting wedges between the provinces. I do not think Canadians are going to fall for that rhetoric, that this motion is intended to be a bit of a wedge issue.

I actually find myself in agreement with almost all of this motion. In parts (a), (b) and (c): recognizing the importance of the energy sector, of course; agreeing that pipelines are the safest way to transport oil, which I think is a fact; and acknowledging the desire of the energy east pipeline by various governments, which is also true. My issue is with the conclusion, which is asking the House to "express its support for the Energy East pipeline currently under consideration".

I have a problem with that last part. According to the member's speech, he believes in having the NEB do a proper regulatory review process and respecting that. However, the energy east pipeline has not gone through that process. What the member is doing is asking members of the House to prejudge that process and express support for a proposal that has not been evaluated.

How can the member square that circle to us? How can he ask the House to support a proposal, and also ask members of the House to put our support behind a credible environmental impact assessment process and respect the results of it when he wants us to prejudge its results?

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, my friend and I have worked on trade together. He has worked on moving the NDP into somewhat more modestly of accepting trade, and I applaud him for that.

On the wedges the member talked about, it is not this motion today. The motion today is brought because of comments by the Prime Minister, and then days later by the mayor of Montreal. As I said, I am concerned that the Prime Minister has set that tone, suggesting that the resource economy is not as important as other parts of our economy. As I said, diversity of our economy is our strength and it has helped us. That is why we are bringing this debate.

The Prime Minister needs to lead the national interest. He needs to have faith in the NEB and has the right to enhance it, but should he champion projects done responsibly and reviewed when he knows they are in the nation's interest, and when he knows that provinces like New Brunswick are struggling and knows we are importing oil to those refineries. This screams national interest, which is why I used Frank McKenna's example.

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Surrey—Newton today.

Business of Supply

I am proud to add my voice to this important debate because there are few issues facing our country today that are more pressing than growing our economy while we protect our environment. Both are critical to our overarching promise to strengthen the middle class and to help those working hard to join it.

All of us understand that our nation's prosperity has been built on our natural resources. It goes without saying that a core responsibility of the federal government is to help get our natural resources to market. This equal balance of priorities is something Canadians have not seen for 10 years by their federal government. However, that is only possible if we earn the required public trust by addressing environmental, indigenous peoples, and local concerns. This is key to improving and protecting economic opportunity and security for Canadians on contentious issues like pipeline approvals.

We need to ensure that our resource sector remains a source of jobs, prosperity and opportunity within the context of a world that increasingly values sustainable practices and low carbon processes. As Prime Minister Trudeau noted recently in answering a journalist's question, a less aggressive—

• (1310)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order, please. I would remind the member that when you are speaking in the House to refer to the person by his or her riding, or by his or her title.

Ms. Kim Rudd: Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister noted recently in answering a journalist's question, a less aggressive approach on environmental responsibility in the past led to a ramping up of rhetoric against Canadian oil and against Canadian energy. This is the Conservative legacy for the energy industry.

If we do not convince Canadians and people the world over that we take the environment seriously, it will remain difficult, if not impossible, to get our resources to world markets.

It does not have to be this way, as the ministers of Natural Resources Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada underlined yesterday in our interim approach to assessing and reviewing major resources projects. The five interim principles they announced would enable energy and pipeline companies to demonstrate that their projects were in the public interest and deserving of the approval of Canadians. This open and collaborative approach is about real change and prosperity for the energy industry.

The steps we are taking would also help to regain the public's confidence that we can achieve prosperity and protect the environment without compromising either one.

We have pledged to Canadians that we would set a higher bar for openness and transparency, to shine more light on government to ensure it remains focused on the people it serves. We will deliver. In the same way, we will be transparent and work collaboratively with other sectors, including the energy industry, to provide proponents with the clarity and certainty they need to plan and implement projects.

In short, in addressing national projects like energy pipelines, we will behave in a positive and productive way that contributes to the economy, a secure environment, to bringing people together, and to creating a better future for the generations that follow us.

Our plan for pipelines is not based on pipe dreams, and it does not involve unnecessary meddling in the marketplace. Our government recognizes it has a fundamental role to play in opening up markets abroad for Canadian resources and to help create responsible and sustainable ways to get those resources to those markets. The best way we can do that is to create fair and transparent processes so industry can create economic growth and protect the environment to sustain the high quality of life of Canadians.

Does that mean we are willing to maintain the status quo, as the opposition motion recommends we do? Clearly not. We need to put an end to the mistrust and suspicion that currently surrounds discussions about pipelines in our country by those playing politics and putting ideology over industry and the public's interest. When the Conservatives shut down real dialogue for over a decade, it is understandable that trust is lost, and trust is a vital resource for effective government. We will protect the public trust.

Let me be clear. No proponent with a pipeline project already undergoing an environmental review will have to go back to the starting line. Rather, project proponents and their investors will have greater clarity about timelines and certainly about what is expected of them in reaching a final decision, thanks to these reasonable and balanced changes.

This government trusts the ingenuity of energy producers and shippers to come up with sustainable solutions. The energy sector has decades of experience in fact in developing technological innovations to extract the value of these resources. We acknowledge the industry continues to lead in reducing its environmental footprint. By devoting more brain power and ingenuity to resource extraction and shipping, the energy industry can and will be more environmentally sustainable.

However, even this progress toward sustainability will not satisfy the concerns of Canadians without the assurance that the regulatory review process is robust. That is why we have announced five interim principles that will support the energy sector's drive to sustainably develop energy resources and ship them responsibly to tidewater.

Business of Supply

•(1315)

We will show Canadians, and the world community, that we are making decisions about project approvals based on science, facts, and evidence. We are taking into account the views of all Canadians and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples. We are determined to better understand and minimize environmental impacts. We will ensure that resource development decisions and actions are central to our government's commitment on climate change.

Protecting the environment and growing the economy are not incompatible goals. A clean environment and a strong economy go hand in hand.

I am confident that by working in partnership with all parties with a stake in responsible pipeline development we will demonstrate that Canada is a global leader in sustainable energy and shipment.

We will restore the public trust. Public trust is essential to public backing of these projects.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for her comments and congratulate her on, I think, her first speech as parliamentary secretary.

We have heard a number of comments from the Liberal side, and we have asked questions and gotten some answers.

Given that the Liberals have committed to more free votes, to not dictating what their members should do or say or how they should vote, I wonder, first, if the parliamentary secretary would tell me if the government will be supporting this motion, and second, if it will allow a free vote so that the members from the government side who would like to support this motion would be allowed to support it.

Will they be supporting this motion?

Ms. Kim Rudd: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question and her compliment.

We, as a government, and in our platform, clearly spoke to this issue of sustainable development and our work toward gaining the public trust. We also, as a government, clearly spoke about the ability of MPs within our government to have a say in what our government is putting out in our platform as well as in bills before this House.

We will continue to move forward on our work with our indigenous communities, communities in general, and stakeholders to make sure that Canadians have confidence in the process we have put forward, and we will see the results of that in the future.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her speech and comments. I am pleased to be part of this debate.

I would mainly like to ask her about the last element of the Conservatives' motion, which clearly supports the energy east project without even taking into consideration the results of an environmental assessment and a clear process to monitor the pipeline projects.

What does she think about the fact that the Conservatives have decided to support a project even before the assessment process has been completed?

[*English*]

Ms. Kim Rudd: Mr. Speaker, we have clearly said that Canadians have to have trust in our process. We are adamant that we will not provide any kind of interference in this process.

We completely disagree with the motion in terms of making a predetermination of an outcome before this project has even had hearings or gone through the process. We are not going to interfere, and we will wait for the outcome of this process before having anything further to say.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all know how important this issue is to Canadians. It is important that the Government of Canada get it right, and I believe that we do have it right.

I am asking the parliamentary secretary to comment on just how Canada's economy and the concerns with regard to the environment are two of the most important issues for Canadians as they look to the future. They want a government that cares about the environment. They want a government that is going to be there to ensure that we get our natural resources to tidewaters, and so forth. Both issues are important, and what Canadians are looking for is a government that is going to do what is right for Canada as a whole.

Maybe she would provide some further comment on the importance of making sure that we get it right.

•(1320)

Ms. Kim Rudd: Mr. Speaker, we have said that we will not be rushed. Canadians do not want us to be rushed. Canadians do want us to get it right.

We recognize that the resource sector contributes 20% of GDP in this country. It is an extremely important part of our efforts in growing the economy, so we cannot do it at the expense of our environment, something that will be with us for a very long time, we hope.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I congratulate the nominees who sit in this chair, and I am sure the constituents of Nipissing—Timiskaming are very proud of the hard and diligent work you do, not only for your constituents but for Canadians.

I am proud to stand today to speak about our government's economic agenda.

This is a difficult period for the Canadian economy. China has slowed down dramatically, and commodity prices have dropped globally. The Bank of Canada has adjusted its economic forecast and has cut interest rates twice over the last 12 months. Now, more than ever, is the time for our government to look toward long-term growth, growth that will provide good jobs for Canada's middle class, the lifeblood of our economy. This is why we introduced Bill C-2, which provides a middle-class tax cut to support Canadian families.

Business of Supply

My constituents of Surrey—Newton are happy to finally have a government that believes that they too deserve tax relief. The Liberal middle-class tax cut will lift \$3 billion in tax burden from the backs of middle-class income earners.

Bill C-2 will reduce the middle-income tax rate from 22% to 20.5%. It will also reduce the contribution limit on tax-free savings accounts from \$10,000 to \$5,500. This will benefit about nine million Canadians, which accomplishes two important objectives. First, it will restore fairness to the tax system by treating middle-income earners on par with the highest earning bracket and corporate Canada, which received the majority of tax relief from the previous government.

Just as important, this is a middle-class tax cut that is designed to stimulate the economy. The Bank of Montreal's chief economist, Doug Porter, has stated that this tax cut will encourage an increase in consumer spending and might compel middle-class earners to work more, because they will be able to keep more of their paycheques in their pockets.

History has shown that a middle-class tax cut has one of the highest returns on investment for a government, because it spurs growth by encouraging spending in the local economy. This is why, in Surrey—Newton and across Canada, small businesses are also supportive of this measure. It means that they will see a direct positive impact.

However, this is not the only way this government is putting money back into the pockets of families. The new Canada child benefit creates a simpler, more generous, and tax-free infusion for families with children.

Investment does not stop there. We will also invest in cities, the economic engines that are critical to the success of our national economy. In Surrey Newton, we see the strain that is caused by rapid growth. The city of Surrey continues to welcome over 1,000 new residents per month, and we need to continue to improve our municipal services to accommodate this growth.

This Liberal government has committed to investing \$125 billion over the next 10 years to upgrade public infrastructure and public transit. The newly proposed LRT line in Surrey is absolutely essential for strong public transit long into the future. Within the next 30 years, Surrey will emerge as the largest city in British Columbia, and easily accessible public transit is critical to that evolution.

● (1325)

Our government understands that investing in Canada's economy must be balanced, but it also means that we will never give up on working to get our natural resources to international markets. Our Prime Minister and this government will never forget that 1.8 million jobs are directly and indirectly attached to natural resources across Canada.

This government looks far into the future of Canada's economy and plans for long-term sustainability and growth. This will be accomplished in a number of specific ways: by ensuring that environmental sustainability is at the heart of Canada's resource sector, which will make Canadian resources globally attractive; by working with the provinces and territories to ensure that under-represented groups are represented in a new skills and labour

strategy; by supporting growing firms in attracting talent and investment while still incorporating innovation in their operations; and by enhancing the Canada pension plan co-operatively with our provincial and territorial partners to ensure that all Canadians have access to a secure retirement. I cannot emphasize how important this kind of approach is to the future success of all Canadians.

In Surrey, we had the pleasure of being one of the six cities to host the hon. Minister of Finance during the pre-budget consultation tour. The minister was able to hear a wide range of perspectives from one of the most dynamic communities in Canada, and one of the key messages was this: Canada can no longer place all of its eggs in one basket. We must look for balance. We must invest in the middle class, in cities, and in different industries, and we must take the long view for our future generations.

These are the same messages we are hearing from Canadians from coast to coast to coast. We have reached nearly 150,000 Canadians in these pre-budget consultations, through technology and through in-person meetings. This is the largest participation in pre-budget consultations in Canadian history. We are proud of this inclusive approach, which will come to define everything our government does over the next four years. This is a government for all provinces, all territories, all cities, all financial profiles, all races, and all backgrounds. We are committed to listening to each and every perspective and opinion. This is why our mandate to grow the economy sustainably, responsibly, fairly, and with a long-term vision was supported in Surrey—Newton and across Canada. We will continue to show respect for every single Canadian voice as we work towards presenting our budget in the coming months.

I am proud to say that balance is back in Ottawa.

● (1330)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on his election. I was a bit taken aback by his comments about how reducing the TFSA was a boon for the middle class. Of the people who maxed out their TFSA contributions, 73.4% earned incomes of \$80,000 and less. How does taking that away from people in the middle class actually help them?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member and congratulate him on his election as well.

As I mentioned in my speech, our Prime Minister made a promise in our election platform that this is the party and this is the government that is going to help the middle class. Every policy that is coming in is helping it. Bringing in Bill C-2, as I said earlier, reducing income tax from 22.5% to 20.5%, would help middle-class families. Bringing in a Canada child benefit would help the families who need the most. These are the types of policies we need, and these are the types of policies our government is going to deliver in the coming months and years.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before we move to questions and comments, I will remind the hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon that there is a process. If he stands up, he will be recognized, and he can ask a question or make a comment then.

The hon. member for Sherbrooke.

Business of Supply

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his election. My question has to do with yesterday's announcement of a kind of interim system or some half measures for projects currently under review by the National Energy Board.

We were told that the government would now consider the greenhouse gas emissions that would result from these pipeline projects. This would include not only emissions resulting from the project itself, but also upstream emissions produced during the extraction and production of what is sent through the pipeline.

Since we learned yesterday that cabinet would determine the acceptable level of greenhouse gas emissions for approving projects, could I have more details on the quantity and level of emissions that will be deemed acceptable?

This announcement seemed half-baked, and I get the impression that we will have more questions than there are answers. I hope to get more information on what emission levels cabinet will deem acceptable in order to move forward with pipeline projects, and especially the two projects under review by the National Energy Board.

[*English*]

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, the member talked about the announcement that was made yesterday by the minister, along with the parliamentary secretary. The main thing is that, when we move forward, we have to have a balanced approach. We cannot sacrifice the environment for the cost of the economy. We have to create an economy that is sustainable, creating new opportunities for every Canadian as much as possible, but at the same time, we have to make sure that we are able to consult with the provinces and territories.

We are not a government that wants to pit one province against another, one community against another, or one city against another. We are a government that wants to have a comprehensive approach, to bring all Canadians together, and to bring in a plan that works for future generations.

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just want to mention at the outset that I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Foothills.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your appointment as one of the chair occupants. I know you will enjoy the role.

I would also very much like to thank the voters of Regina—Qu'Appelle for once again placing their trust in me. This is the first time I have had the floor for a formal speech, so I would like to do that now. In order to come back to this place, one has to go and talk to a lot of constituents in the riding and connect with them during the election campaign. I did just that.

I knocked on an awful lot of doors. Of course the past election gave us a little more time to do that due to its increased length. I would like to say I got to just about every community and every neighbourhood. I will not say I knocked on every single door, because with 30,000-plus households, I do not know that it was possible, but I did my best to get to that target.

I knocked on a lot of doors where the person who answered the door had a direct interest in the construction of pipelines. They had a direct interest because—and members might not know this—in Regina we are proud to host Evraz steel. Evraz steel is the largest single private sector employer in Regina. It employs more than 1,000 people directly and hundreds more in spinoff industries. They make, specifically, large-diameter steel pipelines.

When we talk about pipelines in this place, for the folks back home in Regina we are not talking about some theoretical, faraway project; we are not talking about an ideological thing; we are talking about the very issue, the very type of industry that pays their bills, pays their mortgages, and helps put their kids through sports.

Evraz steel has its roots in the 1960s as IPSCO. Many people in Saskatchewan are very familiar with that name. It is a corporate citizen that sponsors many events and has naming rights on some recreational facilities around Regina.

People all over Saskatchewan are very familiar with how important this issue is. The energy sector in Saskatchewan and western Canada is going through tremendous strain. We all know what the price of oil is. I do not think there is anyone in this room who would say that any government can control the price of oil, artificially lift it or artificially reduce it, perhaps, unless it is the government of an OPEC nation.

However, what governments can do is create a climate of confidence and climate that is conducive to economic growth. That is what our Conservative government did for just over 10 years. While we were in government, Conservatives approved four major pipeline projects that were all started, contrary to what the NDP said earlier, under our government, processed under our government, and approved under our Conservative government.

That is our record. All this talk about the process not leading to confidence, the existing process not leading to certainty to actually allow these proposals to be approved is simply false. There is a record of approval, a record of construction of these pipeline projects, and a record of people working in these industries.

In Regina, the spinoff effects are so obvious. When talking to a person at the door, we see in their driveway a vehicle they have purchased in the last 12 months. They have put their kids through sports and activities. They eat out at restaurants. The local economy in Regina, in Saskatchewan, is so dependent not just on the energy that we extract from the ground but also on the construction, the secondary industries, the value-added industries, and the manufacturing jobs that we have at these companies.

It is not just the large ones, like Evraz. There are all kinds of medium and small businesses all over southern Saskatchewan that have grown up over the years and employ dozens, if not hundreds of people, to supply this industry.

That is what we have on the one hand; we have hard-working families who count on those paycheques, which they receive because of this industry, to pay the bills. They know that, because of the low price of oil around the world, their sector is going through some tremendous challenges. They are looking to the government to help protect that industry, to protect jobs not just in western Canada but in regions all over the country.

Business of Supply

There are manufacturing jobs in Ontario that are dependent on supplying the energy sector in Alberta and Saskatchewan. There are manufacturing jobs in Quebec that rely on the same thing. There are transportation jobs all over the country that rely on a strong and competitive natural resource sector. What they are looking for is the government to say that it stands with them, it supports them, it promotes them, it is a champion of this industry, it is proud to have the natural resources sector in our country, and it is going to do everything it can to help develop it.

Canadian oil is the cleanest, most ethical source of energy in the world, and we should be proud of that. We should support the men and women who work in those industries.

● (1335)

During the election we heard a lot of talk. We heard a lot of talk when the Prime Minister was in western Canada. He would pay lip service to these jobs. He would tell the people of western Canada that in theory he supported them, and then he would go to other parts of the country and say completely different things. Contrast the record of our government, with four approved pipeline projects, to one of the first things the present Prime Minister did, which was to cancel the northern gateway project, which would have brought thousands of jobs to Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Quebec. He cancelled it unilaterally.

In addition to that, while he is paying lip service in the west, he is doing the exact opposite with his processes. He is bringing in a regulatory regime that is designed to bring about rejections. This is a process that is designed to reject proposals. It is a never-ending series of moving goal posts. It is the exact opposite of what we accomplished when we were in government, which was to enact a predictable, science-based review process that had a guaranteed time limit; so that companies would have the certainty that, if they met the very strict and rigorous tests for environmental protection, they would end up with an approval. That inspires investor confidence. It tells the workers back home in those industries that they have a job at the end of the day, that they have a project that their company can bid for successfully.

In this time of economic uncertainty, the Liberals are also talking about stimulating the economy with massive new spending projects and with huge deficits. During the campaign, the Prime Minister promised to run a \$10 billion deficit, and now we know he will not come close to that target. He has gone way past that.

There is a \$15 billion stimulus project that is shovel-ready and will not require a cent of taxpayers' money, and that is the energy east project. That is what we are talking about today. It would not require any money to be transferred from the taxpayer, run through the bureaucrats in Ottawa, and then spent by other levels of government. This is private sector money to bring much-needed western oil to eastern markets. At a time when parts of our country import foreign oil, it makes no sense to me why this is such a controversial issue.

The Prime Minister yesterday announced a new process for these types of projects, and I have a few concerns I would like to put on the record. I look forward to explanations throughout the day and into next week.

There is a bit of a double standard emerging around western Canadian energy. The Prime Minister talked about including "upstream" emissions. Is this the only industry to which that is going to apply? Are we going to apply upstream emissions calculations to the manufacturing sector in Ontario and Quebec? Are we going to talk about downstream emissions, as the Liberal minister did yesterday, to hydro projects that are being contemplated? If that hydro is being used for manufacturing in the rest of Canada, will that be calculated into the GHG analysis? Right now it seems that it is only the western energy sector that is being applied to, and that is patently unfair.

What Canadians need at this time is a message of support from the federal government. That is what they are getting from this side of the House. The Conservative Party stands unabashedly behind the workers and families that are employed in those sectors.

I do not know if some members have had a chance to go through Calgary in the last little bit or go to parts of Alberta or Saskatchewan that have been hit so hard. There is real desperation in the families in those areas. The climate is very bleak. At this critical moment, what those workers and those families need to see in Ottawa is a government that is a champion of these types of private sector projects. There is not enough federal money to make up for the private sector's ability to stimulate our economy right now. All the government needs to do is get out of the way. We do not need fancy new programs. We do not need bureaucratic processes. We do not need to hire hundreds more civil servants to figure out how to spend tax money. We just need to allow the private sector to do what it does best.

I urge members across the way to vote for the motion, stand with the men and women who have been hit hard by this economic downturn, and support the energy east proposal.

● (1340)

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify something. Clearly if you have read our principles you will see that the five principles do apply to other sectors including mining, nuclear, and others. I want that to be very clear.

To correct the record, since the former government had its first and only majority in 2011, there has not been a pipeline approved, so I want that on the record.

My question for the member opposite is, are you suggesting that we do not go through the environmental process, the NEB process, and that we simply rubber-stamp because you would like us to? Are you suggesting that we will not gain public confidence through the process to ensure that the companies like the ones in the member's riding that manufactures pipelines can continue to grow their business and create more jobs in his riding? The only way we can make that happen is if the public has confidence in our processes.

● (1345)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Thank you. Before we proceed with the hon. member, I want to remind members of the House that I will not be rubber-stamping anything. I am sure you meant that it would be the hon. member who is going to be answering that.

