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Monday, October 3, 2016

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Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, October 3, 2016

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

• (1105)

[*English*]

WAYS AND MEANS

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I wish to table two notices of ways and means motions to amend the Income Tax Act.

Pursuant to Standing Order 83(2), I ask that orders of the day be designated for consideration of these motions.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

NATIONAL SEAL PRODUCTS DAY ACT

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.) moved that Bill S-208, An Act respecting National Seal Products Day, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, before I start, I want to say that in 2004-05, when I was first elected, the minister of fisheries and oceans at that time was one of the strongest, most powerful advocates for the sealing industry that this country has ever seen. That, sir, was you, and I thank you very much for that. We all thank you for your service in that cause. That was not just a way of trying to win favour with the Speaker. I am serious about the issue.

This is a very important day for us, and also for a wonderful person, the former Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette. She was the champion of this in the Senate in 2014. The bill died on the Order Paper, and then it came back, of course, moved successfully through the Senate, and now it sits here in the House of Commons. I am honoured to move this.

We are proposing to vote for May 20 to be national seal products day. First of all, why May 20? That is a good question. May 20 coincides with European Maritime Day. The reason we are doing this, and it is not in jest, is because in the European Union, they spend a full day celebrating the culture of the marine industry,

including fishing, harvesting of animals, and all fisheries around the European Union and the entire continent.

Senator Hervieux-Payette thought to have this day coincide with that day as a way of celebrating what we do in the way of harvesting this animal. As we all know, a few years ago, the European Union introduced a ban on seal products, which we vehemently opposed at the time. We challenged it through the WTO, rather unsuccessfully, but nevertheless it exists. There was an exemption for indigenous persons. I will talk about that in my speech a little later. I understand the member for Cariboo—Prince George will be talking about the indigenous factor for seal products. I thank him in advance for doing that.

I also want to thank the seconder of this bill, the member for Laurentides—Labelle, who worked on this when he used to work for me. He worked on this quite a bit. I am happy to say that he is seconding the bill. It is also very fitting that the mover of this today is from Newfoundland and Labrador, and the seconder is from Quebec. These are the two provinces that have harvested seals the most in the commercial industry.

The gulf seal fishery—because we call it a fishery even though they are mammals—in Quebec, and the other seal fishery, primarily in Newfoundland and Labrador, in an area called “The Front”, takes place in April and May.

As we go into this right now, I want to talk about the industry itself and what it has done for the commercial side in the coastal communities. Certainly over the last 10 years, there has been a decline in a major way. By way of illustration, in 2004, \$18 million of seal products were exported, primarily in meat, oil, and, of course, pelts, which was the most at the time. The pelts constitute the garment industry. These are garments such as boots, mittens, slippers, and bow ties.

This one, incidentally, was given to me by the Hon. John Crosbie of Newfoundland and Labrador. I wear it very proudly. He was a true advocate for the industry. Recently, he set up a sealers memorial in the town of Elliston, Newfoundland and Labrador. I thank him for this, and I wear it today as such. If anyone has seal products, I suggest they wear them over the next while. I see that some members are wearing them, and I thank them for that.

Private Members' Business

Let us look at 2004 again. There was \$18 million in exports around the world, primarily in nations such as Norway, Russia, throughout the European Union, some at that point in Asia, not a lot, like we have now, and China, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong. However, that point was the peak of the industry. One pelt would get just over \$100. Today's pelt price is just under \$20. That gives us an idea of how devastating it has been.

There are a couple of other factors as well. Several years of the strong dollar did not help. Also, there has been a substantial amount of ice cover, both east of Quebec, Îles de la Madeleine in particular, and also in Newfoundland and Labrador. That did not help the situation.

• (1110)

It was some \$18 million that was the value back then. Today, the exports are just over \$300,000. It has taken a downturn. I mentioned earlier the ban on seal products in the European Union. Russia has also banned seal products. I am not sure about that one, simply because it was a major importer of seal products. President Putin felt, in his infinite wisdom, that banning seal products was a good thing to do, and it put a lot of people out of work.

Here in Canada, of course, we do not have a ban, but we have an industry that is being recognized for a humane hunt and harvest of these animals. In 2009, through the marine mammal regulations, we put through a three-step process for a kill of a particular seal. It is mandatory training now for commercial licence holders to do this. An independent group of veterinarians, an international group by the way, said a while ago that it represented a humane harvest, more humane than in many cases of domesticated animals, and certainly more humane than other hunts that have taken place throughout Europe.

I will give an example. Several years ago, I put a motion in the House to ban lederhosen. I am not kidding. The reason I did that is there is an unregulated hunt that takes place with deer and boar animals in Germany. The Germans harvest it primarily through Bavaria, but basically it is not as regulated as the seal hunt is here. The harvesting of seals is very regulated, but their wild hunts are not so much. I put a motion in the House. Since they were going to ban seal products, it made sense. They were killing all these animals to create lederhosen. It never got to a vote. I did it in jest. Nevertheless, I wanted to make the point that if they were going to say that the harvesting of seals is inhumane, then they have to open up the debate to all animals being harvested.