Business of Supply

The hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

Mr. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, I respectfully would like to know from the member why she picked the date of the first Conservative majority government. She may know that we formed government in 2006 and under our government, going back from when we took over from the Liberals, we approved four pipelines. Now it seems to me that we ran and were held accountable to our record since 2006, not just 2011, so it is misleading to want to pick another date than when we actually started having control over these types of issues.

When we talk about confidence, we do not inspire confidence in the process when we all of a sudden add extra layers of bureaucracy, extra layers red tape, add an additional minimum eight months of timeline to approve these types of projects, when everything that members and the government says and the old Liberal colleagues say is that they are against these types of pipeline projects. What does inspire confidence is the National Energy Board process that led to the approval and construction of four major pipeline projects and all the jobs and investment that came with it.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to follow on the question by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Congratulations on the member's inaugural speech in the House. What I was clearly hearing is apparently what the parliamentary secretary was hearing from his speech. He thinks that we should usurp the federal regulatory process which states that the National Energy Board will go through this review and then it will be referred to cabinet, for a recommendation to cabinet.

Does the member not stand by, which I understand is what the resource sector wants, a robust, consistent, credible review process? We are only part way through that for the energy east pipeline. Please explain what exactly he is calling on the government to do.

Mr. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, I am calling on the government to unequivocally state its support for this type of project. What we will not see from this new process is clarity, certainty, or confidence. It ends up adding extra layers of red tape and bureaucracy.

I know the hon. member is sitting beside the member for Regina—Lewvan, who I have known for a number of years. He ran in 2004 for the first time and I think we attended a debate together. I have always thought he was a decent fellow and the type of person who came into politics for the right reason. I know that during the election he visited the workers at EVRAZ and they invited him to address their local union. Now I asked for the same treatment and was not granted it. That is fine, I understand that is politics, but I wonder what he told those workers how he would vote on these types of issues in the House of Commons. I hope he has an opportunity to address us today and lend his unequivocal support for the workers back home at EVRAZ, that he will vote for this motion to get more pipeline jobs in his hometown.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Regina—Qu'Appelle for sharing his time with me.

I have to say, it was a long day yesterday as I watched the announcement from the Minister of the Environment and the

Minister of Natural Resources. I was eager to see some glimmer of hope that the Liberal government now understood the significance of the energy industry to Canada's economy and the crisis that is going on in our energy industry right now, especially in Alberta. I must admit, when they announced the first of their five principles, I was somewhat optimistic. The first principle was that the projects now in the queue would not have to go back to square one. I thought this was a good start. Obviously, my optimism did not last very long. In fact, with each additional layer of bureaucracy, delay tactics, and vague guidelines, I came to realize, as many people in the oil sector did as well, that the announcement meant that we would likely never get another pipeline built in Canada.

I would like to take a moment today to explain to Canadians exactly what happened in that announcement yesterday. The Liberal government has told Canadian investors, in fact all Canadians, that it would rather support foreign oil producers over Canadian businesses and Alberta employers. It believes the environmental record of Nigeria, Russia, and Saudi Arabia is a better option than Canada's world renown regulatory regime. It would rather listen to vocal foreign-funded lobby groups than Canadian innovators and economists. It would rather support economies in Venezuela, Iran, and Sudan over Canadian jobs and Canadian families.

Completing these crucial pieces of infrastructure would transport Canadian oil, extracted under world-class Canadian standards. It would create Canadian jobs, establish a secure source of market for a Canadian product, and raise revenue to fund Canadian social programs and Canadian infrastructure projects. Instead, the option the Liberal government has selected is supporting having eastern Canada import 630,000 barrels of foreign oil a day from places like Nigeria, Venezuela, and Saudi Arabia. These are places that are not exactly world renown for their environmental stewardship or human rights records. This, in essence, is exactly what happened yesterday.

This is not rhetoric. This is what I am hearing from Albertans every single day, not just from people in the energy industry but people across the province. These are Albertans who today feel abandoned by the Liberal government.

This decision is absolutely devastating to the Canadian economy and we will feel it especially deeply in my riding of Foothills, where everyone directly or indirectly relies on a strong energy sector for their livelihood. Whether they are in the energy industry, or Clean Harbors in High River, or a Canadian oil sands construction company in Okotoks, or they own a hotel in Claresholm, are a welder in Pincher Creek, or they own a shop in the Crowsnest Pass, this news, this lack of leadership and a framework, is going to be absolutely devastating to southern Alberta.

Business of Supply

After the announcement of the delay of energy east and the Trans Mountain pipeline extension yesterday, I spent last night speaking to many stakeholders across Alberta. The feedback was unanimous. The message the announcement sent to Canada's resource sector is that we are closed for business. Instead, the government wants to add bureaucracy, red tape, and political influence to try to reach consensus. Adding more layers of regulations, infringing on provincial jurisdictions, and delaying decisions will not reach consensus. What we need from the Liberal government is leadership to do what is right for Canada and to stand up for our strong record as a resource-rich country.

Provinces such as Alberta, through the Alberta Energy Regulator and Alberta Environment, already have strong regulatory regimes to measure GHG emissions upstream. In fact, Alberta announced an even more stringent climate change framework in November. Now the Liberal government wants to add additional bureaucracy and red tape to that already difficult system.

It was under the Conservative government's leadership that we passed the Pipeline Safety Act, which ensured a world-class pipeline safety regime. We also strengthened the National Energy Board funding to increase annual inspections of oil and gas pipelines by 50% and double the number of comprehensive audits to improve pipeline safety across Canada, which is now among the best in the world, with a 99.99% safety record. That is something the rest of the world will envy.

• (1350)

Canada's environmental regulatory regime is among the best in the world; especially, when we compare it with some of the countries that are going to be exporting their oil into eastern Canada. For example, in 2013, the World Energy Council acknowledged Canada's higher pace of environmental improvement and ranked it higher as a builder of sustainable energy systems compared with other fossil fuel countries, including Norway, Australia, and the United States. Based upon energy security, energy equity, and environmental sustainability, the World Energy Council ranked Canada number nine in the entire world.

The low-carbon fuel standard stated there are 13 oil fields in California alone, as well as crude oil blends in six other countries, that generate higher upstream green gas emissions than the Canadian bitumen production.

Where is the dirtiest oil in North America? It certainly is not in Canada. In fact, it is just outside Los Angeles, where the oil field generates twice the level of upstream GHGs as the Canadian oil sands. The title of "world's dirtiest oil" goes to the Brass crude from Nigeria, where the upstream GHG emissions are more than four times higher than the Canadian oil sands. Yet, we do not seem to have a problem with importing that into eastern Canada.

A 2014 study by WorleyParsons compared Alberta's environmental standards with nine other comparable jurisdictions around the world. Canada ranked atop all 10 when it came to transparency, compliance, and stringency of our environmental record.

The Liberal government is further putting Canada at a competitive disadvantage compared with other oil-producing countries, including the United States, which is not talking about a federal carbon tax, is

not stopping building pipelines, and in fact has doubled its production to nine million barrels a day over the last five years.

Canadians understand energy is a critical part of our economy. It provides jobs and opportunities from coast to coast to coast. It is unfortunate to see this Liberal government trivializing the importance of our natural resource sector, even though it makes up 20% of our nominal GDP, at \$160 billion a year.

The proposed energy east pipeline has two distinct elements: the conversion of 3,000 kilometres of existing natural gas pipeline that will be converted to transport oil; and additional construction of 1,500 kilometres of new pipeline in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick. This 4,600-kilometre pipeline would carry approximately 1.1 million barrels per day of crude oil from Alberta and Saskatchewan to refineries in Quebec and New Brunswick.

Energy east would basically generate thousands of jobs across the country and address what I hear on a regular basis: the want and the need in Canada for value-added refined bitumen right here at home. This is a huge win-win for Canada.

In fact, energy east would develop more than 14,000 jobs annually during the nine-year construction stage, and 1,300 of those full-time jobs would be in Alberta.

Unfortunately, the Liberal government is now causing further uncertainty in an industry already hit hard by low oil prices, as well as an Albertan carbon tax and a new royalty regime which may be announced tomorrow.

The downturn in the energy sector impacts all Canadians, but is hitting Albertans hardest of all, and it is only getting worse. While the Liberal government feels its lack of leadership in the resource sector is refreshing, Alberta's oil and gas sector is hurting. More than \$50 billion in investment has already left Alberta and the wealth transfer from Canada to the United States is about \$30 billion a year.

Now, this week, Statistics Canada has announced the initial job losses report for Alberta was incorrect. Instead of 14,000 job losses, it is now saying 19,000 Albertans have lost their jobs last year, the worst since the Liberals introduced the national energy program in the 1980s. Alberta's unemployment rate, once the envy of Canada, is expected to exceed 8% by the end of 2016.

One thing really caught my attention in the announcement yesterday. They made this announcement for the future of our children.

I remember growing up in Saskatchewan under an NDP government, and my dad saying, "Go to Alberta, take advantage of the Alberta advantage, and don't come back. There's nothing for you here."

I am very fearful that under this Liberal government's policy, I am going to have to tell the same thing to my kids, "You're going to have to leave Alberta because there are not jobs here for you."

*Statements by Members***YEAR OF THE MONKEY**

● (1355)

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to ask about part of the motion. It states that development in an environmentally sustainable way must be established to move forward with this process.

In the comments that I have heard from the last two speakers, I would like to get some definition as to what that exactly means, to move forward in an environmentally sustainable way. As well, does the member actually suggest that by bypassing public consultation, this would be moving in an environmentally sustainable way? Does the member also suggest that an environmental assessment process that in fact would respect and recognize public opinion, as well as recognize proper science, should also be bypassed?

● (1400)

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, nowhere in my speech did I say that we were going to bypass consultation or the regulatory regime. I said that we had one of the best regulatory regimes in the entire world. In fact, we are ranked in the top 10 oil-producing countries, according to the World Energy Council and the recent report from the Canadian Association for Petroleum Producers. Nowhere in my speech did I say we wanted the government to bypass these regimes.

The Conservatives are saying that there is a system in place. Why would the government add additional regulatory regimes that are already done by the provinces, including Alberta, world-renowned regulatory regimes? That is what we are saying. We should stick with the system that is already there, and stand up and show some support for this industry.

The Speaker: The member will have three minutes and 15 seconds remaining in questions and comments after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS*[English]***MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the approximately 60 students here from Queen's University who are visiting Parliament Hill today. These students are enrolled in the master of public administration program at Queen's, which is one of the leading policy study programs in our country.

I am happy to have such highly dedicated students within my riding of Kingston and the Islands. It is a privilege to represent students from one of Canada's oldest universities.

Their multidisciplinary studies focus on policy analysis, development, and implementation, which will prepare them for rewarding careers in the public and private sectors. Previous graduates have gone on to hold positions as ministers and senior officials in municipal, provincial and federal governments. They also provide leadership in hospitals, community organizations, and national associations across the country.

Although they are students today, they are no doubt the leaders of tomorrow.

Mr. Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am happy today to make my first statement in the House of Commons.

I first want to thank the residents of Edmonton Griesbach for electing me. I am proud to represent each and every one of them as their MP and as a member of Her Majesty's official opposition. We have a diverse collection of communities in Edmonton Griesbach, with rich cultures. I am very glad for that.

Today, I feel it is important to tell the House about some monkey business that is about to happen. Members should not worry as it has nothing to do with any political shenanigans. I just want to remind everyone that February 8 is the lunar new year, and this is the Year of the Monkey. I hope all members will join me in extending best wishes to all Canadians who are celebrating this lunar new year, the year of the monkey.

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*[Translation]***THÈRESE-DE BLAINVILLE**

Mr. Ramez Ayoub (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is the first time I have risen in the House, and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate my colleagues on getting elected. I also want to thank the people of my riding of Thérèse-De Blainville for putting their trust in me. I will fulfill my duties with respect, honour, and dedication. I also want to mention the outstanding contribution made by the many volunteers who worked on my election campaign and say a special and loving thank you to my family.

Based on my experience at the municipal level, there are three issues that I will focus my time and energy on in the coming months. With regard to employment and the economy, the aerospace industry is a major source of jobs in the Lower Laurentians region. I will always be available to ensure that this sector is running smoothly. With regard to health care services, it is clear that the Thérèse-De Blainville RCM has been dealing with a chronic resource deficit for far too long now. We need to ensure that we have all the medical staff required to bring service up to at least a minimum standard. With regard to transport, the work to complete Highway 19 between Laval and Bois-des-Filion has been pending for the past 40 years. I intend to work with the relevant entities to—

The Speaker: The member for Vancouver Kingsway.

* * *

● (1405)

*[English]***HOUSING**

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of the House an issue of monumental concern to my constituents, and indeed to all residents of the Lower Mainland of British Columbia: the crisis in housing.

Statements by Members

An entire generation of young people is unable to fulfill the dream of owning a home, seniors and families of all types cannot find appropriate housing at a reasonable cost, and renters are being priced right out of Vancouver. This is not only a problem of broken dreams; it poses a serious risk to the health of the British Columbian economy.

I call on the federal government to recognize this crisis and immediately take steps to address it. It can do this by building affordable housing on federal lands, by renewing co-op funding agreements and expanding co-op stock, and by investigating the impact of foreign capital on housing prices and the use of laundered or corrupt money being parked in Canada's real estate market.

Every Canadian deserves to live in decent, affordable and secure housing. It is our obligation as legislators to do everything we can to ensure that this is achieved.

* * *

[Translation]

GEORGES GAGNÉ

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (La Prairie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute posthumously to a man who put his stamp on the riding of La Prairie and who, sadly, died a few weeks ago.

Georges Gagné left his mark on municipal politics and was devoted to the people of Delson, whom he proudly represented for 36 years. First elected at the age of 49, he retired shortly before turning 85 because he felt that he had accomplished his goal, which was to give his community the resources it needed to flourish and become independent.

Today I join everyone in the municipality of Delson in extending my sincere condolences to his family and expressing my profound gratitude for the many years their father devoted to making Delson the municipality it is today.

* * *

PLACIDE POULIN

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a man of passion, one of the most influential businessmen in Beauce, Placide Poulin, who was just made a member of the Order of Canada. This inspired and inspiring native of Beauce is renowned even outside of our region. He is a leader, a builder, and a founder. For instance, he founded a company called MAAX. He has also mentored many young people. In his 2010 biography entitled *Le périple d'un gagnant*, a winner's journey, Mr. Poulin said that when you have a dream, you should not hesitate to make it happen.

He set to work, taking his own advice, and embraced the values that help people succeed, namely perseverance, determination, hard work, and innovation. Placide Poulin is a true son of Beauce: he has an acute sense of entrepreneurship, a taste for calculated risk and cautious adventure, an independent spirit, and a touch of stubbornness. Congratulations, Mr. Poulin.

[English]

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the men and women in my riding who day after day, week after week, serve the most vulnerable and needy by providing hot meals, clothing, and even shelter.

These organizations, being the Surrey Urban Mission, the Lookout Society, and Guru Nanaks Free Kitchen, work diligently and with minimal resources, but ensure that the most vulnerable of our population never go to sleep hungry. I have had the privilege to visit with these organizations and have witnessed first-hand their positive impact on our community.

I ask that all members of the House recognize our collective social responsibility and ensure the most vulnerable are not forgotten.

* * *

BASKETBALL

Mr. Raj Grewal (Brampton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak about a big event happening in Canada next month. For the first time in history, the NBA will be hosting an all-star game outside of the United States. The beautiful city of Toronto will be hosting the best players from around the world, including our very own, Kyle Lowry from the Toronto Raptors.

Basketball is growing in popularity all over our great nation, including in my home riding of Brampton East.

Sports has always been a way for young Canadians to learn the importance of teamwork, hard work, and dedication. In Brampton East, we have partnered with local youth organizations to host free community drop-in basketball on Sundays. It provides a safe environment, sense of community, and free physical activity for young Canadians who may not be able to access it otherwise.

I would like to invite all members of the House to come shoot some hoops in Brampton East.

* * *

● (1410)

LABOUR

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier today the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour introduced Bill C-4, an act to take away employees' rights to a secret ballot vote.

During the last Parliament, I introduced Bill C-525, the employees voting rights act, which would give every worker the right to a mandatory secret ballot vote to determine if they wanted to be in a union or not. After a series of secret closed-door meetings with their big union boss friends, today's announcement shows once again that the Liberals are only in it for their big union boss friends.

Canadians elect their politicians with a secret ballot. Five provinces currently use secret ballots in their labour laws. When unions tried to challenge this in Saskatchewan, Justice Richards said, “The secret ballot, after all, is a hallmark of modern democracy.” He also said, “a secret ballot regime does no more than ensure that all employees are able to make the choices they see as being best for themselves.”

We are getting a clearer picture of how the Liberals think when it comes to the democratic process and the outcomes of elections. They apparently only support models that ensure they get the outcomes they want.

* * *

MERITORIOUS SERVICE DECORATION

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to highlight the accomplishments of one of my constituents.

This past December, Marc Balevi of Hudson, Quebec was awarded the Governor General's Meritorious Service Decoration. As we know, this decoration is awarded to recognize remarkable contributions of those who are true mentors, those who have improved the quality of life of their community, and those who have brought honour to Canada.

Mr. Balevi, along with his partner, founded Canada Cycles for Kids. This unique organization pairs a passion for cycling with a willingness to raise much-needed funds by organizing cross-Canada fundraising tours.

To date, Mr. Balevi has raised over \$500,000 to benefit the Children's Wish Foundation of Canada.

I wish him the best of luck on behalf of the House.

* * *

[*Translation*]

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 100 years ago, Manitoban women won the right to vote for the first time.

Nellie McClung and her fellow suffragettes devoted many years to the cause. Initially, their demands went unanswered, but they persisted. Finally, on January 28, 1916, the right to vote was granted to some women in Manitoba.

The federal and provincial governments followed suit. Women in Quebec got the right to vote in 1940, and in 1960 women's suffrage became a reality across the country when aboriginal women finally achieved equality in this area.

This milestone anniversary is an opportunity to look at the considerable challenges that remain to be overcome. Even today, a significant wage gap disadvantages women, who remain under-represented in management positions and are far too often victims of violence.

As our Prime Minister renewed our commitment to equality—

The Speaker: Order.

Statements by Members

The hon. member for Portage—Lisgar.

* * *

[*English*]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today marks an important milestone for Canadians. One hundred years ago, Manitoba women were the first in Canada to be given the right to vote. Nellie McClung and the rest of the Famous Five were instrumental in helping women get the right to vote in Manitoba, and eventually across Canada. Nellie McClung actually lived for a short time in a small community called Manitou right in my riding of Portage—Lisgar. I am very proud to have such a large and important part of history in my riding.

Today more than ever before, women are in prominent leadership roles across the country. We are leaders among the G20 when it comes to female participation in the workforce. We are leading the way when it comes to education levels and standard of living. Being such leaders gives us a great opportunity to help women in other countries who are suffering and do not have the same rights and opportunities we have in Canada.

As Canadian women, it is our responsibility to continue to make strides to inspire the young women who come after us, just like Nellie McClung and the Famous Five did before us.

* * *

FINANCE

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, twice this month I had the pleasure of speaking with municipal, business, and community leaders from across the riding of Niagara Centre and the greater Niagara region about the government's upcoming budget and infrastructure investments. I had great success working with this team, as more than 60 community organizations and businesses participated in the discussions, as well as elected leaders from all 12 municipalities throughout the Niagara region.

I would like to thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance for lending his support and expertise to these discussions. I would also like to thank everyone in Niagara who attended the pre-budget consultations for their valuable input and I look forward to the opportunity to continue to bring the many voices of Niagara Centre to be heard in the House here in Ottawa.

* * *

● (1415)

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on January 28, 1916, Manitoba women became the first in Canada to win the right to vote and the right to hold provincial office, a historic achievement and the result of decades of struggle led by women like M.J. Benedictssen and, later on, Nellie McClung. Unfortunately, first nations women fought much longer to receive the right to vote in our province and country.

Oral Questions

As a Manitoban, I am proud of the way Manitoba women and Manitoba feminists have blazed the trail, from voting to human rights legislation, to family law, to child care, and access to abortion. Today, we acknowledge the women who fought decades ago and who fight every day for equality.

The fight must go on. We must put an end to the epidemic of missing and murdered indigenous women, to sexual violence against all women, to pay inequity, to poverty, to the lack of reproductive services, and the continued discrimination that indigenous, racialized, disabled, lesbian, and trans women face every day.

Today, let us be inspired by Manitoba women and take action to make gender equality a reality for us all.

* * *

[Translation]

ENERGY EAST PROJECT

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the time has come to carefully examine the issue of transporting oil by pipeline.

Of all the ways to transport oil, pipelines are the safest because of their rigorous technical standards for public safety and environmental protection.

In Quebec alone, many thousands of jobs providing a steady income for many families would be created, and more than \$900 million in tax revenue would be generated. That is even before the pipeline becomes operational.

The Prime Minister must show leadership on this issue and consult workers, who are the first victims of this new administrative burden.

In these times of economic instability, we must support businesses that create wealth and, above all, our families. This is not the time to stall the process.

* * *

[English]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 100th year of women's suffrage in Canada. On this day a century ago, a savvy group of Manitoba women succeeded in their campaign to give women the right to vote and hold political office, first in Manitoba, and three years later at the federal level, and only by the mid-twentieth century for indigenous peoples.

While we have made great strides since then, including gender parity in cabinet, in 2016 we still have glass ceilings to break. Women in this House represent 26% of all members. That places Canada at number 49 in the world, behind such countries as Afghanistan, Sudan, and Iraq. Together, with multi-party groups such as Equal Voice, we will work toward real parity in all aspects of public life.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Conservative Party oversaw the approval of four major pipeline projects that created jobs in every region. Yesterday, the Prime Minister showed the hundreds of thousands of people who are out of work across the country that the Liberal government does not understand the problem. The Prime Minister's plan is to add more levels of red tape and a never-ending series of moving goalposts.

Will the Prime Minister admit that his new process is simply designed to block job-creating energy projects?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the 21st century the only way to get big projects like pipelines built is to do them responsibly and sustainably. That is the lesson we learned from 10 years of the members opposite being unable to deliver for the province of Alberta, unable to get resources to tidewater.

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it seems that the Prime Minister is going to devastate the western economy with his own NEP, the no-energy program.

We are debating a Conservative motion today that would send a clear signal of support to out of work Canadians. The thousands of families who are enduring job losses need a champion to promote projects that would get them back to work.

The Prime Minister promised more free votes. Will he allow his members from Saskatchewan, Alberta, and New Brunswick to stand up and vote freely? Will he free the member for Wascana?

● (1420)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the motion that the members opposite have put forward is simply a rehash of their failed policies of the past 10 years. Not only did Canadians vote against those policies in the last election but we will vote against those policies today in the House of Commons.

[Translation]

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we cannot create jobs by inventing new barriers and new obstacles.

The Liberal plan that was announced yesterday does nothing to streamline the assessment process or make it more effective. Hundreds of thousands of families are desperate. The energy east project would be good for Quebec's economy.

Why is the Prime Minister more worried about the opinions of celebrities than those of unemployed Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, even after 10 years of failure, the Conservatives do not understand that we cannot create projects without the approval of the community, without working in partnership with the first nations, and without sound scientific evidence to reassure Canadians.

Oral Questions

The Conservatives refuse to accept that their approach does not work. Canadians and Albertans deserve better than what the Conservatives are offering.

* * *

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Liberal government said that upstream greenhouse gas emissions would be part of the transition assessment, but the Minister of Environment and Climate Change said that downstream GHGs would also be part of that assessment.

Did the minister misspeak? Could she confirm that downstream emissions will not be considered in the transition process announced yesterday or in the permanent new process that will be announced at a later date?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make it very clear that we consider our climate change obligations to be very serious. We have been clear that in this process we will, in our new interim principles, include upstream greenhouse gas emissions.

I am also happy to announce that I am meeting with environment ministers from across the country today, where we will be framing our new pan-Canadian climate change plan, which will include consideration of downstream greenhouse gas emissions.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, still more uncertainty for people whose jobs are in the balance, unfortunately.

Now there is another area of confusion with the announcement yesterday. The government said that additional roadblocks would be in place for Kinder Morgan and energy east. It also said that the minister would look at all other projects under way in the NEB process and determine if those proponents would also need this additional assessment, which would look like more interference.

Could the minister tell us how he will determine which other job-creating programs and projects will have to undergo this red tape?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday Canadians were offered a brand new image, and that was the image of the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Natural Resources standing next to each other talking about sustainably developing the energy sector and the Canadian economy. Since then, many Canadians have told us, including provincial leaders, industry leaders, environmentalists, and others, that this is the better approach and the only way in the long term to develop our resources.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, next week the Prime Minister intends to sign a Conservative trade deal that was negotiated in secret. However, in spite of calling for transparency before the election, the Liberals still have not released any economic impact study on the deal. In fact, according to recent reports, the Liberals are saying that they cannot find any economic impact study on the TPP. Meanwhile, independent studies have

suggested that the TPP could cost Canada as many as 60,000 good jobs.

Can the Prime Minister explain why he is willing to sign this deal without having seen an economic impact statement, when tens of thousands of good Canadian jobs are at risk?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, trade creates jobs for the middle class and growth for the Canadian economy. That is why we are a pro-trade party.

On the TPP deal, we have consistently said, throughout the campaign and since, that we will consult with Canadians and allow parliamentarians an opportunity to discuss the impact on their regions and on the future of this country.

In order to do so, however, we cannot stop debate on it. Therefore, we will be signing it as a way to consider it through ratification.

[Translation]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this agreement is bad for workers, bad for farmers, and bad for creators.

The economy is already in bad shape, and now nearly 60,000 good jobs are on the line if the trans-Pacific partnership is signed.

For someone who was elected on a campaign promise of transparency and change, the Prime Minister apparently has no problem signing an agreement negotiated behind closed doors.

Canadians know that signing an agreement signals our intention to abide by it. Does the Prime Minister often sign deals that he does not fully agree with?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this once again gives me the opportunity to explain to the member opposite that signing and ratifying an agreement are two completely different things.

In order to discuss and review this proposal, we have to move on to the next step. The member will then have the opportunity to make his arguments here in the House. We want to continue the discussion and that is why we are going to sign the agreement.

* * *

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thousands of Canadian families are struggling. They do not have jobs, do not qualify for employment insurance, and do not have adequate housing.

However, according to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, these Canadians may be forced to wait. Inequality is rising in our society, but the government chose to make tax cuts for the wealthy a priority.

Does the Prime Minister agree with his minister that many people will simply have to wait?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since January 1, 2016, millions of Canadians have been getting bigger paycheques as a result of our tax cuts for the middle class. To pay for this tax cut, we increased taxes on the wealthiest 1% of Canadians. I am still surprised that the NDP does not support this measure, since we normally all agree with the principle of asking those who are successful to do a little more for those in need.

[English]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, here is the fact: in the first 100 days since the election, it was tax breaks for the rich that made the list of urgent priorities, because if they make \$200,000 a year, they got the maximum benefit. A family earning \$45,000 got nothing.

However, low-income seniors have also been left struggling with their rent and rising grocery bills. This, in spite of Liberal campaign promises to boost the guaranteed income supplement "immediately".

The Minister of Families, Children and Social Development warns, "There will be things that will have to wait". So the question is clear: is it immediately, or tough luck this time?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian people elected this government with a clear mandate to support our seniors, to grow the middle class, to give help to those who need it by asking those who are doing well to do a little bit more.

That is exactly what we are going to do. I look forward to our Minister of Finance presenting a budget that includes help for seniors, investments in infrastructure, and growth for the middle class.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a sad day for Canadian democracy and accountability. This morning, the government announced that it would repeal two fundamental labour laws. The first is the law to allow union members to vote by secret ballot, and the second requires union bosses to be accountable. Today it became clear that the Liberal Party is thanking the big union bosses for spending millions of dollars against the Conservative Party. That is the reality of the Liberal Party.

How can the government go along with this lack of democracy and accountability? It is completely unacceptable.

[English]

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was my pleasure today to try to right some of the wrongs of the past. Earlier today I introduced legislation in this House to repeal Bill C-377 and Bill C-525, both a direct attack on the Canadian labour movement.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk: Our government intends to—

• (1430)

[Translation]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when someone has a hard time answering, that is because there are problems with transparency, accountability, and democracy.

Something interesting came to light this morning. The Commissioner of Canada Elections revealed that Unifor Local 524 made a non-monetary contribution to the Liberal Party of Canada, which is forbidden because the organization is not an eligible donor.

This kind of behaviour lowers democratic and accountability standards. How many other fishy manoeuvres like this one will never be made public?

[English]

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to inform the House that we have introduced two bills to respond to attacks on the labour movement that were unwarranted, uncalled for, and undemocratic.

This was not called for by industry or labour. The repealing of these two bills will bring back fairness and balance.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the minister is confused about where her priorities should be. Why? It has come to light today that the Liberals received illegal union donations during the election.

This morning, the minister was repaying her union friends. She announced the Liberals have made it their priority to remove accountability and transparency from government.

The Liberal government had no intention to keep its commitment for accountability and transparency. Why is it important to reward union leaders rather than to come up with a plan to get Canadians back to work?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member knows full well that confusing a meritorious public policy and legislative change was an accident that happened during the election in terms of compliance.

Let us be very clear. At the very moment that this was brought to our attention, the party followed the law, reimbursed the Receiver General, and the appropriate union signed a compliance agreement with the commissioner.

That is something that the members opposite had a very difficult time doing.

Oral Questions

The Speaker: Yesterday was really good, folks. Let us get back to that nice tone of respect, because we hear things that we do not like sometimes. I am sure that in private meetings that happens too, and we can control ourselves. Let us try to do that and let us listen to the member for Foothills.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is very clear is why the Liberals' priority is to reward union leadership. Just today, we found out that the unions illegally donated to the Liberals' campaign. It is no wonder that the Liberals want to hide this information from Canadians by repealing legislation that imposes transparency and accountability on union members.

Why do Liberals have so much time to defend union leadership but no time to come up with a plan to get Canadians, to get Albertans, back to work?

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it appears that there was a lot of time spent by the previous government looking at unfair, unjust attacks on the labour movement.

In this case, we are looking at a bill that was put together that attacks the labour movement. It makes it more difficult to certify and much easier to decertify.

That is not fair and balanced, and these bills need to be repealed.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the government seems blindly determined to normalize relations with the Iranian regime, I wonder whether the Minister of Foreign Affairs is aware of the latest poisonous utterances by the regime's supreme leader. Yesterday, on International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Ayatollah Khamenei posted a video on his website questioning the slaughter of six million Jews by the Nazis.

Does the minister really believe he can engage in a meaningful dialogue with a regime that not only denies history but regularly calls for the destruction of Israel?

• (1435)

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member, who I had the pleasure of meeting last night at the ParlAmericas conference, where our diplomacy was in fine form.

As Minister Dion has stated, Canada needs to engage on the international stage—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for mentioning the minister's name.

As the minister has stated, Canada needs to engage on the international stage much more than before. Engagement takes different forms, and in our case, it does not mean that we agree with all of Iran's policies, by any stretch, but it is a pathway toward economic opportunity and dialogue and possibly regional security, and we are not going to give up.

The Speaker: This is a good chance to remind those who give advice to parliamentary secretaries or those drafting questions to

refer to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and not to the name of the minister. However, I am glad the member noted that as she replied.

The member for Thornhill.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, given the government's vague intention to end sanctions against Iran, it is time for some specific answers.

Which of Canada's two dozen prohibitions against the Iranian regime does the government plan to lift? Given new U.S. sanctions, provoked by Iran's ballistic missile tests, will Canada now look the other way as Iran works on a weapon aimed at Israel? Finally, does the government really intend to delist Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism?

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely currently reviewing our sanctions against Iran, and as part of this review, we are exercising rigour in ensuring that any changes do not open the door to trade in proliferation-sensitive goods and services, of course. However, we are acting in concert with our allies, like the UN, like the United States, like Europe. We feel it is an important signal. Our foreign policy is based on talking, something that the opposition was not that good at in the past.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brousseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change will be meeting with her provincial counterparts to talk about climate change. Since returning from Paris, the minister has not told us what Canada's targets are. Yesterday, the minister announced that impact on climate change would be a component of pipeline project assessments, but she said nothing about acceptable greenhouse gas emissions targets.

Can the minister tell us if the government is planning to introduce ambitious new targets or carry on with the old Conservative ones?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

We need a pan-Canadian plan to tackle climate change. That is what we are working on. I am very pleased to be meeting with my colleagues from all corners of the country today to talk about the plan.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in December, at the climate change conference in Paris, Canada committed to a 1.5-degree rise in global temperature. Yesterday the minister announced pipeline reviews that would include climate tests but could not say what a pass or fail would actually look like. A test only matters if they know how they are being graded.

The minister knows full well that current provincial efforts are not enough to meet the weak goal that Canada currently has. Canadians want to know the real impact a climate test could have for a government that does not even have a climate target.

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for joining me in Paris at the climate conference and also for his useful comments.

We are committed to taking action on climate change. That is why I am meeting today with my colleagues from across the country to talk about what a pan-Canadian plan would be. It would be irresponsible to come up with a new target without actually having a plan to implement it, as the Conservatives did.

* * *

● (1440)

*[Translation]***FINANCE**

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, National Bank economists announced that the federal deficit will reach \$50 billion in the next two years.

It is disappointing that the current Minister of Finance still believes in the old Keynesian theories whereby more government spending will lead to greater prosperity and that he is still applying them. Canadians know that spending more money will not make our country wealthier.

Why is the Minister of Finance applying old theories and getting the government into more debt? These deficits will not create wealth.

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we now know that our economic growth is lower than anticipated. Therefore, it is important to have a plan to improve our situation.

Our first step was a tax cut for the middle class, which will put more money in the pockets of nine million Canadians. The second step will also be good for the economy. We are introducing the Canada child tax benefit, which will help nine out of 10 families and hundreds of thousands of children who live in poverty.

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance no longer has any credibility. During the election campaign, he said that tax cuts would be revenue neutral for the government. Today, all Canadians know that \$1.7 billion has been added to the Liberal deficit.

If the government wants to create wealth, it should start by creating stable and productive economic conditions for entrepreneurs and businesses, not putting Canada into a never-ending debt spiral. That is not the solution. Instead, we should control public spending.

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a plan to grow the economy, and we have already started.

In the 2016 budget, we will introduce infrastructure investments that will help us increase economic growth.

[English]

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance was wrong when he said his government had inherited a deficit. His own department states that, from April to October, the federal government posted a surplus of \$600 million. It is in black and white, posted publicly on its website and available for all to see.

We Conservatives left a surplus. Did the parliamentary secretary, in answering my question, wilfully mislead the House? If so, will he stand in his place, correct the record, and apologize?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity in December to introduce an economic and fiscal update to make absolutely clear the situation we inherited from the members across the aisle.

We inherited a deficit, a deficit of \$3 billion. Ten failed years of low growth have led us to a situation where we have failed to make the investments that will allow us to grow the economy.

We have a new plan, one that will lead us to a place where we can actually grow the economy, to put Canadians in a better place in the future.

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is shocking to hear this wrongful denial. The Liberals cannot even get a handle on their own baseline numbers. His own department is reporting a \$600 million surplus for the first half of 2015. The Parliamentary Budget Officer forecasted a \$1.2 billion surplus for the year, yet the finance minister and the parliamentary secretary appear to be working from a different set of numbers.

These are taxpayers' dollars, and Canadians deserve transparency. Could the parliamentary secretary explain where he got his numbers?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians decided in October that they do in fact deserve transparency. They elected a new government that committed to being fair, open, and transparent. We immediately came out with an update to the numbers, so that Canadians could understand the situation we are actually in. We have seen a continued deterioration in our economic situation, which is a result of 10 years of failed policies.

Happily for Canadians, we can now move to a new set of policies that will make a real difference for the future of our country.

• (1445)

[Translation]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the federal government systematically discriminated against indigenous children for years. In order to implement this week's decision, the government must take meaningful action immediately. We need to see an entire cultural shift in all government institutions. Other cases are still before the courts regarding access to education and health care.

What specific actions has the government taken since Tuesday to finally respect the rights of indigenous children?

[English]

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we realized the chronic underfunding that has existed in first nations, for many first nations children. We are very concerned about this, and for the first time our government is in a position to be able to take action. We are committed to investing more in first nations children in Canada, so that they too can have that equal opportunity, as all other Canadian children have.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on the very day that the Human Rights Tribunal ruled on the systemic discrimination against indigenous children, officials in Health Canada told a little indigenous girl named Kendall that they would not pay for badly needed orthodontic surgery. Now Kendall also has an ocular tumour and needs special drops to save her vision. The response from the officials was “absolutely not”. I ask myself, as a parent, how that is possible.

For the health minister, what steps has she taken to issue directives to her ministers to make it right for Kendall and all the other children who are still being denied basic rights every single day?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the House has heard repeatedly that our government is absolutely committed to restoring the inequitable status that many indigenous peoples have faced in child care, in health care, and in many other capacities. I will certainly look into the situation that the hon. member has brought to my attention. I will look into that and bring back news to the House with details as to how we will respond.

* * *

[Translation]

LABOUR

Mr. Rémi Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the rights of workers in my riding of Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia were violated for nearly a decade because of the Conservatives' anti-union positions.

Can the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour tell the House what measures our government is taking to better protect the rights of workers?

[English]

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that today we announced legislation to repeal

Oral Questions

two bills, which attacked the labour movement, by the former Conservative government and that these two bills will restore fairness and balance to the workplace, encouraging a stronger economy, which I hope every member of the House is working toward.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister said, with regard to the Syrian refugee initiative, that the government had “briefed” the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. ambassador to Canada and that there is “a very open line of communication directly to the White House”.

What was the scope of these briefings? Who is the government communicating with in the White House administration, and have American officials raised any concerns with the government plan, and if so, what are they?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, very early in the going, as we were putting together the Syrian refugee initiative, we were communicating in a steady way with the American administration. They submitted a number of enquiries, which we were able to answer satisfactorily, and the line of communications remains open to this day. If the Americans have a concern, they are perfectly entitled to raise it, and we will make sure that the issues are properly addressed, as they are.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, section 94 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act requires the government to annually present to Parliament a report that includes the government's desired immigration levels. Even in 2008, when a general election was held in October, this report was tabled on November 28 of that year. Today is January 28, a full two months later than this report has ever been tabled since the act came into force. Is the government delaying its release because it will show a significant reduction in provincial nominee program levels and other economic immigration streams?

• (1450)

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I assure the hon. member that the levels plan will indeed be presented to Parliament well before the deadline date. We are working on this. One of the things to come out of it, as I mentioned earlier, is an astounding, unacceptable increase in the processing times, particularly for spouses. One of the things that will come out of our plan is a determined effort to bring down those processing times, which skyrocketed under 10 years of Conservative rule.

Oral Questions

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Syrian refugees are being abandoned by the Liberal government in cramped, temporary accommodations. Can the minister confirm if in fact in London, Ontario, one of the hotels in which these refugees are being housed is located next door to a gentlemen's club, which features exotic dancers? Can the minister tell Canadians how much these so-called temporary accommodations are costing taxpayers?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that my government looks into every item of that nature. However, the best summary was provided by a refugee from Syria, currently staying in a Toronto hotel, who was reported as saying this by the media today:

I'm just happy to be here. The tiny room I had in Lebanon was not safe....

I was suffering in Lebanon for two years. Compared to there, this is heaven. Of course, we all want to settle down quickly, but the wait is OK.

That is from a refugee, and it is a very good answer.

The Speaker: Order, please. I would encourage all members to assist the Speaker in maintaining order by choosing their words carefully.

The hon. member for Markham—Unionville.

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister claimed that bringing 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada was only a matter of political will. From November 1 to December 14, 2015, the government brought in a grand total of 105 government-assisted Syrian refugees.

Can the minister explain why it broke its biggest election promise and now sees government-sponsored refugees spending weeks in hotels as perfectly normal?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it seems the Conservatives have trouble figuring out whether we are doing it too fast or too slow. However, as I have said to Canadians many times, it is more important to do it right than to do it fast. We are certainly doing it right in terms of security and health. I can guarantee Canadians that the full 25,000 Syrian refugees will be on Canadian soil before the end of February.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals and Conservatives have approved thousands of takeovers of Canadian companies by foreign interests.

Recently, Allstream, a Canadian company with a fibre optic network that carries confidential data on thousands of Canadians, was sold to an American firm. The upshot is that sensitive information will now be subject to American surveillance.

Why did the government authorize that sale without even conducting a national security review?

Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member was not part of the team that formed the government following the October 19 election. Perhaps she is not

aware that every investment by a foreign company in a Canadian firm is subject to careful review under the Investment Canada Act.

That is all I can say on the matter because, under the provisions of that legislation, I cannot disclose any commercial confidences.

• (1455)

[English]

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals and the Conservatives have rubber-stamped countless foreign takeovers, and it seems the new government will be no different. Manitoba's Allstream owns a fibre optic network that carries the confidential information of the federal government and countless Canadians. However, the Liberals just stood by as it was sold to an American company, putting that information at risk of U.S. surveillance. The previous government blocked an earlier attempt based on national security concerns, so why is the Liberal minister refusing to do a review to protect Canadians?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, security screening is part of the process. That is in the law, and the Government of Canada follows the law.

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2010, the previous Conservative government passed legislation to ensure that convicted child sexual predators would never be able to apply for a pardon. This week, Canadians were horrified to see that an infamous serial child rapist was granted day parole.

The Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness has indicated that the government will make it easier for criminals like that to get pardons. Why would the Liberal government do that?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, public safety is always the consideration. We will look at the changes that were made by the previous government in terms of the waiting times and the fees that were charged to see if they were effective in the administering of public policy or whether they were intended for some other purpose. We will base our decisions on evidence, not on ideology and not on bias.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the survivors of Graham James and other child sexual predators will never be able to forget the crimes inflicted upon them. We were reminded of that this week when Graham James was granted parole.

Why is the government standing up for the rights of criminals like Graham James instead of their survivors?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the issue arising most recently with respect to James is a parole matter, not a pardon. I would indicate to the House that the pardon previously granted to this offender was a decision of the previous government.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are 16 children in the Democratic Republic of Congo who have been adopted by Canadian families. They are waiting for exit visas and the DRC has refused to issue them. Now there is legislation before the Congolese parliament that could force these Canadian families to wait years more.

Will the Prime Minister pick up the phone, call President Kabila, and request 16 exit visas?

Mr. Omar Alhabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is an important matter that our government is seized with. The foreign affairs minister has been in contact with the foreign affairs minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo. We have raised this issue. We will continue to monitor the situation and we will follow it up. Any new changes will be reported to the House.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, residents in my riding of the Northwest Territories, as well as other northern and remote areas of Canada, live with the reality of a very high cost of living. One way to help address this challenge is through our tax system, specifically the northern residents deductions.

Could the Minister of National Revenue please advise the House of the commitment to increase the northern residents deductions?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the voters of Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, who have placed their trust in me to represent them.

I thank my colleague from Northwest Territories for the question.

During the election we campaigned on increasing the deduction for northern residents. It is a priority. Canada's north and the people who live there can count on our government to help families living in remote areas contribute to the economy and benefit from Canada's economic growth.

* * *

• (1500)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on January 15, six Canadians from the Quebec City region lost their lives in a terrorist attack in Burkina Faso.

Since the beginning of this tragedy, the government has failed the victims. No government representative attended the vigil in memory of the victims. Yesterday, the minister from the Quebec City region refused to confirm whether he or a government representative would attend the funeral. The people in the Quebec City region are anxious to have their government take an interest in them.

Oral Questions

While respecting the families' wishes, can the minister help his government save face and confirm that he, the Prime Minister, or one of his cabinet colleagues will attend the funeral?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. It gives me the opportunity to say how moved the Canadian government and I were by the sadness and suffering of our families in Quebec City. These deaths occurred under extremely difficult circumstances thousands of kilometres away from home. This was a tragedy for the families and friends, for the entire Quebec City region, and for the entire Canadian government.

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CANADA POST

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister reminded the House that he promised to put a moratorium on the changes at Canada Post. That is strange, because during the election campaign, the Prime Minister stood in front of Mayor Denis Coderre and promised to, and I quote, "save home mail delivery".

Will the minister honour the Prime Minister's word and restore home delivery, or will this promise be broken?

[English]

Hon. Judy Foote (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to carrying out an independent review of Canada Post, which will look at every entity, every aspect of Canada Post. It will be done independently. I cannot imagine that my colleague would be adverse to that.

It is important we have a Canada Post that delivers services that Canadians expect, and at a reasonable cost.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. David Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign, I was proud of our commitment to grant immediate permanent residency to spouses who have been sponsored to immigrate to Canada. A number of my constituents are waiting on these regulatory changes to be reunited with their loved ones, whom they have not seen for years in some cases. Can the Minister of Immigration share his plans on this issue?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his great question. Obviously, when spouses entering Canada have a conditional status, they are at risk of domestic violence because they have no status here. The government is determined to change that, so that all spouses who enter Canada immediately become permanent residents.

Business of the House

[English]

THE SENATE

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when I asked the minister a couple of days ago about why the government had baked so much secrecy into its Senate appointment process, she responded by hiding behind the courts.

Her suggestion that the courts had interpreted the Constitution to require secrecy at any stage, let alone at all stages, of the appointment process is just wrong. What the Supreme Court actually says, in paragraph 50 of its Senate reference ruling, is that the practice of appointing senators on the advice of the Prime Minister is nothing more than a non-justiciable convention.

Given that the courts do not require it, what is the real reason for all the secrecy?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not share the hon. member's cynicism, and with good reason.

The new independent, non-partisan, merit-based, open and transparent process we have introduced is in the capable hands of nine of eminent Canadians who make up the advisory board, individuals like Dr. Dawn Lavell-Harvard, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada. We believe that the presence of new non-partisan senators will enhance the effectiveness of this important democratic institution.

* * *

● (1505)

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in Paris, the Prime Minister promised to help fight climate change. Yesterday, the government said that it wanted to consider the increase in greenhouse gas emissions related to the TransCanada pipeline project. In addition to putting more than 800 Quebec waterways at risk, this project would increase the production of oil from the oil sands and the associated greenhouse gas emissions by 40%. When will the Prime Minister realize that the construction of the energy east pipeline goes against the objectives that he set for himself in Paris?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are really proud of the work that we accomplished in Paris and the ambitious agreement that was reached. I was there along with colleagues from all of the parties. Our government will rebuild Canadians' trust in the environmental assessment process. We are going to look at greenhouse gas emissions as part of our assessment process, and we are going to ensure that we have Canadians' trust.

* * *

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the CBC has suffered major funding cuts over the past few years, which are now jeopardizing the quality of programming, as well as accessibility and regional news in Quebec. The Liberals repeatedly promised during the election campaign to restore and enhance

funding for the CBC, and they have continued to make that promise since they took office.

On behalf of artists and the general public in particular, I am asking the minister whether she intends to keep her promise to—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for that important question.

I want to reassure the House that we are going to reinvest in CBC/Radio-Canada, because unlike the previous government, we believe in that corporation. That is why I am going to work with stakeholders to hold consultations on how best to support CBC/Radio-Canada in its digital transformation.

* * *

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Brian Kenny, Minister of Environment and Local Government for the Province of New Brunswick, and the Hon. Tom Nevakshonoff, Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship for the Province of Manitoba.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: I would also like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the winners of the million-dollar 2016 Arctic Inspiration Prize, consisting of members from the groups Tri-Territorial Training Project, Better Hearing in Education for Northern Youth, and Qaggiq: Nurturing the Arctic Performing Arts.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: I would like to take this opportunity to remind all members that as part of the members' orientation program, the Service Fair is taking place until 4:00 p.m. in the committee rooms off the Hall of Honour area. The Service Fair features more than 30 kiosks presenting key resources available to you and your employees to help you manage your offices and carry out your parliamentary work.

* * *

● (1510)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The Speaker: I want to say this to the House leaders, who could pass this on to the whips, that right after question period is a good time for the whips not to leave but to stick around to make sure that members leave if they are going to be talking. Otherwise if they want to sit and listen, of course, that is to be encouraged.

Now I am happy to turn for a brief question for the opposition House leader. I trust that he and the government House leader will stick to the issues of the day, the facts, and not any embellishments.

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know if that has ever happened in this chamber before.

Business of Supply

I have a very simple question. I know this is the part of Thursdays that members look forward to the most. I simply want to ask the government House leader if he can update the House as to the business for the rest of the week and into next week.

I know he has already informed the House that the principle of secret ballots is so offensive to Liberals that they are going to repeal that very important legislation, but I just want to know if there are other pieces of legislation that he may be bringing forward next week as well.

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in spite of his best efforts, we just had a good example of embellishment right there. Why do I not focus on the very erudite question that comes on Thursdays that I know members look forward to all week.

[Translation]

This afternoon we will resume debate on the Conservative Party's opposition motion.

[English]

Tomorrow, the House will debate Bill C-2, which amends the Income Tax Act, at second reading, and we will continue that important debate on Monday.

Tuesday, February 2, will be another opposition day.

On Wednesday, we will debate Bill C-4, which repeals the Conservatives' unfair union bills. As colleagues know, this important legislation was introduced this morning.

[Translation]

Lastly, Thursday, February 4, will be another opposition day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—ENERGY EAST PIPELINE PROJECT

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: We have 3 minutes 15 seconds remaining in questions and comments.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Souris—Moose Mountain is a riding in Saskatchewan where the pipeline will go. The pipeline is coming through a community called Moosomin. Moosomin is supposed to get a receipt and delivery terminal, otherwise known as a tank farm, which will accommodate 1.05 million barrels of oil.

In the two-year process of building this tank farm, there are projected to be 150 jobs, which will come from local welders, builders, and construction.

I would ask the member if he could comment on where he sees other losses in the industry as this progresses.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, the misnomer about the energy east project is that it is all about Alberta and Quebec. The fact is that this is a project that will impact Alberta,

Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and the Atlantic provinces. This is a project that will bring \$55 billion over its 20-year lifespan to the Canadian economy.

This is not just about big business, but will impact rural communities across the western, eastern, and Atlantic Canadian provinces. This is going to mean jobs in small towns. This is going to mean jobs in construction, hotels, and restaurants. The ripple effect of these kinds of projects impact almost every Canadian in these provinces.

• (1515)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we need to realize that when the Conservatives had their majority government, they were unsuccessful at building an inch of a pipeline. That is the reality. They can swing their fingers all they want. They did not even get an inch.

Why does the member believe the Conservative government was such a failure to the industry that needed to be able to get its natural resources to tidewater?

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, I certainly did not say that our Conservative government was a failure when it came to the natural resource sector. If anything, we were a success story. We built four pipelines during our 10 years in government—four not zero. Yesterday the Liberal government pretty much stood up to the resource sector and said that it would be building zero pipelines during its term.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my hon. colleague from London West.

On October 19, Canadians elected a new government. Canadians voted for real change. They voted for a government that does politics differently. They made it clear that they wanted a throne speech that clearly articulated a future in which “a clean environment and a strong economy go hand in hand”.

[Translation]

That is what we are doing. We have a new approach that balances economic prosperity and environmental protection, because Canadians were disappointed in the processes over the last 10 years.

The price of oil has dropped to its lowest in more than a decade, investments in the oil sector have been cancelled or delayed, and good jobs are disappearing in a sector that is extremely important to Canada's future. That is the legacy of the Conservatives' failure in the energy sector.

[English]

The Government of Canada's announcement of our approach makes our principles clear. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change was clear, as was the Minister of Natural Resources, that the economy, the environment, and the voices of Canadians will finally be heard when the government makes decisions on major natural resource projects.

Business of Supply

If an investor has already submitted an application to a responsible authority such as the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, the National Energy Board, or the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, we will not require that investor to return to the starting line.

Under the Conservative government, companies expended too much time and too many resources on preparing to invest in Canada.

[*Translation*]

The government announced that deadlines would not take precedence over results. We will introduce effective environmental assessments. We will make the right changes to the assessments to improve consultation with the aboriginal peoples and the communities that are along the proposed routes of these projects.

That is a fair solution. Natural resources and the environment are a key part of our wealth as a nation. The development of these resources should not have a negative impact on the environment.

I will be frank: the Liberal government is committed to keeping the energy sector as the driving force behind jobs, national prosperity, and opportunities for all Canadians, because it is 2016.

This balanced approach to economic power and environmental management will make Canada a proud and prosperous country. It is the essence of our vision for the country's future. The energy sector creates jobs and economic growth across the country.

[*English*]

In 10 budget round tables that I held in Edmonton recently, the message was clear that our government must create a process that earns the confidence of Canadians so that we can grow the Canadian economy. Yesterday's announcement creates those favourable winning conditions for all Canadians.

What will truly benefit the prospects for the energy east pipeline is a robust environmental assessment process that tackles the issues of climate change and fully engages Canadians. This will work to restore public confidence and support from coast to coast to coast.

We need to approach resource development in the same way that we approached the building of railroads more than a century ago, a nation-building project at a critical moment in Canada's history. Our government's interim approach does just that. It is about fulfilling our promise to indigenous peoples and our commitment to engage industry in our approach. This is a historic moment for our country. This is a historic opportunity.

• (1520)

[*Translation*]

We are ushering in a new attitude with respect to the development of Canada's resources, one that protects our environmental heritage, respects the rights of aboriginal peoples, and supports the resilience and sustainability of the energy sector.

We have promised to work in partnership with the provinces, territories, and municipalities to set firm greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets. That is what we are doing.

We have promised to bridge the gap between the regions and the sectors to create a pan-Canadian framework to fight climate change. That is what we are doing.

We must not fool ourselves: the energy sector changes with the circumstances. A low-carbon economy, as desirable and inevitable as that may be, will always need Canada's abundant energy.

The means of extracting, processing, and transporting energy to markets will change so that sustainability becomes the inescapable context of our economic activity. The Minister of Natural Resources is making necessary changes to the regulatory and policy regimes to ensure that our natural resources are developed in a responsible, sustainable manner.

We need to trust that our environmental assessment regime is transparent and science-based in order to properly build the infrastructure needed to transport our resources to global markets. The future development of our resources depends on sound environmental management today.

[*English*]

The world changed when 195 countries came together last year in Paris to sign a historic, ambitious, and balanced approach to combat climate change. We have to be realistic about how we do business. We can no longer talk about economic growth in Canada without talking about environmental sustainability. We will not have the market access we seek, nor the social licence we need, without getting it right on the environment. It is that simple.

After 10 years of inaction we will re-establish our credibility on the world stage on climate change. We will lead on clean technology and we will deliver on our promise to all Canadians to protect our environment.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague and friend on his speech and remind him of what big shoes he fills. The hon. Laurie Hawn was the previous MP for his riding. He was a friend and mentor to me in the House of Commons and my former RCAF MP seat mate, so he is dearly missed. However, I welcome this member.

We are talking about the economy, energy, and the future of Canada's economy. The member talked about there being a new attitude in town. It is that attitude that concerns me. The Prime Minister attended Davos, the most important meeting in the world, and made light of our resource economy, which probably fuels most of the economic development in the member's city. He mocked it by saying that we are resourceful now, that we do not need that dirty stuff in the ground. Why does the member not speak up to the Prime Minister, tell him the importance of this project not just for western Canada but for Atlantic Canada, and follow Frank McKenna's guidance when he said that energy east is nation building at its best? Will the member do that?

Business of Supply

• (1525)

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the member opposite and I honour the work that Laurie Hawn did in this great chamber. I also would also note that the former deputy prime minister and former minister of natural resources, Anne McLellan, is also from Edmonton Centre. Therefore, I indeed hope to fulfill great expectations in the chamber on behalf of Edmonton, Alberta and the whole country.

As the member opposite will know from my remarks, it is very clear that my colleagues and I see building pipelines and getting natural resources to tidewater as a nation-building exercise, but only when the process has the confidence of Canadians and when we employ the new triple E, which is the economy, the environment, and energy.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Liberal government has been talking about restoring the confidence of Canadians in the environmental assessment process around these pipelines. Yesterday, at a hastily called news conference, it announced what it called a new process. However, it will not change anything with the NEB assessment process at all. There is nothing to address questions that companies refuse to answer, nothing to talk about documents that are not available in both official languages, and nothing to restore cross-examination. I wonder if he could explain why Canadians would think there is a restoration of credibility in the process when the NEB process is really untouched.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Madam Speaker, our government has been clear and methodical in its approach to making sure that we balance the environment with the development of natural resources. Our government has been clear that there will be a transparent process for refreshing and renewing the National Energy Board program.

The Minister of Environment is meeting today with her provincial counterparts to make sure that any process we move forward with will respect our government's commitment at COP21 and will balance the economic needs of the country. Our government has a balanced approach and that is what we will deliver.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, could the member comment on how important it is to Canada's economy that we do this right, that we have that balance with the environment and our natural resources in ensuring that they get to market?

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Madam Speaker, to be personal for a moment, my father worked for 10 years in the oil sands of Alberta, running the largest gravel pit in North America for Albion Sands. My brother worked with him. My father passed away in that part of the country. I know the dedication that men and women are putting into the natural resources sector from coast to coast to coast.

The impact on our country is substantial. This is our number one exporting sector, with \$130 billion in exports, the next largest sector being the auto sector at \$62 billion. We must get this right. We will only get this right in conjunction with the environment. That is our approach, and that is what we will do.

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today and speak as the member of Parliament for London West.

I want to take a few moments before I address this important subject to thank the people of London West for putting their faith in me and the new Liberal government to bring about the changes needed, moving forward. The team of volunteers who supported me throughout the nomination and election campaign were superb, and I count many of them now as my friends.

I also want to thank my family for believing in me and encouraging me to follow my dream and help make Canada the best that it can be. To my children, Lauren and Billy and my partner Brian, words cannot express how their love has energized me to continue fighting for what is right. I will do everything in my power to provide my twin grandsons, Harrison and Francis, with the greatest country in the world. We are blessed to be born in Canada, but as our Prime Minister has said, we can always do better.

London West has two rail lines running through it, making the safe transportation of dangerous goods all the more important to my constituents. I want to take a few minutes now to address how the transportation of dangerous goods program can support jobs and economic security.

The government has promised Canadians that we will bring real change in both what we do and how we do it. Canadians sent a clear message in this election, and our platform offered a new ambitious plan for a strong and growing middle class and a revitalized economy.

The government is working on the delivery of a newly focused building Canada fund that will make greater investments in Canada's roads, bridges, transportation corridors, ports, and border gateways, helping Canada's manufacturers get their goods to market, and supporting jobs and growth in this country.

We will also focus on areas to enhance rail safety in the transportation of dangerous goods. Keeping goods and services moving supports jobs and growth in our community. We need to do this by maintaining the highest standards of safety and security. Protecting public safety is essential for ensuring continued access to markets. That helps to preserve Canadian jobs and grow the economy. Dangerous goods remain an essential part of our modern-day life and our economy. It is a \$50-billion industry that needs a harmonized safety plan to gain access to world markets. Getting crude oil to international markets and Canadian refineries remains an important part of our economy that provides Canadian jobs. We will remain vigilant and make sure crude oil moves through our communities safely.

Business of Supply

The government is listening to all Canadians as it begins to take further action to enhance rail safety and the transportation of dangerous goods. The foundation of any safety program is its act, regulations, and standards. The Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act, 1992 is the best regulatory framework to enable the safe transport of crude oil to domestic and international markets, efficiently, effectively, and safely. The act provides the federal government with the authority to develop policy, verify compliance, conduct research to enhance safety, guide emergency response, as well as to develop regulations and standards to manage risk and promote public safety. It does all this while mitigating the consequences of an incident during the transportation of dangerous goods.

Transport Canada's dangerous goods program is based on solid foundation. Properly classifying a dangerous good and ensuring that the dangerous good is transported in the required means of containment are essential elements for safe transport. Other important safety elements for protecting public safety include emergency response assistance plans to assist municipalities and aboriginal communities in the event of an incident, proper documentation, safety marks, incident reporting, and training.

Transport Canada also leads the development of dangerous goods regulations for Canada. The transportation of dangerous goods regulations adopted by all provinces and territories established the regulatory requirements for all modes of transport including rail, road, marine, and air within Canada. There is no question that it is the government's responsibility to protect the safety of Canadians who travel on the rails, live near railway tracks, and operate the railway.

• (1530)

Since the tragic incident in Lac-Mégantic, Transport Canada has taken many actions to enhance public safety. However, our work is not completed. In the coming days, weeks, and months, we will be working with Transport Canada officials to further enhance public safety. We will ensure that jurisdictions have access to proper dangerous goods information, that our regulations and standards are up to date and appropriate to reflect the changing needs of our economy, and that we have the appropriate support for first responders following any incident involving dangerous goods.

There are approximately 30 million dangerous goods shipments annually in Canada. While most make it to their destination without any incident, we must continue our efforts to enhance safety for all Canadians.

The previous government's approach resulted in a budget reduction of 20% for rail safety over the last five years. This was unacceptable and put Canadian communities at risk. We have to ensure that our transport routes are the safest they can be. We will make sure that municipalities have the support and necessary resources to deal with crises should they occur.

Finally, our government will continue to work with all stakeholders through Transport Canada, from municipalities to provincial governments, industry, international governments, and agencies, to ensure we have the most appropriate and effective safety regime available to protect Canadians. We must protect and grow our economy but we must do it in a way that protects our citizens. That is

why this government will seek to develop and listen for potential solutions to further enhance the safe transport of crude oil. Together, we can build a prosperous and safe Canada. Together, our regulatory safety regimes can support the efficient and safe movement of dangerous goods across this country. This will help support important economic activities in this country, including the oil and gas sectors of our great country.

• (1535)

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, we do have an obligation to take care of our environment for the betterment of tomorrow's Canadians, but Canadians need jobs now to feed their families and save for retirement. They do not have time to wait.

The member talks about the economy and what the government will do. Can the member tell us how we are to respond to the welders, mechanics, roughnecks, motor hands, derrick hands, drillers, rig managers, tong crews, well site supervisors, geologists, and the owners and operators of trucking companies that move the pipe, who will be left out in the cold because this infrastructure program the government is proposing will not help them in the slightest?

Ms. Kate Young: Madam Speaker, Canadians have lost faith in the process. That is the bottom line here. We do not have to trade off between the environment and the economy; we can do both, and we must do both in order to grow our economy and grow it quickly.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to ask the member opposite about the credibility of the National Energy Board and its really flawed assessment process. The environment commissioner's report recently showed that the NEB does not track compliance in over half of all of the cases studied. I want to know what concrete steps the Liberals will take to ensure that the NEB does its job more than half the time.

Ms. Kate Young: Madam Speaker, we are definitely looking toward modernizing the National Energy Board. We will tighten up its monitoring. It has already started the process. We will work toward that, and we will hear more in the coming weeks and months.

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wonder if the member can elaborate a bit on whether the people of her great riding realize that balancing the energy sector with the needs of the environment is important to them, what she heard during the election with respect to that, and what she is hearing these days.

Business of Supply

Ms. Kate Young: Madam Speaker, the people of London West are very concerned about balancing the environment and the economy. There is no question that we have suffered because of manufacturing losses in London West and we know that there is so much that needs to be done so that we do not lose any more jobs. When it comes right down to it, they all connect to energy, so it is important that we look to the future and find new ways to produce and make jobs for all Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, my question is about the government that recently instituted new transitional standards that seem pretty bogus to me. There are no meaningful measures here; this is just a smokescreen to hide the fact that the government is not really doing anything and does not really care about public safety.

Some 45% of Quebeckers get their water from the St. Lawrence. The proposed energy east pipeline will cross more than 150 rivers. The commissioner of the environment and sustainable development correctly pointed out that the National Energy Board was not conducting the necessary infrastructure audits. One wonders if there is much of a difference between the Conservatives, who make no secret of their support for the pipeline, and the Liberals, who give us bogus measures that suggest they might support pipelines after all.

I would just like to know how the government plans to really win Quebeckers' trust on this issue.

• (1540)

[English]

Ms. Kate Young: Madam Speaker, the Liberal government is listening to Canadians, including Quebeckers, and we will be continuing to listen and hear more about their concerns and their plans for the future. We are always open to hearing more.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am sharing my time today with the hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, which is an honour in itself for me.

As a lifelong Albertan, I am proud of our world-leading energy sector. Alberta has long played an important role in Canada's economy and has attracted thousands of Canadians to pursue opportunities for themselves and for their families. Alberta has been the economic engine of Canada for decades, contributing direct and indirect employment, globally recognized innovation, world-renowned responsible energy regulation and development, and massive amounts of revenue to multiple levels of government.

This revenue provides programs and services supporting the standard of living for everyone in every province. Indeed, a strong Alberta means a strong Canada. However, the long-term sustainability of Canada's energy sector and Alberta's ability to offer prosperity for people across Canada long into the future depend on accessing new and diverse markets here at home and abroad. Maximizing the value of our country's resources internationally and enhancing our domestic energy independence and self-sufficiency are crucially important. Canada has the world's third-largest crude oil reserve, most of which is in the oil sands deposits of northern Alberta and those beginning to be developed in Saskatchewan.

My riding of Lakeland stretches across a large expanse of northern Alberta, situated between those oil sands reserves, with rural farming, forestry, and manufacturing communities and towns, a prairie province border city where the local economies are fuelled by the responsible development of conventional and heavy oil and natural gas. Lakeland is home to Portage-Pipeline Training Centre, unique in Canada, training people to build pipelines right where they are built. Pipelines start and cross in my riding.

Yet despite our country's powerful position among leading energy-rich nations, in our own country eastern Canadian refineries import an astounding 86% of their oil from the United States and from countries in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. This is while Canada exports 97% of our oil production to the United States. There is no doubt Canada has an important global role to play in exporting our responsibly developed supply of energy for the world's needs, but it also makes very little sense that we are not completely meeting our own energy needs for all our fellow Canadians right here at home, simply because of a lack of infrastructure.

The energy east pipeline is an immediate shovel-ready project that would create thousands of much-needed, well-paying jobs for Canadians who are now seriously struggling. This pipeline is important for another reason: it would actually tie together eastern and western Canada physically, economically, and symbolically. To me, energy east really epitomizes the Canadian way: diverse communities with unique assets and characteristics, bound together across vast and varied geography. However, the Liberal government caused instability and uncertainty in the energy sector at the very worst time, during a severe and extended global oil price drop, through mixed messages, signals of impending increases of the fiscal and regulatory burden, and intended changes that are either unclear or will add extra time, layers, and costs to the approval process for important pipeline projects.

On this side, just like the energy developers and workers in Canada, we have always valued expanding economic growth while enhancing environmental stewardship through continuously advancing technologies and innovation. We unequivocally support the nation-building energy east pipeline.

Business of Supply

I want to explain why all of this matters so much to me. My constituents, their families, their friends, their businesses, and their charities are being hurt by the job losses in the energy sector. It is easy for politicians in their bubble in Ottawa to rattle off stats and talking points and to pontificate about what is happening in Alberta, but I live side by side with hard-working, generous, and humble people who are anxious. Their livelihoods and futures are at risk and they live in communities sustained by businesses, charities, and public services that rely on a robust natural resources sector. In some cases, these communities are literally on the verge of becoming ghost towns. The people in Lakeland elected me to represent them and to advocate for them. I hope I am earning the confidence they lent me on October 19, and I will work hard to sustain it.

Members of the House may recall the Facebook post that went viral recently. A Lloydminster man named Ken Cundliffe wrote an open letter to the Prime Minister urging him to help Alberta. Mr. Cundliffe said that times were getting desperate for families and highlighted many problems in Alberta today, including unemployment, increased thefts, and mental health challenges. He rightly pointed out that many Canadians do not know how bad the situation is in Alberta. Mr. Cundliffe inspired me, so following his lead I would like to share some of the experiences of the people behind the StatsCan reports, news stories, and talking points.

● (1545)

Take, for example, a young family from rural Alberta. The mom is going back to school and the dad has worked tirelessly in oil and gas for many years. The couple lives on a rural acreage with their two school-aged kids about an hour away from town. On his way to work one morning recently, the dad received a phone call telling him that he no longer had a job. He lives in a rural community and there are not many other options for work, but houses are not selling and investments are lost. They are stuck.

Then there is the story of a married father with small children in Lloydminster. He worked in the oil sector for 20 years and lost his job not once but twice last year. Now he is working as a plumber's helper, but construction is at a virtual standstill right now. It is inevitable that he will be laid off yet again. What is worse, he has been a saver all of his life, putting money away for a rainy day, in what he thought would be stable oil-related stock. He has lost 60% of his overall wealth.

It is not just businesses directly related to oil and gas in Alberta that are suffering. People do not have the money for bigger SUVs they need for their expanding families to get around remote and rural areas. They do not have extra cash for a weekend trip into the city, dinner out, or kids' activities. Businesses are bleeding money daily and have cut wages, hours, benefits, or entire jobs to survive. Some have closed and others will close imminently.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars of construction equipment and other equipment sit idle in parking lots. Small and independent service and supply companies, individual contractors, and home-grown businesses, which are companies in name but families in practice, are barely staying afloat.

I recently heard about a man in his mid-50s who had worked his way up in a leading Canadian energy company that operates in Lakeland and throughout northern Alberta. He is now pinching

pennies because he did not have another option except to retire early. He contributed his entire career as an ambitious worker and a skilled leader. This is not the way his career should end.

Let us not forget the skilled and educated apprentices whose careers have stopped before they started. Now they are jobless, stuck in an endless cycle of fleeting opportunities, and living in their parents' basements.

In his letter, Ken Cundliffe also mentioned that crime is increasing. Small, tight-knit rural communities that have never had problems with crime are being shocked that trucks are being stolen from driveways, children's toys stolen at Christmas, and armed robberies happening at local businesses like the Boyne Lake General Store. Not only are people losing their jobs, they are losing their sense of safety. One look at the Alberta police report online really illustrates the pure desperation of people who have lost everything.

This type of activity is not indicative of the rural Alberta community where I grew up or of the self-sufficient, generous, and tenacious communities that I represent in Lakeland. The decline of Alberta's economy happened quickly. Just over four short years ago, Alberta itself accounted for more than one-half of Canada's job creation, adding 100,000 jobs in 2011. Compare that to last year, after the election of the new provincial government, when Alberta lost the most jobs in one year since the 1980s when the Prime Minister's father introduced the NEP.

Alberta's unemployment rate was 7% last month, the highest it has been since 2010. In fact, Alberta EI claims have doubled in the last year. Little more than a year ago, Alberta's biggest and most persistent problem was having virtually no unemployment, a severe labour shortage, with businesses scrambling for Canadians who would be willing to work, and for temporary foreign workers. Now, after contributing so much to Canada, tens of thousands of people do not have jobs or the means to support their families.

Business of Supply

I am a typical Albertan in a certain way. My family is from everywhere else in Canada. I am a first-generation Albertan, with family across Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritimes. My Nova Scotian and Newfoundlander parents moved to Alberta to build a future. Why? It was because there were countless jobs and opportunities to build the life they imagined and because they did not have any options where they were born. This is a common Alberta story. That is the Alberta I have always known, the one that punches beyond its weight in Confederation and in the world, the one that is a beacon of prosperity and opportunity for entrepreneurs, adventurers, inventors, investors, and dreamers. The province that is at once the builder of Canada is also built by Canadians from everywhere else, and that, as much as anything else, as much as jobs, investment, opportunities, and revenue, is why a strong Alberta means a strong Canada.

Albertans want the Liberal government to lead, to show that it understands and cares about the scale, magnitude, and long-term impacts of the challenges hitting Alberta the hardest, to which no community or province in Canada is immune. We need a plan. Energy east is the perfect opportunity to get Canadian energy to tidewater and to increase market access in a smart, responsible, and safe way. It is not a pipeline from a certain province or specific region or for a certain province or specific region. It is a pipeline for all of Canada that will transport Canadian oil to Canadian refineries, developed under globally renowned Canadian standards, while creating jobs for Canadians.

• (1550)

Let us become proponents together of contributing to the world this product that they need and want, and let us join in support of energy east. We need the Liberal government to immediately make a difference in the future of Alberta and for all of Canada. Let us all continue in earnest to get access to diverse international markets in—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I am sorry, the time is up, and maybe you could finish your speech during the question and answer period. I did allow for a little bit more time, but I am sorry.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Saint John—Rothesay.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am from Saint John—Rothesay. I think there is no riding in Canada where the pipeline is of more importance. It is where the pipeline ends. Many people talked to me about why I was running for the Liberal Party in the past election, and why, if I was for the pipeline and for the development of the pipeline, I would not run for another party. I said the reason I was running for the Liberal Party was that it is the party that will build and develop the pipeline process, because a lot of people across our country have lost faith in the process. They have lost respect for the process. The way to build a pipeline is to consult and have a transparent process, with everyone included. That is how we will build a pipeline across this country.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments. This is something that ties us together, because the start of the energy east pipeline would start within about one hour of the southern border of Lakeland in the riding of my colleague, the member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

The concern of people who are suffering job losses in the energy sector is that this is a crisis. It is a crisis that is happening now, and we cannot wait.

It should be incumbent upon all of us, recognizing the nation-building critical aspect of this pipeline, to explain to all Canadians the role this pipeline will play in enhancing our own domestic energy security and independence while we access new, diverse markets. That is critical to the long-term sustainability of the energy sector, which does so much for all of Canada.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I welcome my colleague from Lakeland to the House. I know parts of her riding well. My wife is from Red Deer nearby.

My question is with respect to criticism that used to come from Conservatives, when it came to pipelines, that the processes that were being undertaken to review them in public hearings and whatnot was to predetermine the outcomes. Conservatives would lather themselves up into quite a state of frenzy when anyone suggested a criticism of a pipeline that was in the process of being evaluated. They had not yet come to a determination. The science had not been studied. The public had not been consulted.

Therefore, my only confusion with the Conservatives' motion here today is that there is a certain level of hypocrisy in the sense that they are seeking that the Parliament of Canada prejudice the outcome of a pipeline, for a very large natural resource sector, with risks and benefits, yet have not heard much in the way of testimony, science, or anything that would come close to rational debate.

• (1555)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, we are asking the federal Liberal government to recognize the importance of the energy east pipeline for its potential in enhancing our domestic energy security and access to diverse international markets. There is not a conflict for any member in the House to say boldly that this is a step we need to take for the long-term sustainability and future of our country.

My job is to represent the people of Lakeland. They are suffering, and they are struggling. For decades they have contributed so much to all of Canada in so many ways. The Liberal government giving support to the energy east pipeline and to this motion would show constituents in Lakeland that it cares.

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Lakeland for a great presentation. It is interesting that the Liberal government at this stage is looking at not supporting our Canadian economy and not supporting jobs in Canada but is wanting to ship those jobs to countries like Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, and Venezuela, which do not have energy assessments anything like Canada's. They are nothing like Canada's.

Business of Supply

I am wondering what her constituents say about supporting foreign investment and turning their heads against Canadian investment, when we have such strong environmental support here?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, my constituents have always valued their role in providing prosperity and support for all of Canada, and they would like to continue to do so.

We know that Canada's regulatory system in energy development is world renowned. We should fight for this project, for Canadian jobs, and for Canadian products. The instability is not helped by the Prime Minister saying that our country is moving away from resource development or by the government constantly reinforcing a lack of confidence. That causes instability and unpredictability in the investment business, which is what causes lost jobs.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for sharing her speaking time with me. I am also pleased to share it with her.

The project we are talking about today, the energy east pipeline project, is a good project for Quebec, Alberta, British Columbia, all 10 Canadian provinces. It is a good project for Canada and the government must support it.

We think it is good for Quebec's economy because construction of this pipeline will create 3,000 jobs. We know that employment is precarious in Quebec these days. If we can have such a strong investment and provide employment for 3,000 people at the construction stage, that is added value.

The same goes for economic spinoffs. For Quebec alone, the spinoffs from the work and construction are \$1 billion. I am sorry, but we cannot afford to turn up our noses at \$1 billion in economic spinoffs and 3,000 jobs.

What is more, once this is all in place, royalties will be paid to the municipalities, the RCMs, and the local communities, which could grow the investments and economic spinoffs in their own communities.

Since the beginning of this debate, we have been given the impression that this project is just about oil. However, oil is not just used to produce the gasoline we use in our vehicles. Oil is also one of the cornerstones of the petrochemical industry. If we could use props in the House, I would show members hundreds of objects we use on a daily basis that are oil-based.

In Quebec, the petrochemical industry accounts for 70,000 jobs and includes two refineries that get their oil delivered from abroad by ship. The choice is therefore obvious. Do we want our refineries to continue using foreign oil or do we want them to use Canadian oil? Do we want to continue sending millions and even billions of dollars abroad when we could be buying our own oil and investing that money in our own economy? The opportunity is there.

Let me be very clear. I am not saying that we need to do everything independently and close our borders. Nevertheless, when it comes down to whether to seize the opportunity to create jobs for Canadians across the country for the common good and buy Canadian oil in order to invest in the Canadian economy or to buy foreign oil and have the money go elsewhere, the answer is obvious.

I mentioned the 70,000 jobs in the petrochemical industry. The greater Quebec City area is home to IPL, a company that sells plastic products throughout the world. Plastic is a petrochemical product. The government needs to look beyond the end of its nose and see that this oil could help our Canadian companies. We need to stop seeing the oil produced in Alberta in such a negative light.

Pipelines are the safest and most environmentally friendly way to transport oil. This government boasts about caring about the environment more than anyone else. It is time to prove it by supporting this project, which is good for the economy and the environment.

The same goes for safety. The statistics are quite striking. In the past five years, the pipeline safety record has been 99.999%. I wish I had done that well when I was in school, but that was not the case. Why show disdain for an industry, facilities, and infrastructure that are so good and have performed so well? On the contrary, we should be proud of this industry and support it.

If we do not, the oil will be transported by 1,530 rail cars or trucks a day. I do not think that is what Quebecers want. Once the pipeline has been built, it will not bother too many people.

My friends in the government keep repeating that we did nothing for 10 years, but that is not true. Four pipelines were built in Canada in recent years under the Conservative government. That is part of the equation.

● (1600)

Were there any tragic events? Were there any catastrophes? Has the environment completely deteriorated as a result? No. We are capable of doing things right in Canada. I have faith in the Canadian companies that will build this. It is good for Canada, good for Quebec, and good for the economy. We must support this project.

We are concerned about the fact that provinces like British Columbia, and particularly Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Alberta, are suffering as a result of plummeting world oil prices. We are all aware. I am Canadian and proud of it. When my fellow Canadians are suffering, I try to give them a hand up. I am also doing this for somewhat selfish reasons. Quebec sees economic spinoffs from the development of the oil sands. Some 191 companies in Quebec have contracts in the oil sands sector. Yes, I am proud to be a Quebecker and to stand up for Quebec's economy, because I know that there are about 200 companies working in this sector.

More specifically, an environmental company in my riding, CO₂ Solutions, has been working directly with the Alberta oil sands sector for about a decade, helping it reduce its impact on the environment. I am very familiar with that company; I visited it during the election campaign. On top of that, in another life, I was a journalist and I did a story on that company. This might interest my friends in cabinet. Who did I make this visit with? It was with the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was once the environment minister. If you talk to him, he would be happy to tell you that there is an excellent company in the riding of Louis-Saint-Laurent that is working hard to help make the oil sands more environmentally friendly. Shall I remind the House that during the 10 years under the Conservative government, greenhouse gas emissions linked to the oil sands sector dropped by 30%?

We are calling on the Prime Minister to show greater leadership. He is the member for Papineau, and therefore a Quebec MP from Montreal, and what he said in Davos two weeks ago about our natural resources sector was not worthy of a head of state.

We would like the Prime Minister to champion this project because it is good for Canada's economy. We think that when one is a head of state, one's primary responsibilities include maintaining and creating wealth, creating jobs, and moving forward with projects that drive the economy. That is what we want the Prime Minister to do.

True, there have been some problems with this project. We support the project, but, unfortunately, we do find fault with the company. It did not do its homework. It came to Quebec with a pile of documents in English only, which, as you can imagine, did not go over well. That is not the right way to do things. Refusing to answer perfectly sensible and relevant questions from mayors, municipalities, and RCMs and acting all high and mighty is not the right way to do things.

A lot of mayors took the company to task for that, including the mayor of my hometown, Quebec City. He had every right to do that, and I was pleased when the company vice-president, Louis Bergeron, talked to an audience of about 200 business people yesterday during a debate on energy. He acknowledged that they did have some homework to do. He recognized that they needed to get back on track and be much more proactive and attentive to Quebecers' needs. I was pleased to hear that, and I was pleased to hear that the company will change its tone and engage in dialogue. That is good because this project must not be derailed because of problems with how it was presented. On the contrary, we need to be able to do a proper assessment of all aspects of the project.

• (1605)

[English]

It is a great honour for me to support this project. It is good for the Canadian economy. It is good foremost for the Quebec economy, with 3,000 jobs in Quebec and \$1 billion in investments. More than that, in Quebec we have two refineries that are buying offshore oil. They are paying in Canadian money to go offshore when they cannot have access to Canadian petroleum.

This is good for the economy, it is good for Quebec, and it is good for Canada.

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[Translation]

We sincerely hope that the government will support this motion, support Canadian industry and enable all Canadians to benefit from what is a good project.

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague opposite for his speech.

This is an important file for me, especially since the pipeline passes quite close to the Cap-Rouge water intake, which supplies the Sainte-Foy water treatment plant that is located in my riding, and thus supplies water to many of my constituents.

Does the member not believe that we should have the most rigorous and robust environmental assessments to ensure that this project does not harm the environment? Furthermore, we know that when his party was in power it removed 98% of waterways from the Navigation Protection Act, which reduced applications for environmental assessments for these types of projects. There are 900,000 lakes in Quebec; only 97 are protected by the Conservative legislation that was enacted when his party was in power.

I would like to ask the hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent if he believes that truly rigorous environmental assessments should be carried out before proceeding with a project such as this one.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, one should not preclude the other.

It is obvious that environmental measures that are just as rigorous as our safety measures must be put forward. These rigorous measures have resulted in a 99.999% safety record, which is very impressive. That is what I would call a great safety and environmental record.

I would like to remind my colleague that not so long ago and not far from my riding, because we are close to the south shore, 243 kilometres of pipeline were built. Were there any problems? Did we have any difficulties? Has there been an environmental disaster? No.

We are capable of getting things right. We have proven it, and we will prove it with this project.

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

Over the past decade, the Conservatives dismantled legislation that protected our air, land, and waterways. In budget 2012, the Conservatives significantly weakened the role of the National Energy Board in terms of assessing pipeline projects. Today, we are suffering the consequences.

Why should Canadians give any credibility to or trust the Conservatives when it comes to pipelines?

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•(1610)

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, the hon. member may not have been paying attention to what I was saying earlier. I would remind her that under our government, four major pipeline projects were built, planned, completed, and shown to be successful.

Yes, we are capable of building successful pipelines in Canada. Yes, we are capable of doing so in an environmentally friendly and safe way. Need I remind this House that we demonstrated 99.999% efficiency? I am sorry, but that is not bad at all.

If we can do it, then so can the current government. If the government is capable of being as good as our government was, then Canada is on the right track.

[*English*]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, that was a passionate discussion of nation building from one of our great new members from the province of Quebec. He laid out the benefits of some of these resource opportunities by energy east for the entire country.

Coming from the Quebec City region, he reminds me how nation-building projects like the St. Lawrence Seaway went through many communities and impacted the environment, communities, coastal villages, and so forth, but had a tremendous impact on such a nation-building exercise.

I would like the member to review for the House how, with the proper consultations that we have in Canada, this project will not just bring jobs and opportunities to western Canada, or importantly to New Brunswick, but also to the Quebec City region, to Quebec, and indeed to all of Canada.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, the point is that just for the construction of that we are talking about 3,000 jobs and a \$1 billion investment into the province of Quebec. This is good for Quebec and it is good for the economy. More than that, we are talking about getting Canadian oil to two major refineries in Quebec, in Montreal and Lévis. Therefore, instead of buying offshore petroleum and sending Canadian money offshore, we can keep our money for our people, for Canada and for Quebec. This is good for the economy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to say that I will be sharing my time with the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Since this is the first opportunity I have had to address the House other than in question period, I would like to take a moment to thank the voters in Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques for putting their trust in me for the second time. It is a privilege for me to represent them in the House. There is a lot of work to be done.

When the last session of Parliament ended, I was the official opposition critic for energy and natural resources. Obviously, the issue of pipelines, and energy east in particular, was very important. It was a major concern for me. This issue generated a lot of debate across the country, but particularly in Quebec. I took the issue very seriously because it affects me directly as an MP. The route proposed for the pipeline then and now goes through Témiscouata in my

riding to get to New Brunswick. I had the opportunity to speak to many residents, mayors, and regional elected officials regarding their completely legitimate concerns about the project.

As the NDP's energy and natural resources critic, I undertook a consultation. I held some information sessions in my riding, across the Lower St. Lawrence, the region I represent, and across Quebec. It is important to note that every resident from a given municipality was invited to come hear about the project and to learn about different aspects of it. For example, the economic aspect is important and is often underestimated. In Quebec, we often forget that the natural resource, gas, and oil industry is important not only to the west, but also to Quebec. This was an opportunity to inform people who had an interest in the pipeline about the economic spinoffs of the project, not just in terms of investments, but also in terms of jobs. My consultations were as neutral as possible, to give residents the facts about the various studies that have been conducted on this topic, including a study carried out by the Conference Board of Canada and the Deloitte report. The consultation also included other studies from organizations that did not necessarily support the project. I presented all of this, and I shared my comments as an economist.

We also had a legal component in order to inform the public about the nature of the National Energy Board and how it works. Again, this is a little-known organization in Quebec because we are not used to having transboundary pipeline projects that come under the responsibility of the NEB. There was a lawyer on hand to talk about the process in an informative way.

Finally, we discussed some important environmental aspects that are the main cause for concern when it comes to energy east, as they are for any pipeline project we discuss in Quebec. This is about the potential impact on landowners, more specifically farmers who might end up with a pipeline traversing their fields. This is about the repercussions for the waterways and the watersheds. We shared the information as objectively as possible with residents of the municipalities where we had the chance to speak. Some of those municipalities were in my riding and in the Lower St. Lawrence. In fact, there were eight in all. I was able to speak to people in the municipalities that, under the current plan, would be crossed by the pipeline. People in Yamachiche, Lanoraie, Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures, Terrebonne, and Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville had concerns and they wanted to hear about these issues.

As I said, these are legitimate concerns and they have to be part of the public debate. My problem with the motion is that it asks us to take a position and support the project before it ever undergoes a process of assessment and legitimate consultations whose objectives would include providing important information to the government so that it can make an informed decision.

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•(1615)

That is why, this morning, my colleague and our House leader, the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, tried to amend the Conservative motion to include an element stating that the House should express its view that pipeline reviews must be credible, thorough, open, and free from political interference. The reason why this is so important is that one of the primary obstacles to this project in particular and others across the country is the lack of credibility; people do not trust the process or the National Energy Board.

It is extremely difficult to get support for a project and allow it to move forward without social licence and the knowledge that the people who will be affected by such a major piece of infrastructure are okay with it. Much of the blame lies with the Conservatives because they watered the process down and dismantled it to the point that people lack confidence in the National Energy Board and the process.

As for the consultation process, the Conservative government limited the consultation period to 15 months. For such an important project that runs from Alberta to New Brunswick and crosses thousands of waterways, the ramifications are absolutely endless, and yet a single body was asked to examine the entire issue in just 15 months before making a recommendation to the government. That is extremely problematic.

Another thing that is problematic is the restrictions imposed by the previous government, once again, on identifying people who can come forward and express their concerns or their opinion about this project to the National Energy Board, or NEB. In the case of the energy east project, when the NEB opened its doors and invited people to register for hearings, nearly 3,000 requests were received, but over 90% of them were rejected. For a consultation process that is supposed to be transparent and open to all Canadians, the fact that 90% of those who applied will not be able to submit a brief or even appear before the NEB is extremely problematic with respect to social licence.

It is the same problem with environmental assessments. Who was responsible for environmental assessments before the Conservative government made changes in the last Parliament? It was Environment Canada in co-operation with the provincial environment departments involved in the project.

Today, the National Energy Board is required to consult all of the people affected by such a long pipeline and conduct the environmental assessment. After speaking with many stakeholders, not only in my region, but also in the rest of Quebec and Canada, I can say that people have major doubts about whether the National Energy Board is competent and credible enough to work on the environmental assessment of these projects specifically. There was a reason why these two processes were separate. Each process required a different type of expertise. Now, the same organization is responsible for analyzing the entire file.

Obviously, I will not go back over what we learned yesterday about the report of the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development, who raised serious questions about the National Energy Board's ability to ensure that the conditions it imposes on such projects are met.

I could go on about that for a long time. I am very familiar with the topic. I will let my colleague have the chance to speak, but I would like to say that, as an economist, I fully understand the economic importance of this project. I understand that it is important not only for Alberta and the western provinces, but also for Quebec and the entire country. However, although it is important to look at the economic aspects of a major project such as this, if we want to gain Canadians' trust, we also need to consider the environmental and legal aspects. Unfortunately, they have not really been discussed in this debate.

•(1620)

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech. As an MP from Quebec, like me, he has likely seen many situations where members have engaged in political pandering by calling national unity into question. That is what the Conservatives seem to be doing by bringing up the national energy policy and national unity in this debate.

To those of us on this side of the House, the Conservatives seem to be using this motion to get Parliament to approve this pipeline project today. It sometimes seems as though the NDP will never support this project, no matter what process we put in place. We know that there is unemployment in Alberta, and we are looking to make investments to help this.

I appreciate the constructive comments from my hon. colleague about the process.

Could he assure us that his party will support this project with us, if we manage to have the energy east pipeline project approved?

Mr. Guy Caron: Madam Speaker, I am going to ignore the attempt to impute motives that is implicit in the question.

The NDP looks at the merits of any infrastructure project to be approved by the federal government. We look at the arguments for and against before taking a position.

The role of the National Energy Board should be to provide pertinent information and the expertise that is rarely available in the House, even in the government. In that sense, the process is extremely important. As I was saying, when considering the arguments for and against, we must look at the economic, legal and environmental aspects.

I have a good understanding of the situation, as I generally follow what is happening in the country, including the unfortunate economic situation in Alberta. I am very proud to be of the same political stripe as the current government in Alberta, which is working very hard to fix the problems created by previous governments.

It inherited an extremely difficult situation and has shown a willingness not only to create jobs, but also to promote the sustainable development of natural resources while bearing in mind the need to fight climate change.

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•(1625)

[English]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for sharing his comments and his perspective.

Does he, therefore, favour the regulatory application approval and enforcement process in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia over Canada's? If he does support the government's intended application of GHG emissions in the regulatory process for pipelines—although there are no specifics around that, and pipelines do not emit greenhouse gases—does he also intend to urge the government to do an evidence-based comparative analysis on the other methods of transporting petroleum products? For example, what is involved in importing foreign oil through tankers, and what is involved in terms of rail and trucks?

We believe in reducing regulation and red tape on all businesses in all sectors, because that stimulates the economy and provides jobs. However, I wonder, if there is really a concern about choosing the very best option based on the concerns he has outlined, will he also urge the government to consider those other things, so we can be assured the best option is being picked?

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron: Madam Speaker, there was some bias in the question. First, I hope the member is not hinting that we should set the bar as low as possible for environmental protection and the assessment of risks and benefits, two vital components of such projects.

Second, in regard to the list of countries the member mentioned, we often forget that much of the oil we have comes from the North Sea, for example, and that never makes the list of countries or elements suggested by that party.

As for the different means of transport, I would direct her to the report on this very subject by the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, which I carefully read in 2013. The report is very helpful for understanding the problems associated with the transport of oil and other dangerous substances.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my dear colleague from Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

[English]

I would like to thank my colleague for sharing his time with me.

I would also like to take a moment to thank the voters of Skeena—Bulkley Valley, in the northwest part of beautiful British Columbia, for sending me back to this place. It is always a humbling and honouring experience to stand in the House of Commons on behalf of the people of northwestern British Columbia. People who have spent any time there have found it to be a beautiful place. The people are diverse and proudly Canadian.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to enter into this debate today, because we know first-hand in British Columbia, perhaps more than many Canadians, just how bad the process for evaluating such energy projects has become in Canada. We were ground zero for the discussions surrounding the controversial northern gateway pipeline project that is still being proposed. We call it the zombie

project because, no matter how many times it gets defeated by opposition from first nations, environmental groups, businesses, and successive reports from the provincial government, it still walks around with some unnatural energy and manages to stay alive.

This project has exposed to us how bad governing can become. The previous Conservative government decided it was going to attempt in its own awkward and unintelligent way to try to so-call “reform” the energy system in Canada and did so by gutting just about every environmental and fisheries law we had, in order to ram through pipelines all across this country, under the former prime minister's aspirations. It leaves one with some doubts about the sincerity or the abilities of the previous government, because the very definition of insanity is to do the same thing over and over again and expect different results.

What that government attempted to do with us in northern British Columbia was to bully and pressure and undermine the very basic civic duties that we all share as Canadians, which is to speak, represent our concerns, and raise our voices in any publicly held process.

We saw from letters issued by the previous prime minister's office in the midst of the process that anyone who had any questions, any people who dared to have concerns about a massive raw bitumen pipeline traversing 1,100 rivers and streams over two mountain ranges, as well as supertankers in Kitimat sailing out to China, were called enemies of the state and foreign-funded radicals. Anyone who had the audacity to raise concerns about such a proposal was called by the Conservative prime minister's office an enemy of the state or a foreign-funded radical. I am not even paraphrasing. Those were the government's actual words.

Lo and behold, that same government actually accused some of its own supporters of the same thing. People up in the north who like to hunt and fish were also raising concerns about what a potential bitumen spill would look like in the mighty rivers of northwestern British Columbia. They were concerned about what impact such a spill would have on the fishing industry off the north coast, which has sustained us for thousands of years.

The Conservative government growled and said we were either with it or against it. We either stood with the pipelines or we stood against Canada, the government said. How did that work for that party? Not so well, not just in the merits of the projects it proposed, but it did not work out so well for them electorally. The growling, bullying, and cajoling did not work out for that government.

Once more, in today's motion, the Conservatives have taken the same “with us or against us” stand. We have sought to amend the motion by adding the very controversial words that the House of Commons express its view that pipeline reviews must be credible, thorough, open, and free from political interference. My goodness, who would want to stand against such a motion as that?

The breadth and depth of ignorance around what Canadians believe about energy projects being held by the Conservative Party knows no bounds. The Conservatives shot down our amendment to today's motion because they clearly do not want a credible, thorough, and open review, free from political interference. They want to cast judgment on what will happen with energy east before it even hits the hearing stage. They want to say whether this thing is good or bad. They want to tell Canadians how it is and how it ought to be, and then they have the audacity to stand in the House, as some of my Conservative colleagues have done today, and say we have to get behind these things because otherwise the jobs will go overseas. They are talking about a raw bitumen export project, which the Alberta Chamber of Commerce has studied, and it said that when we add no value to these things, we are exporting three times as many jobs as we would be creating here in Canada.

• (1630)

Why would an opposition party choose its opposition day to talk about something so hypocritical as to affect the process around pipelines? After 10 disastrous years, it was unable to convince even its own allies that the process it manipulated and conjured up was anything close to fair and reasonable. Canadians rejected the Conservatives' way of doing things and rejected their pipelines. Thus, they have no pipelines that go to tidewater. Not a single kilometre of pipeline was built to take the product to tidewater. Now we have oil at \$30, give or take. We have an economic crisis in Alberta and Saskatchewan that is affecting other parts of the region, and rather than standing up with anything approaching the intelligible or comprehensive, we have the Conservatives growling again, saying we are either with them or against them and, if we are not with them, they are going to send out fundraising letters this afternoon and try to make money off something that is playing politics with pipelines.

We also know from the northern gateway experience that the prime minister of the day changed the process midstream. We were halfway through the reviews when the prime minister deigned to tell us how it was actually going to be. The Conservatives somehow made what was a bad process into a worse process and, now that these new pipeline proposals are approaching, they have made it even worse still because at present there are closing arguments taking place in Burnaby, British Columbia, over the somewhat controversial TransCanada pipeline heading into the Lower Mainland, and Canadians are not allowed to cross-examine the oil company. They are not allowed to test the evidence that the companies bring forward, because how dare we make such an affront in Canada as to dare to question any of the company's evidence or practices?

We know from past experiences that it is good to hold up good company practices, but verification is a lot better than trust. "Just trust me" is what happened in Kalamazoo, where millions of litres of diluted bitumen spilled into the Kalamazoo River. Five years later, \$1.3 billion has been spent trying to clean up the river. They had to physically dredge up the bottom to try to recover the oil, which they were unable to do. Therefore, we know that it is better to verify than to simply trust.

Now we have this motion in front of us. We have a former Conservative government that was the worst friend the oil and gas

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sector ever knew, because what did it sow in the hearts and minds of the Canadian public? It was mistrust, conflict, and misapprehension about any of these proposals. Meanwhile, it tried to bully a president. How did that work out for the former prime minister? I guess he would be right in saying it was a no-brainer. It was quite correct to stand in New York and essentially call the president stupid. That always works out well with cross-border relations with the United States. Then the Conservatives were shocked when President Obama rejected it, if not for the insult then for the lack of merits for the project itself. We do need a credible, thorough, and open process, free from political interference.

Just yesterday, the environment minister and the natural resources minister were out attempting to put a bit of a band-aid over a bad process. We have a few questions that remain.

Finally, we are going to say the words "climate change" when talking about oil pipelines. That is revolutionary. It is a new day. It is shocking that we are able to put those two things together. However, we do not yet know how the process will actually unfold. How much will climate matter when making the decisions in cabinet? That was a choice actually made by the former prime minister. He took the decision for all of these resource projects out of the hands of the independent and quasi-judicial National Energy Board and put them in cabinet. I remember the day when we asked the Conservatives why they would do such a thing. The former prime minister said they wanted to take politics out of the process, to take the decision away from the National Energy Board and put it into the hands of politicians because that would take politics out of the process. I will say this for my Conservative colleagues: they are able to be ironic and hilarious with a straight face.

It is remarkable to see the audacity and hypocrisy of the motion put forward today; as if attempting to help the people who are suffering from an energy downturn in Alberta and Saskatchewan is to play politics with the issue; as if to help those families struggling to make ends meet right now is to suggest it is somehow against their interests to diversify our economy, green our economy, and help modify the ups and downs, the booms and busts; against the interests of the people of the great province of Alberta, or Saskatchewan, or anywhere else across the country.

• (1635)

We need to look at our pipelines with the best available science and the most open and broad public consultation possible.

Canadians do not take well to bullying or insults. They expect to be brought into the conversation, conversations that affect them, conversations that they know best how to determine the outcome.

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for what I think is actually a wonderful assessment of the Conservative record of hypocrisy and audacity, and their relationship with the oil sector. I thank the hon. member for pointing that out.

He spoke about needing a credible, thorough and open process, free from political interference. We could not agree more. That is what will be delivered in the process we spoke about yesterday.

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Will the hon. member support the process that we will put in place? It meets all the criteria discussed in his speech.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Madam Speaker, I suppose I left the press conference and briefing yesterday with a few more questions than answers with respect to what would happen next.

For example, the new plan of the Liberals is to add four months on to the process of studying the trans mountain project in Vancouver. The problem is that all the evidence the Liberals will look at was gathered under the old prime minister's regime and way of doing things, in which the company was able to put forward its plan without anybody being able to scrutinize it. If the evidence is in a sense tainted or not fully described and articulated, then the government remains unable to properly understand its effects.

Also, and this is important, while climate change impacts are now being considered, the government is unable to tell us how and to what level they are being considered. Is it 1% of the equation? Is it 50% of the equation? Is there a target that companies have to meet in their total emissions?

Those things matter a lot, not just to the proponents who are trying to build these projects and get them passed, but they matter a great deal to citizens who are concerned with this issue, who voted for that change on October 19. If climate is to matter, it is not enough to say it matters. What is really important is to say how much it matters, and to be fully transparent and public about that.

Canadians are owed answers to both of those fundamental questions.

• (1640)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague's speech was rather dramatic. People watching at home would be forgiven if they thought maybe they were watching the sci-fi network and not CPAC.

I listened to his comments about upgrading. Across the way, infrastructure will fix everything. On one side we also hear upgrading is everything.

The NDP in B.C., which I know is a place the members bow down to and pray to every day, appointed a gentleman to its climate review board who discussed upgrading. He actually ridiculed it, saying we needed a \$35 difference between the price of bitumen and the end product to make it worthwhile to cover the cost before we even got into staffing at refineries, etc.

Would the member kindly explain the economics of how we can add \$35, get \$65 from a final product that is only trading \$30, \$35 right now on the international market?

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Madam Speaker, I did not totally understand the reference to bowing down and praying to British Columbia, but I greatly love the place. If my friend from Edmonton has not been there, he should certainly come by. British Columbia is beautiful. I do not know if it is worthy of praying to necessarily, but it is certainly a remarkable place.

I suppose the question for my friend is this. There was this radical premier in his province one time who suggested that adding value to the natural gas that was coming out of Alberta back in the seventies, as somewhat of an ancient industry, was incredibly important and in

fact went so far, that raging socialist, to suggest that exporting of that natural gas in its raw form be banned outright.

Premier Lougheed has been lauded for many things. Being a left-wing socialist was not one of them. One of the things he believed in was that building up to capacity to add value to the great wealth and natural endowments that we had as a country should be the centrepiece of any government, right or left, because these resources, particularly the non-renewable ones, only came once.

It seems to me as if we are simply willing to be energy and price takers at all times and hope that the world comes around once in a while to buy our product, rather than be innovative price leaders in many of our natural resources sectors, which would be a very good thing not just for Edmonton West and Alberta, but the entire country.

A little more courage, a little more energy into this debate I think would help Canadians understand that this is not science fiction. This is what countries that export natural resources to their best benefit have always been interested in. Our country used to be as well until his government took over and we lost half a million manufacturing jobs just while it was in office. What a record to run on when talking about jobs in Canada.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan.

I rise today to speak to an issue that is of significant importance to our national, provincial, and municipal economies.

We have heard spirited debate here today. My hon. colleague for Skeena—Bulkley Valley brought a tear to my eye as he waxed eloquently about a region that I am very familiar with as my riding is adjacent to it.

In these times of economic uncertainty, it is imperative that we recognize the importance of our energy and resource sector, something the government seems to have failed to do.

Canada is a country dependent on resource development, and our economy is predicated on the trading of the commodities we produce. The comments made by the Prime Minister about Canadians being known for their resourcefulness rather than the resources is, in short, ignorant and out of touch with realities faced by Canadians living in today's uncertain global economy. Canadians are facing unemployment as a result of the downturn in oil prices. They are struggling to put food on the table as a result of the skyrocketing cost of living.

My hon. colleague for Chilliwack—Hope spoke today on the emotional comments from his riding about families who feared they would lose their home, or who worried how they would put food on their plates, or who were affected more and more by the sinking loonie.

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With all of that being said, I am not surprised the Liberal Party refuses to put forward a clear position on the energy east pipeline. Liberals would rather brainstorm ways to build bigger bureaucracies and add red tape to resource projects until Canada's once reputable investor climate is all but destroyed. In fact, by the sounds of it, our new Prime Minister has taken a page from his father's playbook.

I am sure I do not need to remind the House that last year was the worst year for employment losses since the global recession, and after the introduction of the national energy program, which was coincidentally introduced by the former Prime Minister Trudeau. Alberta lost 45,000 jobs in 1982.

However, facts are facts, and the Liberals can only avoid reality for so long. Canada holds the third-largest oil reserves in the world, but a lack of energy transport infrastructure means that the eastern part of our country is dependent on foreign crude imports to meet 86% of our daily needs.

Surprisingly, the Liberals trumpet transit as creating jobs. Surely they do not mean that they are going to use high-speed transit to move our commodities to tidewater. This makes no sense.

The Canadian oil and gas sector is experiencing increased capacity and it is crucial that this sector have access to new and diverse markets through the energy east pipeline. In fact, energy east is projected to create over 14,000 jobs during the nine-year construction phase alone. These are much needed jobs, particularly in Canadian regions hit hard by job losses and economic downturn.

The creation of the energy east pipeline would benefit western producers, eastern refineries, all levels of government, and everyday Canadians. It would mean more dollars staying in our country. Energy east would bolster our country's trade balance and strengthen the Canadian energy industry, which employs over half a million people and generates more than \$20 billion in taxes for all levels of government. Energy east would provide for the creation of highly paid, skilled manufacturing jobs and economic opportunities, not just in the west but across the country. Now this makes sense.

The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers projected that Canada would lose 100,000 jobs both directly and indirectly due to the low price of oil. I have a quote from Conrad Winkler, president and chief executive officer of EVRAZ North America, a leading producer of engineered steel products for rail, energy, and industrial end markets. He says:

Pipeline project benefits do not recognize regions or stop at oil field borders. They generate huge benefits for Ontario and Quebec as well — because they provide jobs, property and income taxes, construction activity and community development.

The energy east pipeline will not just have huge benefits for Ontario and Quebec, but it will have significant impact on my riding. If people take a walk downtown in the streets of Prince George, Quesnel or Williams Lake, they will see Alberta licence plates of families that live in our riding and commute to high-paying jobs, or used to commute to high-paying jobs in the oil and gas sector.

•(1645)

We cannot help but have an acquaintance, friend, or loved one who has been impacted negatively or lost his or her job due to the downturn in oil prices. Just this week WestJet airlines announced that it would be cancelling direct flights between Calgary and Prince

George, Terrace, Brandon, Manitoba, Penticton, Kamloops, Abbotsford, and Nanaimo. There were 88 flights alone in and out of Calgary. That is a huge blow for small communities in my riding. A daily round trip domestic service into an airport in a community roughly the size of Prince George generates \$2.5 million in value-added GDP and \$5.8 million in economic output.

Business follows access follows transportation.

The government's arrogance toward the hard-working Canadians employed by the oil and natural resource sector is unprecedented. When I and three of my colleagues were at home in my riding last week attending the B.C. premier's natural resource forum, the largest of its kind in Canada, it was noticed that not one member of the Liberal government was in attendance. In fact, the Minister of Natural Resources declined. He had other things to do.

That silence was heard. That absence was seen. We heard from over 900 leading industry professionals, provincial and municipal representatives, and indigenous leaders. The new-found confidence the government talks about is not there. I am not sure who the Liberals are talking to.

The Prime Minister has refused to state support for pipelines in principle, suggesting that it is not his duty to act as a cheerleader for projects. Is it not the Prime Minister's job to act as a cheerleader for Canada and Canadians? Instead of going to the communities hardest hit by the downturn in our nation's economy, his first trip after being elected was to Paris to hobnob and perfect his selfie. He took pictures with movie stars, while the hard-working communities across Canada, those who are less fortunate, worried about their uncertain times.

The Minister of International Trade has made comments that it is not her job to promote trade.

The forecast for 2016 is looking exceptionally grim. While the Alberta labour market continues to weaken, the Liberal government remains silent. Employment in the natural resources sector, the manufacturing sector, and the food sector continues to steadily decline. Canadians deserve an action plan that will create jobs and growth and that will ensure they can provide for their families. The sooner the Liberal government figures out whose job it is to represent Canadians, the sooner we can move toward building an economy that will serve our children's future.

I will once again reiterate for my colleagues across the floor that while they may want us to be known for our resourcefulness, never forget that our nation is dependent on resource development and our economy is predicated on the trade of the commodities we produce. I stand before them and ask again. Who is going to stand up for Canadians in ridings such as my riding of Cariboo—Prince George?

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•(1650)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague spoke about the importance of the pipeline project.

Unfortunately, while he is talking about the importance, his party is making this an issue of national unity. Does he understand that this undermines the project? While he is talking, his party is pitting one province against another. Does he understand that this also undermines the project?

The Conservative government's attitude will not create a single job in Alberta, Quebec, or anywhere in Canada. Does my colleague understand that?

[*English*]

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member opposite for his spirited question and answer, the fire of a volley across the way. I want him to rest assured that our party is not looking to divide our country. Our party is looking to make sure that the government's focus is on all of Canada, not only just the energy projects, but the softwood lumber projects, the resource development that is vital to the communities such as my riding of Cariboo—Prince George, and to open their eyes and come into the communities. I have asked the Minister of Natural Resources to please come and visit my riding. I will open the doors for the Liberals to visit my riding to see what matters most for friends and families, and those families who are struggling to figure out how they are going to put food on their plate.

My challenge with the government is that Liberals have lost sight and are overwhelmed with patting themselves on the back. I challenge them to come to our ridings, our small community, and hear first-hand the comments.

•(1655)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened with some shock and surprise to my colleague. I come from a resource-based economy. My family worked in the mines. We understand. I never met anyone in Timmins who said let us build our economy by dumping the dirt into the river systems. They want a clean economy. I hear the hon. member want to jerry-rig a review system of the pipelines and then attack the Prime Minister. I have no love for the present Prime Minister, but he went to Paris. Why was he in Paris? It was to deal with the international environmental climate conference. This is something the Conservatives' prime minister refused to do. It made Canada an outlier because they believe to talk about greenhouse gas and about the environment is somehow anti-jobs.

I want to tell the member it was that attitude for 10 straight years that put them in this pickle now that the rest of the country said no more until we have a credible, coherent, clean, and transparent system to prove that it will be environmentally safe. The Conservatives failed and they continue to fail. Until they start talking about the issue of climate change with any credibility, they are going to remain a marginal party.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes) : Order. Before I continue, I want to remind the members that out of respect

when someone has the floor, someone I have already recognized, that person should have the respect of the House. I would appreciate if the noise could be toned down on this side of the House. When the member spoke a while ago, he had that respect and I would assume that you are going to extend that as well.

The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George can respond to the question from his colleague from Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments from my hon. colleague. I have been waiting for a chance to have this comment today. Earlier his colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby waxed on about provincial colleagues in Alberta, about how great they are doing. It was maybe a little Freudian slip, but I heard it talked about as “ground baking new policies”. I think he is right because with the NDP provincial government's scorched earth policies on economic development we are sure seeing that as we move forward.

We have had an incredible amount of spirited debate here today. The biggest part I would like to leave, which we have heard over and over again, is the government does not have a plan with the exception of putting on layers and layers of more red tape that is going to diminish Canada's opportunity to take advantage of economic benefits to get our product to tidewaters and to other countries. We need a focused government and we have not seen it yet.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to stand today for the first time in this new Parliament to speak on what I consider to be an extremely important issue, but let me first talk about being here, for the first time in 11 years, as a member of a new riding. I now proudly represent the good people of Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan. For the previous 11 years, I was the member for a riding called Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, but that consistency was eliminated during the recent boundary review. Now I have a brand new riding, which I am extremely proud to represent, and I thank the voters of that riding for their confidence in me and for re-electing me for my fifth term in this place.

I want to say a few things off the top about the debate we are having today. First and foremost, I honestly cannot understand why members of the government have stated that they will be opposing this motion today. I thought for a moment that they would at least have the ability to vote freely on this. I thought for a moment that perhaps some of the members from regions in Canada that are solidly in support of energy east, like New Brunswick, would be able to stand in the House and vote freely, according to the wishes of their constituents. That, at least, is what the Prime Minister had promised during the election campaign. Apparently, saying one thing then means doing another thing today.

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The Prime Minister responded to a question during question period, saying that the Liberal government will be opposing the opposition day motion today. He did not reference the fact that he would allow his members to vote freely. He arbitrarily said that his government will oppose. That is his prerogative. I suppose he can change his mind about allowing free votes. I suppose he can change his mind about allowing his members to represent the views of their constituents. I suppose he can do whatever he wants, because Liberals have a majority in this place. However, what I do not understand is how Liberal members can come to the conclusion that the motion before the House today is something that they cannot support.

Let me explain, if I can, in a little more detail, by reading some of the elements of the Conservative opposition motion and then what the Minister of Natural Resources said earlier today during his speech on the motion.

The opposition motion states, “That...the House: (a) recognize the importance of the energy sector to the Canadian economy and support its development in an environmentally sustainable way”.

What the Minister of Natural Resources said today in his opening address was, “Our government does recognize the importance of the energy sector in Canada and to the Canadian economy, and we wholeheartedly support its development in an environmentally sustainable way”. That is word for word what is contained in the opposition motion. The Minister of Natural Resources agreed word for word with what the motion contains.

Now the Prime Minister is saying that Liberals oppose the motion. One has to ask why. I can only assume it is for some political reasons. I cannot understand what they may be, since the government continues to say that it wants a fresh start. It wants to represent all Canadians' views. It wants to consult with Canadians and represent their views to the best of its ability. Yet when the Minister of Natural Resources said word for word that he agrees with the opposition day motion, how in the world can the Prime Minister then say that the Liberals would oppose the very motion presented today for debate?

I can understand all political parties wanting to intuitively and automatically oppose any initiative posed by an opposing political force. I know that when the Conservatives were in government, and we were for 10 years, the majority of times we opposed opposition day motions, but on occasion, we agreed with opposition motions if we believed and agreed with the content of the motion. For the Prime Minister, basically out of hand, to say that his party will reject today's opposition motion is something I just cannot fathom, because as we have heard here today, we are not just talking about energy east. We are talking about the energy sector. We are talking about what that sector and individual projects like energy east can do to benefit our economy.

We have heard from many eloquent speakers today relating to energy east, in particular, and the economic benefits that would accrue to Canada. We have heard about the jobs that would be created. My colleagues from la belle province have talked about 3,000 jobs that would be created in Quebec alone.

● (1700)

We know that provinces like Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario, and New Brunswick are wholly supportive of this project because they know the economic impact and benefits that would accrue to their provinces. They know that jobs would be created across Canada because of this project.

We know that the economic benefits stem far beyond merely job creation in the energy sector. The benefits from energy east would support the manufacturing sector. It would support the construction industry. It would support a host of other industries in this province, and then indirect, ancillary benefits would support all of us, all of the social programs that we in Canada seem to take for granted, through tax revenues raised by this project.

This \$1.5 billion privately funded project would bring untold tax revenues to Canada, which the government would then be able to use to support some of the initiatives, some of the health care initiatives and social programs, that we take for granted and depend upon.

It is beyond my level of comprehension to understand why the government today would oppose a motion that is merely stating the obvious, that we as a Parliament should be supporting projects in the energy sector, like energy east, if they can be proven to be environmentally sustainable.

All that the Prime Minister would have to say, even though he states he does not want to cheerlead or to pick winners and losers, to prove that the government truly supports the energy sector would be to stand up and say, “I support energy east if it can demonstrate unequivocally that it can be developed in an environmentally sustainable way. If that can be proven, then I will support energy east because of the benefits it would bring to this country.”

Did he do that? No. The Prime Minister simply stated, again, that we have to be responsible. I would suggest that responsibility takes many forms, and one of them is leadership, by showing the Canadian people that he respects all of the workers in the energy sector, understands the benefits that the energy sector can bring to this country, and appreciates the fact that this country, right now, is looking for ways to stimulate the economy that has hit hard times.

We have heard time and time again from speakers, both from the opposition side and some vague references from the government side, about the hardships being foisted upon provinces like Alberta and Saskatchewan. Provinces like Alberta and Saskatchewan, who have proven time and time again that they want to be willing partners in Confederation and year after year after year that they are willing to contribute vast amounts of money, billions of dollars, to the Canadian economy through equalization programs, want to be heard. They want to be appreciated.

They simply want the new Prime Minister of this country to understand the fact that the project being debated today, energy east, is good for Canada. We all agree that it has to be developed in an environmentally secure and sustainable way.

However, to deny the very existence of the energy sector and its importance to the Canadian economy is shameful. I call upon the government to reverse its position and to please think about and support today's opposition motion, which is good for Canada.

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• (1705)

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot even begin to tell the House how much respect I have for my colleague. I have known him for quite some time. I sat on that side of the House for the entire tenure of the Conservative government.

To my surprise, I heard him say that there should be a free vote within the House, and to my surprise, the member referred to the tyrannical majority government. I swear there is a small indentation on this floor where my rear end landed, because I jumped and fell right out of my chair. When the member started to talk and lecture us about freeing up the votes within the House, I thought, honest to goodness, this is something that was not done in the past 8 to 10 years, which is the responsible way to look at a project of this magnitude stretching across this country.

We know the benefits. Newfoundland and Labrador is not directly affected by this, but we know the benefits of this industry and now the turmoil created by the situation in the oil and gas sector.

Could my hon. colleague talk very briefly to us about what is the responsible way, because we never saw it in those years of Conservative government?

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the comments made by my friend and my colleague across the way. I would want to point out, however, his comments were factually incorrect. If members want to go back to check the record, which I have stated in this House on many occasions, with all the private members' bills in the 10 years that we were in government, our government, at that time, supported the government position 77% of the time. In other words, about 25%-plus of our members would vote against the government's private members' bills or government-sponsored private members' bills.

Contrast that with the voting record of both the Liberal Party and the NDP. The Liberal Party voted 93% of the time in favour of Liberal Party private members' bills. The NDP, 99% of time, voted in favour of one of its own private members' bills. In other words, they were whipped; we were allowed to vote freely.

However, the point that I was making here is merely to reflect the fact that during the election campaign the Liberal leader at the time, now Prime Minister, stated, without equivocation, he wanted to do things differently. The government wants to take votes differently in this new place, this new configuration. He is the one who said he would allow his members to vote freely. Clearly, saying one thing on the campaign trail does not reflect the reality in today's Parliament.

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, earlier, a member of the Conservative caucus told the House that 2016 was the year of the monkey. Truer words have never been spoken. A little earlier, another member of the Conservative caucus was monkeying around when he claimed that the fossil fuel industry had saved whales from extinction. Unbelievable.

When I heard that, I had to wonder what the residents of the Lower St. Lawrence and the north shore would think. They were

threatened by a port that was almost built in Cacouna and would have jeopardized the whale habitat.

I also have to wonder what other marine mammals my Conservative colleague thinks were saved by the oil industry. The polar bear?

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I find it passing strange the member would make reference to the St. Lawrence, the environment, and beluga whales.

What I would point out to be quite a contradiction, and this stems from the government side, is how the mayor of Montreal thinks it would be environmentally proper to dump eight million litres of raw sewage into the St. Lawrence and, yet, oppose the energy east pipeline because, he says, it may not be environmentally sustainable. There seems to be a bit of contradiction in terms.

What we have stated, in essence, is that any energy project, any pipeline project, has to be proven, has to be demonstrated empirically, scientifically, and above reproach, that it is environmentally sustainable. Then, and only then, would we agree to approve and support such a project. That is the proper approach to be taking.

We want pipelines. We know it is the safest and most secure way to transport oil in this country. It is far better than rail, as the member would know, with the tragedy in Lac-Mégantic. It is far better than tankers, far better than truck transport. Therefore, we want to ensure that not only does the transportation adhere to safety regulations, but it complies with a strong regulatory review process that we have established in this country.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for North Vancouver.

I appreciate the opportunity to offer a few words with respect to the motion by the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar. If I may, I would like to focus my remarks today on consultations and engagement with indigenous people.

When any project presents either a challenge or opportunity for an indigenous community, meaningful consultation is crucial. Aboriginal and treaty rights are affirmed in section 35 of the Constitution. The government needs to ensure that, moving forward, we uphold the honour of the crown and that proposed projects make good policy sense for indigenous peoples and all Canadians. As the hon. members know, there are many projects representing potential new investments that are either planned or under way in Canada, and many are located in or near indigenous communities or on traditional territories. These projects have the potential to create important new opportunities for indigenous communities.

Today, over 30,000 indigenous people work in energy, mining, and forestry jobs throughout Canada, this great country. That makes the natural resources sector a leading private sector employer of indigenous Canadians. What is more, the indigenous population is young and growing at a time when there will be an increasing number of opportunities in these sectors over the coming years. Yet we know the strong leadership in indigenous communities is also an integral part of responsibly developing Canada's natural resources, as more indigenous leaders take a proactive role in determining how their communities engage in resource development. We know that properly consulting those communities and leaders is paramount to ensuring that we get things right.

We also know that we need to do things differently. Yesterday, we heard the government deliver on a key promise to do just that. As the Minister of Natural Resources noted, the Government of Canada has taken an important first step to restoring the public's trust and faith in the way Canada reviews and assesses major resource projects. I am pleased to highlight today that the first step includes enhanced collaborations and consultations with indigenous populations, respecting their rights and interests. This is an important point. The Prime Minister has said that no relationship is as important to him as the one with indigenous peoples. This government has been very clear: It will begin to renew that relationship based on the recognition of rights, respect, collaboration, and partnership.

Yesterday's announcement also made our intentions clear. The government takes our consultation obligations very seriously. The Prime Minister has also said how "critically important it is for First Nations to be full partners at those tables where shared decisions about the future of our country are made, from resource development to environmental stewardship". As we all know, consulting indigenous groups is already mandatory where a proposed activity may have an adverse impact on potential or established aboriginal and treaty rights. With this new development, the government is confirming our commitment to work even more closely with indigenous groups, building on the relationship that provides the foundation for proper and full consultation.

As the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Natural Resources noted yesterday, the government will respect the rights and interests of indigenous peoples while responsibly supporting our natural resources sector, and it will make decisions based on science and evidence, including traditional knowledge from indigenous peoples. Hundreds of first nations, Métis nations, and Inuit groups may be impacted by projects like pipelines, and yesterday's announcement confirmed that this government is absolutely committed to seeking their views and input.

As announced, a process for those consultations will be developed and funding will be available for these groups to participate in those consultations. Currently, consultations with these groups are already integrated into environmental assessments, but it is clear that more must be done. Improvements to Canada's whole-of-government approach are needed to undertake these consultations and fulfill our legal duty to consult.

I would like to take a moment to shed further light on some of the steps being taken with respect to consultation with indigenous

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peoples. What is different after yesterday's announcement is threefold.

First, the government will take immediate steps to improve awareness of the environmental assessment process within indigenous communities through education and training programs.

• (1715)

Second, the government will promote early community engagement by proponents on upcoming project environmental assessments.

Third, it will enhance indigenous capacity to actively participate in project environmental assessments through improved participant funding, better integration of traditional knowledge, and the building of technical capacities within indigenous organizations.

Further, the government will meet with indigenous groups to determine the ways they would like to be engaged in the broader review.

The Government of Canada looks forward to providing further details on these steps over the coming weeks and months.

I firmly believe that working together is the best way to achieve our shared goal of healthier, more prosperous, self-sufficient indigenous communities. Indeed, it is the only way toward the nation-to-nation relationship that has been promised.

The Government of Canada is listening to indigenous groups and is renewing the relationship to advance reconciliation. When any project, energy or otherwise, may impact indigenous peoples, the government looks forward to continuing to work with all partners on shared solutions that can deliver positive results for those communities, not only for their benefit today but for future generations.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to something one of my colleagues talked about, which was the importance of MPs being able to represent their interests on a wide range of issues. I see this motion as one that is truly not partisan; it is something that we could support. Even members of the same party but from different regions of the country could support it, because it really is a motion of general support for our natural resources, particularly gas and oil.

I will read a quote, and then I will say who it is attributed to. It states:

Let me be very clear on Energy East...[I am] pro-pipeline...and pro-Energy East.

I am going to be an advocate for Saint John, I am going to move forward whatever is best for our riding.

That was said by the new Liberal member of Parliament for Saint John—Rothesay. That is a very powerful statement made by that new member of Parliament.

I am wondering if my colleague, who is also a new member of Parliament, can speak to how disappointed that Liberal member's constituents will be when he votes against energy east and against this motion.

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●(1720)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, the most important point we must come up with at this time is to have a robust consultation process through the National Energy Board. That consultation process was obviously broken during the last 10 years of Conservative rule. We need to consult with our indigenous partners and with industry and business to move forward. We need to have a robust review of all major projects that are currently outlined. We need to make sure that all communities are heard.

This is something that may be new to my opposition neighbours next door, but it is not new to us. We must consult with aboriginal Canadians and all Canadians who work in this sector. We know how important the resource sector is to Canada. We understand that we need to reduce the differential between WTI and WCS, and we are working hard to attribute that. However, we need a robust NEB process, and that is what we are putting in place.

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know how hard the hon. member has worked in the last few months to be elected on October 19. I am wondering if he could share with us how important it is to him and to his constituents to achieve the right balance between the energy sector and the environment. How important is that to his constituents?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, we live in a time when we cannot de-link the environment and the economy. They are part and parcel of a partnership, and they must move forward on a sustainable basis.

We need to have a serious conversation, and our government is having that conversation. That was one of the reasons we won on October 19. Canadians were tired of a government that ignored the environment, that ignored the challenge of climate change and greenhouse gas emissions. Our government promised to move forward on that, and we are, with COP 21, with the announcement yesterday. That is what we are moving forward with so that Canadians know and understand fully that we have an environmental regulatory review process they can have faith in, that when these projects are evaluated there is no political interference, that these projects are evaluated for their merits, and that the various groups of stakeholders are consulted properly, fully, and thoroughly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Boudrias (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House, people singled out Quebec, specifically the stance taken by the mayor of Montreal and the municipalities surrounding the Montreal suburbs.

In my riding, Terrebonne, there is a pipeline that has been in place since the 1970s. In my community, this is unacceptable. I want to make that very clear here. In my riding, neither the people nor their elected leaders want it. The shortest, most economical route is to the west as far as I can tell, but we know that the agreement between Alberta and British Columbia failed. Now it will have to go east.

It might be a good idea to take another look at where the product is going and to consider exporting it via the shortest route. That is my proposal.

●(1725)

[*English*]

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, I would like to repeat that we are going to put in place a robust consultation process and regulatory environmental process for this pipeline and the other pipelines we commented on yesterday in our release. We will put in a place a process where all Canadians can rest assured and have faith in the process we will undertake in the coming months. It will be thorough and full, and all stakeholders will have an opportunity to participate in the process.

It is imperative that Canadians understand that we are working with them not against them, and we will continue to do so. It is imperative that our resource sector has a voice, that it is brought to the table so its concerns are listened to as well.

Canada is a resource-dependent entity; 30% of our business investment over the last few years has come from the oil and gas sector. That is recognized. What the oil and gas sector needs now is a partner in the federal government that it knows will have a regulatory review process that is fair and balanced and links the economy and environment together, so all provinces and Canadians can move together. We will consult with aboriginal Canadians, so that they are full and active partners in these projects as we move forward.

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government understands well that natural resources and natural resource projects play a vital role in our economy. They are important contributors to job creation and economic prosperity for Canadians. This government understands that responsible resource development is crucial for our future. This government further understands that a clean environment and a strong economy go hand in hand and our future well-being demands that we have both. This government supports the development and export of resources in ways that bolster the economy, protect the environment, and bring Canadians together to create a better future.

As a government, we are committed to rebuilding the trust of Canadians in our environmental assessment processes. As the experiences of the past 10 years should tell us, this is the only way to get resources to market responsibly in the 21st century.

We need a robust environmental assessment regime in order to attain our goals. One of this government's major priorities is thus to review and improve Canada's environmental processes. Our government's goal, which we intend to achieve through a robust and comprehensive review of existing environmental assessment processes, is to establish an environmental assessment regime that enables decisions to be based on evidence, takes into account the views and concerns of Canadians, and respects the rights and the interests of indigenous peoples.

We are committed to designing this new environmental assessment regime through robust consultations with the public, indigenous peoples, governments, and industry. We are presently developing the details of these consultations. The government intends to outline its approach in the coming months.

Our government also understands the pressing need to provide clear guidance to project proponents, such as the TMX and energy east pipelines, and to the Canadian public regarding projects that are already undergoing an environmental assessment or that will soon start an environmental assessment under current processes.

Yesterday, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Natural Resources announced the government's interim approach to assessing ongoing projects. Key principles comprising this interim approach are: no project proponent will be asked to return to the starting line; project reviews will continue within the current legislative framework and in accordance with treaty provisions; decisions will be based on science, traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples, and other relevant evidence. Further, the views of the public and affected communities will be sought and considered; indigenous peoples will be meaningfully consulted and, where appropriate, impacts on their rights and interests will be accommodated; and direct and upstream greenhouse gas emissions linked to the projects under review will be assessed. This stands in very stark contrast to the current environmental assessment regime that we have in place.

In addition to rebuilding Canadians' confidence in our environmental assessment processes, this government's domestic and international commitments to sustainable economic development are part and parcel of its strategy for combatting climate change. Our strategy regarding climate change involves establishing national emissions reduction targets while providing flexibility for the provinces and territories to design policies to assist in meeting these commitments, including carbon pricing.

While a comprehensive strategy to address climate change will have a number of elements, one key area of focus will be fostering the development of a robust clean-tech sector in Canada. This includes a focus on renewable forms of energy generation but also clearly involves working with our natural resources sector to reduce its carbon intensity. Clean tech is highly relevant to Canada's resource industries in terms of improving efficiency and enhancing the marketability of such products to global customers. Our government's efforts in the clean-tech space will be a critical part of our approach to combatting climate change and will form a key part of our economic strategy for the resource sector and the broader energy sector.

I have spent the last 20 years as an executive on the front lines of the clean-tech industry. Clean tech offers tremendous potential in entrepreneurship, innovation, and economic growth. Our government's commitments to invest in this critical sector will contribute to lowering our greenhouse gas emissions, create middle-class jobs, and place Canada as a clean technology leader around the world.

● (1730)

As we speak, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change is meeting with her provincial counterparts to make progress toward a pan-Canadian framework that embraces the opportunities that a lower carbon economy will provide.

Canada's natural resources are, indeed, a crucial part of our economy. However, in the modern world major energy projects, such as pipelines, will succeed in gaining the necessary public confidence only if we can demonstrate to Canadians that this can be done in an

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environmentally responsible way. We have a plan that will enable us to restore the confidence of Canadians, a plan to restore the primacy of science and evidence-based decision-making in the evaluation of major projects, including pipelines; a plan to increase and significantly improve the government's engagement with communities, and consultation with indigenous peoples; a plan that will enable us to bring our goods to market in a modern, responsible way.

In short, we are committed to rebuilding the confidence in the integrity of environmental assessment processes in Canada. I am proud to say that Environment and Climate Change Canada, in conjunction with Natural Resources Canada, is taking important steps to ensure that resources are developed responsibly and in a manner that will enable us to restore the confidence of Canadians.

I look forward to working with my colleagues from all parties represented in the chamber to make substantive progress on these important files.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on some of the issues the member was talking about, Conservatives want to get to the same destination but just see a different way of doing it.

As I said earlier regarding the motion that has been presented, this is something that the government can support. It can support it and it would send a signal. We have talked a lot about Alberta, but I want to talk a bit about New Brunswick. I want to ask my colleague if he would comment on the impact there. The government is saying that it would, in principle, support energy east. Obviously, it would have to go through all the environmental processes and it would have to be approved, just like any other piece of infrastructure would have to be approved, but if the government could say that, it would send such a strong signal.

For example, in New Brunswick right now there is an 8.9% unemployment rate, which is obviously higher than the national average. The other part of this issue is that currently it is Saudi oil that is going to New Brunswick. Would it not be better to have Canadian oil? Talking about responsible oil and gas development, that is happening in Canada, not Saudi Arabia. If we look at GHGs downstream or upstream, look at how responsibly Canada does it.

The Liberals should be able to indicate their support, or at least be able to have a free vote. If the Prime Minister does not want to support it, that would be his choice, but Liberals should be able to have a free vote.

● (1735)

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, there was an election fought about four months ago in which this was a critical issue. Canadians said very clearly that they want a process that is built and founded on science, that they want communities to be involved in the process, and that they want indigenous peoples to be respected and consulted in the context of the process. There is a reason why Liberals are sitting on this side of the House and the hon. member is sitting on the other.

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Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, those who represent resource-based regions have certainly seen the huge downturn in the commodity cycle. We are seeing layoffs and mine closures. There are people who travel to work in the gas fields and we want to make sure that we have an economy that makes sense, that is balanced the issues of the environment. The previous government's support to maintain that balance was certainly out of whack.

I want to ask my hon. colleague about the following. One of the concerns I am hearing from the people I work with in the mineral sector is that they want good, clear environmental policies so that they can build trust in first nation communities and develop, but they also want to know if the government will maintain the mineral exploration tax credit, which is so important for maintaining prospecting and finding the next generation of mines, because aging mines are closing now.

Can we get a balance between good, clear environmental direction, but also maintain the support that we need for the resource economy in our regions?

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the support for getting the balance right between resource development and environmental sustainability. There are lots of commonalities in that approach. What we saw yesterday was the first step, but only a first step. We would welcome the input of all members of the House on the more robust environmental assessment process that we will be establishing generally.

The government believes strongly in ensuring the strong economic base that we have, whether it is energy or minerals, and that it continues. I cannot provide an answer at this stage with respect to the specific tax credit, but I am confident that in the budget we will see elements that will ensure the strength of the resource economy going forward.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is great to have in the caucus a person with such experience in the clean energy sector, because it is very important in our platform.

I am sure that the member and environmentalists certainly support the money we are dedicating to green technologies, to the organizational support for organizations that support innovation in green technologies, and to the resource extractors in improving their green technologies.

I think people understand that, but a lot of people may not realize, as the member does, the huge economic benefits some countries have gained from this, which can be gained in this green sector. Maybe he could talk further about that.

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, there is a reason why most of the advanced economies, including China, have focused an enormous amount of energy on the development of plans for the clean-tech sector. If we look at the growth of various industries around the world, clean tech has grown at about 10% a year for over 15 years, and it is expected to grow at least that fast for the next 50 years.

If we think about the fastest-growing areas, such as solar and wind, China is now the largest consumer of clean energy technology in the world, but it is also now the largest producer.

I think that other countries have actually recognized that there are enormous potential benefits for the first adopters and developers, and Canada needs to be part of that. It needs an end-to-end strategy around clean tech that is going to enable us to meet our carbon commitments but also to develop a strong and robust economy in the future.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Calgary Signal Hill.

I am very proud to speak in favour of the motion to support the energy east pipeline. I am also very proud of the environmental record of the Conservatives when we were in government.

Let me give hon. members some numbers, because too often numbers are forgotten. Members on the other side speak with passion and emotion, but never with numbers. Under our watch, there was a 9.5% decrease in per capita CO₂ emissions. There was a significant decline in sulphur dioxide, significant declines in nitrogen dioxide, and a very significant decline in the concentrations of volatile organic compounds.

In 2010 the United Nations said Canada had the second-best water quality ranking among selected industrialized countries. All our protected areas increased by 95%, and our government designated over 135,000 square kilometres of new protected areas since 2006, the largest increase in history. There was the Sydney tar ponds cleanup; Hamilton Harbour remediation; Lake Simcoe cleanup; the habitat stewardship program; Great Lakes cleanup; the recreational fisheries partnership program; and 800,000 new hectares of habitat conserved under the natural areas conservation program. In my own jurisdiction, significant improvements were made to Lake Winnipeg with our Lake Winnipeg cleanup program,

Our government had a tremendous environmental track record, one that I am very proud of, but I am very frightened of the way the new government is operating in terms of the environment.

It is very shameful that the Liberals and the NDP have literally declared war on Canada's natural resource industries and the people and communities who depend on those industries. It is shameful, and I have the honour to represent communities and people who are supported by the natural resources industries.

Natural resources account for about 20% of the Canadian economy, and the health of these industries affects all of us. Look at the recent decline in the stock market. Look at the recent decline in the value of pension funds. Much of the stock market and most of Canada's pension plans are supported by the natural resource industries, those same industries that the Liberals and the NDP actually want to kill.

Energy is Canada's most valuable export, and in addition to creating hundreds and thousands of jobs, these energy exports fuel social programs, support transfer payments, and contribute very strongly to Canada's balance of payments.

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Although natural resources are important to all people in Canada, as I said, they are especially important to rural communities, the kind I represent, where most resource harvesting and extraction is done. In fact, I could even go so far as to say the Liberals and the NDP have declared war on small-town Canada.

When a natural resources company closes down, as recently happened with the potash mine in Sussex, New Brunswick, the affected community itself literally closes down. The Minister of Natural Resources and the House leader were there to watch this, crying crocodile tears for that community, but as a person who lived in a community where a paper mill closed down, I know these are literally life and death events.

Pipelines are critical to the energy industry, and it is critical that Canada gets our crude oil to tidewater. As many people know, there is a two-price system for oil in the world, and since Canada has no pipeline access to salt water, we are essentially a captive supplier to the United States, where we receive the lower West Texas price, as opposed to the higher Brent price.

The difference was very significant four or five years ago when oil prices were very high, and from the figures I saw, we lost about \$20 billion per year because we could not access the higher Brent price. This is why the energy east project is so important. That is why I am so proud to support this particular motion. Not only will this diversify our oil markets and get us higher prices, but it will generate over 14,000 jobs in the nine-year construction phase, much-needed jobs, many of them in economically depressed areas. We are talking about 2,3000 construction jobs in New Brunswick alone, which is reeling from the loss of the potash mine, as I described. Western producers, eastern refiners, and all levels of government would benefit from this.

Furthermore, this would replace imported Saudi oil, which is currently being refined in New Brunswick, with Canadian crude oil instead. Who in their right mind could be against that? If that is not enough, most of this pipeline is already in place, and all that we are talking about over most of the length is a substitution of gas with oil. Who in their right mind could be against that?

● (1740)

It must be noted that pipelines are the safest mode of oil transportation, with 99.999% of oil shipped through federally regulated pipelines arriving at its destination without incident.

What goes into building a pipeline? When I was fresh out of graduate school with my fisheries degree, my first job was in the Mackenzie Valley, way back in the 1970s, with the first proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline. I had the honour of serving the entire pipeline route, along with engineers, wildlife biologists, ecologists, and land use specialists. I will never forget flying in a helicopter over the proposed pipeline route, dropping in at various streams, sampling the streams for fish and benthic invertebrates, looking at the quality of the habitat for spawning, over-wintering, and so on. The wildlife biologist did the same thing for wildlife, and the engineers looked at the capability of the land to support a pipeline, the depth of the hydrology of the stream to ensure that the pipeline would be buried deep enough and so on and so forth.

This was some 40-odd years ago, if not more. Even then, Canada was a world leader in the construction of pipelines. What was interesting is that back in the 1990s, when the price of gas went back up again, the environmental process of the day required that all of that be repeated all over again. Nothing had changed up there, but another 10-year process was put in place to do all the same surveys that we did in the 1970s, and again, ultimately, that particular pipeline was not built because the price of gas declined.

I want to talk about the environmental process. Much of what the Liberals are talking about putting in place will actually be of no benefit to the environment itself. At the briefing yesterday, I asked the staff to quantify any environmental effects that the process we had put in place had. I wanted numbers and measurements of the real environment. The staff people could not do a thing. All we are doing is talking about a process here; we are not talking about the environment itself.

The problem with these processes that the Liberals are going to put in is that delay of a single pipeline project that could improve market access could cost up to \$70 million per day, not to mention the foregone benefits of property taxes, jobs, and social benefits.

I also asked the officials yesterday if there were any intent to do an economic impact analysis of the proposed process, and what I heard was basically crickets. There will be no analysis of the cost of these delays, but we do know that every day's delay costs the Canadian economy about \$70 million.

One of the things that it is important to realize is that the energy business is a people business. People work in the energy industry to put their kids through school, to buy homes, and now with the energy industry in decline, these people are really suffering.

Again, going back to the environmental process that the government announced yesterday, these changes are not improvements. They are all about interference. In fact, this charade should really be called "five steps to get to no". Under this particular process, we can easily see that after all is said and done, the answer will clearly be no. Again, Canada's oil will stay in the ground, and many of the members on the Liberal and NDP sides want Canada's oil to stay in the ground, regardless of the human cost.

I had the honour of working in the oil sands in the winter of 2009-10. I worked at a camp doing environmental assessments. I got to know a lot of the energy workers from all across Canada who worked at the camp, including moms and dads wanting to put their kids through school or to put a down payment on a house, or a young person wanting to pay their university education, or seniors working to ensure that they would have a dignified retirement.

Business of Supply

This is the cost of what the Liberals are proposing. This is what will really happen. I find their lack of concern for the working people in this country truly appalling. It is quite clear that the only party that cares about working Canadians is the Conservative Party of Canada.

That is why I call upon all members of the House to support this vitally important project. It will contribute to nation building, provide much-needed jobs and economic benefits, and guarantee it will be done in an environmentally sound manner. This motion must be supported.

• (1745)

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome my fellow Manitoban's contribution to the debate. I also respect the considerable experience he has in the sector and the way he has observed the energy sector grow in Canada over many years.

However, when we were in New Brunswick and had to be a part of a very serious announcement that affected hundreds of people because of the closure of a potash mine, these were not crocodile tears. No political party in this chamber has a monopoly on compassion. These were people who were suffering from commodity prices, and they were suffering through job losses. We take that seriously. Therefore, I want to assure the member that our interest in these people, and the consequences these job losses have on families, are real.

I would like to ask the member for his experience in helping us sort out the way forward in modernizing the National Energy Board. I would ask him sincerely for his best advice on how we can take advantage of the experience of the regulatory history in Canada to make the future better than it is now. Does he have one suggestion, or perhaps two, on how we could make the regulatory process in Canada more responsive to the Canadian people?

• (1750)

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Mr. Speaker, in response to his first point about New Brunswick, all I can say is that talk is cheap. These are real consequences. I will accept that the minister's intentions are good. However, good intentions are not enough. It is all about policy, process, programs, and the signals they send in the street to encourage them to grow and develop. The wrong policies, the wrong programs, and excess delays due to lengthened environmental processes result in the closure of towns and projects that are not built.

In terms of fixing the National Energy Board process, quite frankly, all environmental processes should focus on the environment. The members opposite are implying that somehow the environment was degraded under our term. I have proven with my numbers from Environment Canada that the environment improved mathematically on our watch. Environmental processes should focus on the environment.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am interested in the member's comment with respect to the Conservatives' record. The truth of the matter is, the Conservatives actually broke the assessment process by changing many of the laws that should apply and by reducing the requirements of the environmental assessment process, whether it was the Navigable Waters Protection

Act, whether it was hiding all of that with the Environmental Assessment Act in the omnibus bill and so on.

With a weakened, and what I would say is an environmental assessment process not based on scientific evidence, how can we come forward and say that the record of the former government is one that we can all stand behind and simply plow ahead, without renewing a true environmental assessment process that is based on science?

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Mr. Speaker, I really thank the hon. member for proving my point. Notice how in the questions she asked there was not a single quantifiable item. There was nothing about the state of water quality, nothing about air quality, nothing about biodiversity. It was all about process.

I was on the fisheries committee and the environment committee for my four years. I had a front row seat in the changes to the legislation there. I challenge any member of any party in the House to prove that any of that had any negative environmental effect, because it did not.

By the way, the Navigable Waters Protection Act is not a conservation of environment act, it is a navigation act that was written in 1895 and we modernized the act.

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand today in the House. I think I am if not the last then close to the last speaker to this motion. That has both good and bad repercussions. I get the last word, but unfortunately, an awful lot has been said. A lot was said on this side of the House. I did not hear a lot that was said on the other side of the House that I would want to repeat, but I am going to try to do the best I can to summarize some of the comments I heard today and to try one final time to see if we can get a very well-attended government caucus to support our motion.

I want to make a couple of comments first about the Minister of Natural Resources and his attentiveness today. I want to congratulate him for being part of this debate and for sitting through all eight hours of this debate. I could not help but watch him and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change on CPAC last night. It was a very uncomfortable minister making this announcement. It was a minister who knows that he has to deal with industry, and he was very uncomfortable in his skin, in my view, because he would like to move this industry forward.

I believe that he would like to address some of the issues we have talked about today, but he is continually outvoted by all of those members of his own government, many of them new, who were elected under a view that was uninformed about western Canada. I hope that they are much more informed today about what has made this country work over the past 148 years. I do feel for the Minister of Natural Resources.

The same thing is going to apply when the Minister of Finance tries to prepare a budget. We have a Minister of Finance who is probably going to want to try to do some of the right things, but he is going to be outvoted by the taxers and spenders who are around him. It is not a government that wants to work with the private sector to create jobs.

Business of Supply

All I heard in all the talking points in the debate today was how the government is going to create jobs through this magical infrastructure program it is going to come forward with. That will be nice, but it is not going to solve the problems of the Canadian economy.

I am shocked that my two colleagues from Calgary, the Minister of Veterans Affairs, the member for Calgary Centre, and the member for Calgary Skyview, have not participated in this debate today. Frankly, I was looking forward to being refreshed by the Minister of Veterans Affairs. After his speech the other day, I actually wanted to ask him some questions about his speech, but unfortunately, he elected not to take part in this debate. He did not stand in the House and say that he supports the industry in our province. He did not raise his voice in the House to say that he supports energy east.

I also want to make a couple of comments about some things that have been said here today. The member for Gatineau said something along the lines of if we vote for this motion, we are asking them to approve the energy east pipeline. That is not what the motion says. The motion says very clearly, “express its support for the Energy East pipeline”. I Googled “support”, and it says help, aid, assist. It has nothing to do with approve. The member from Gatineau did not even read the motion. If he did, all he did was to do what his whip told him to do, and that is vote against the motion.

We also heard from the member for Saint John—Rothesay, who talked about his issues and unemployment in Saint John. We heard the member for Portage—Lisgar quote the member from Saint John on the campaign trail.

● (1755)

We heard our colleague talk about the Prime Minister and his promises on the campaign trail, and now stands in the House without even hearing the debate, without even giving his members of caucus an opportunity to express opinions and say that they are going to oppose this motion. That is hardly a new sunny way of governing our country.

However, I have never been so proud to be a member of a team listening to our presentations today, whether it was the somewhat lighthearted presentation but very serious one by the member for Red Deer—Lacombe, or the very passionate speech that was made by our member for Chilliwack—Hope. My colleague next to me talked about the real people issues.

All I heard from the other side were Xerox talking points, starting with the Minister of Natural Resources, who was incredibly uncomfortable making those comments today. He knows he has to go back and sell this dog food to the people of Calgary.

On the remarks that I will talk about briefly tonight, much of it has been said, but I will repeat so we can correct some of the untrue facts that have been said across the way.

We hear about no pipeline approvals during the Conservative administration. We have proven that four pipelines have not only been approved but they have been built and they are producing. They are moving oil 100% of the time safely.

In addition to that, during the Conservative government's time, the National Energy Board had very serious hearings on the northern

gateway pipeline, and it gave its approval to that pipeline. That project should move ahead, except we have a government that talks about dealing with facts, and about scientific evidence. Then we have a Prime Minister who, in the middle of night, says that we will not allow tankard traffic on the west coast. Well what is the scientific evidence? That is just a joke.

I also want to remind our friends in the Liberal government that every day of delay, as my colleague for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa in Manitoba says, is \$70 million per day. We have now seen 40 to 70 days of delay on these projects,

I was a farm kid from Saskatchewan at one point in time, but I like to put things in fairly simple perspective. We produce a product in western Canada called oil. It is a product that we all use in many ways. I would venture to say that there is not one member of the Liberal government who does not have a constituent who is not directly affected one way or another by the production of oil in our country.

We take that oil, put it into a pipeline, and ship it across the country, 99.9996% safe, and we create jobs in a refinery in Saint John and in Quebec. It does not get any more simple than that. Then we lay on top of this that we do not buy foreign oil to refine in these refineries. It seems pretty simple to me, but they cannot quite figure it out on the other side of the House.

I am old enough to have lived through something called the national energy program. It was introduced a former prime minister named Trudeau. That program caused wreckage in our part of the country and it took 10 to 15 years to recover from that.

I remind members of the House, especially the member for the Northwest Territories, about something called the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline. There was delay after delay because of interference, because of consultation, more consultation, more study, and more consultation, until the time that gas was worth nothing, and that investment dried up and went nowhere.

If we do not move on something as straightforward and basic as the energy east pipeline, then we are absolutely missing out on a tremendous opportunity. It is a \$15 billion investment. That is about equal to what I think our budget deficit will be. That is private money. Why would we not put this money in?

● (1800)

In my riding, NEP now stands for “no more energy pipeline” because that is what people there think the current government is going to do. Far too many people, I am hearing, are saying it is time for NEP, in their mind, to stand for “no more equalization payments”.

Business of Supply

•(1805)

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his comments, and I would like to recognize his long-standing service to the people of Alberta in the provincial legislature. I will refrain from tagging the hon. member for any responsibility in the previous government. He was not yet a member when that government systematically put this country in a position to earn five fossil awards in a row from the United Nations climate change, and the country's first lifetime un-achievement award on climate change science.

I would like to ask the hon. member across the way how many budget round tables he and his colleagues hosted while we were getting ready to make the 2016 budget. My colleagues and I have held hundreds of budget round tables to talk to business people across this country.

My question for the hon. member is this. How would he expect this government to get pipelines to market with such a terrible environmental reputation?

Mr. Ron Liepert: Mr. Speaker, again I would like to congratulate the member for his election in Edmonton Centre. We will do everything to ensure that he is a one-term member but while he is here we will have to deal with him.

It is a matter of opinion. I can say that I have over 100,000 constituents who are proud of the industry they worked in. They would be absolutely appalled to have that member stand there and say that somehow they worked at an industry that is meaningless, because some environmentalist, some movie star in Los Angeles decided to give some kind of phony award away.

Getting to budget round tables, we had the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons stand in this House about a month and a half ago now and name the finance committee that was supposed to hold public hearings around this country. I happen to be one of the names on that finance committee. The current government is so inept it cannot even get a committee approved. Now it wants to study multi-billion dollar projects for years on end and we cannot even get a committee approved from the government to go out and consult with Canadians on the budget.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member just proved my point yet again, making a comment about the state of Canada's environment under our previous government, with not a single measurement, not a single number, not a single example. It was nothing but hyperbole. That is what the other side does. The Liberals have no mathematical, quantifiable evidence regarding the environment. They are afraid to talk about it because the environment improved considerably under our watch.

Could my colleague elaborate on the very human cost of the decline in the energy industry, not just in Calgary and Alberta but across the country? Could he talk about what it means to families and their futures, their incomes, and their hopes and dreams with the current decline in the energy industry? The decline, I might add, has partly been caused by bad public policy by the current government.

Mr. Ron Liepert: Mr. Speaker, I could do that. It has been well documented by all of my colleagues who spoke today. However, I want to make another comment.

About five years ago, when serving as the minister of energy in Alberta, we hosted the energy ministers from across the country. We went up to the oil sands because none of them had been there. I happened to be sitting next to the NDP minister of energy from Nova Scotia at the time, and we were about to land in Fort McMurray.

He looked out the window and said, "Where is this boreal forest I always hear about?"

I said, "That is it."

He said, "That is not boreal forest; those are scrub pines."

I said, "Yes, that is the boreal forest."

That is the kind of stuff that we have been misinformed about. The NDP is the biggest offender of misinformation. Even the NDP government at that time said that was just a bunch of misinformation.

•(1810)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we need a reality check. In listening to the debate today, there are number of thoughts that came across my mind.

First and foremost, we need to recognize that the Government of Canada has done something in a few weeks that the previous government could not do in 10 years.

We actually saw the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Environment, and the Minister of Transport come together—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

I am trying my best to hear the hon. parliamentary secretary. There is too much noise in the chamber. I am sure that all hon. members will want to know what the parliamentary secretary has to say. He is usually not short on volume.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: The heckling does not bother me, Mr. Speaker. I still want to make my point.

The point is that we have done more to address the issue at hand than the previous government did in 10 years. We need to give credit where credit is due.

At the end of the day, look at the former Conservative government. What was it able to achieve since it got a majority government? Not an inch of pipeline.

It is not as if energy east has only been here in the last three, four, or five weeks. This idea has been talked about for years. What did the former government do? Nothing. It built not an inch of pipeline when it had a majority government.

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What has the Liberal government been able to achieve? In a very short time frame, we have come up with a process, a process that Canadians can believe is going to work. If it is going to work, that means it is good for the economy and good for our environment. All we need is a chance to be able to demonstrate that.

I would suggest that there are things that have to be done. There has to be consultation. The Government of Canada is working on the consultation, whether it is with our different levels of government, our indigenous people, or others. There needs to be a collaboration of the different departments. We have witnessed that.

Most important, as I say, we have the process in place to ensure that the environment is in fact taken into consideration and to ensure that our natural resources get to market.

We in the Liberal Party acknowledge and recognize how important our natural resources are to our economy. On several occasions in question period, we heard the Minister of Natural Resources talk about their contribution to GDP of over 20%.

We understand that. We believe in the middle class, which means that we must support the industries and natural resources that are important to our country, but so is the environment. We believe that we must have a process to protect our environment.

There is the difference between us and the Conservatives. We not only believe in our economy, we believe in the environment. We need to ensure that the process that we have in place will be in the long-term best interests of our country. This is something that we have been able to achieve but the government before us failed to achieve.

So, let us give credit where credit is due.

[*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 yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1815)

Mr. Gordon Brown: Mr. Speaker, after that flurry of excitement, I ask that the vote be deferred until Monday, February 1, 2016, at the end of the time provided for government orders.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, the recorded division is deferred until Monday, February 1, at the end of government orders.

[*Translation*]

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 6:15 p.m.)

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