How do we harvest our animals? We know about cruelty to animals in domesticated ways; we know about cruelty to animals in general. However, let us look at the situation we have here. We have a highly regulated harvest of a mammal that represents a great commercial value. We do not get as much from it as we used to. It has a value of \$34 million in one year as far as landed value is concerned, and these are primarily harp seals. However, we understand that by doing the steps, such as mandatory training in the three-step process for the harvesting of the animal, that makes it humane. These are all international standards that are looked upon by international animal welfare groups. Some of them said "yes", most of them said "no", but the problem is that the ones who said no did it, in my opinion, in a very selfish manner.

I mentioned earlier about deer and boar that are harvested in Germany and it being less regulated than our hunt. The reason it is not highlighted as much is because putting a deer or a boar animal on the front of a pamphlet to raise money does not work as well as putting a seal pup on there, now does it? Therein lies the problem that we have had for many, many years.

If we look at the seal pup when it is born, it has white fur. Protesters use that as a way of putting forward their mission to raise money for their individual groups. It is demagoguery at its worst. What we have is a situation where we do not harvest that animal; it is much older than that. Therefore, the most frustrating part is the myths that we keep battling against. We keep getting pushed back because those myths keep circulating about how we harvest an animal. It is no different than any other animal harvests around the world.

I had an argument with a British member of parliament one day. He said he did not like the seal hunt because he did not like the way we harvested the animal, the way it is done. I did not want to be too angry. I wanted to try to be intelligent about it, and I pointed out his leather shoes. He shook his head and said he knew what I was going to say, that he was wearing leather that came from a cow, but he said that it is a domesticated animal. I am sure the cow did not really care whether it was domesticated or not; it was about to face its ultimate demise.

• (1115)

Nevertheless, I asked him how the cow was slaughtered, and he could not tell me. Therein lies the mistruths that have been put out there.

The point of this is to say that our national seal products are tied to culture, going way back. I will give members an idea how far it goes back. Several hundred years ago, when the mass harvesting of seals took place, the oil from these seals was transported to London. It was excellent fuel for the street lamps. It is kind of ironic. In a way, the British started the anti-seal hunt campaign with groups such as the International Fund for Animal Welfare, Greenpeace and others.

Many of these groups have come around to understanding how this harvest takes place. Some have not, however. We have suffered the wrath of many mistruths by them, and unfortunately that continues to this very day.

However, there is an exemption in Europe now for indigenous communities. We have invested a bit of money as did the former government. We invested around \$5.7 million, which is a good investment, to allow indigenous groups to market their products within Europe and other places. This is essential because the marketing help certainly will bring a level of understanding as to how we harvest animals in a humane way and how we respect this as being the culture of indigenous communities. Nunavut is now doing that and soon the Northwest Territories will embark on the same. That is ideal.

Private Members' Business

I know my colleague, the member for Labrador, speaks about this quite a bit.

We can do many things to increase the level of understanding as to how we can get around these lies and myths about seal harvesting, with which people around the world have painted us. We have heard it all. My ancestors were called barbarians for what they did. Someone asked me once why my grandfather had taken part in killing seals. I believe I said that it had something to do with supporting his family.

We need to increase this understanding. A short time ago, when the member for Nunavut was the minister, he went to the United States and met President Obama. He had his seal tie on when he met him. I thought that was a very touching moment. We are going to turn the corner. We are going to increase the level of understanding through the indigenous communities, and all coastal communities, for that matter. I have many coastal communities that rely on this.

There was a time when up to half a person's income was created from the seal harvest, up until about 2010 when the market started suffering.

However, I believe the markets will come back for many reasons: first, seal oil is rich in omega-3; second the fur is high-quality; and third, the meat is also good. We are making efforts to increase market awareness in Asia, such as China. Hopefully, it will turn out to be a big market. However, we need to stay away from the bans of seal products based upon myths, not conservation.

Back in the seventies, there were less than two million harp seals on the east coast. Now there are 7.4 million of them. They are plentiful, indeed, to the point where some nations kill seals because they get in the way of the ecosystem. What is their excuse?

Nevertheless, I want to thank the House for hearing me on this. I look forward to the debate and any questions. I look forward to the support of all members of the House for Bill S-208. Finally, I again would like to thank Senator Hervieux-Payette for bringing this forward.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame. I was happy to hear his speech, which clearly showed how passionate he is about this extremely important issue.

I wonder if he would care to comment on one aspect he did not mention in his speech: harp and grey seal population control with respect to cod stocks. In the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence, the cod stock is taking a long time to recover. According to Fisheries and Oceans Canada, cod recovery is slow because of the expanding grey seal population, which has grown from about 10,000 to nearly a million in 50 years.

Both cultural and economic issues are in play here, but the fishery is also a factor. We have to consider the species' impact on the ecosystem and the importance of controlling the population. Can he comment on this important issue?

● (1120)

[English]

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, the member brings up a valid point. I did not get around to the conservation aspect vis-à-vis other species and the crowded ecosystem with respect to both harp seals and grey seals. He is absolutely right and I thank him. Some of the most passionate advocates for the commercial seal hunt have come from the province of Quebec, much like my own province.

Nevertheless, with respect to the recovery of cod, seals play a factor in the ecosystem. Obviously, overfishing is a major factor as well. There may come a time when we have to curb the population measures, just like we do with other species, which could create many problems. Some countries do this. They condemn us and part of the seal ban. Sweden is one of them. It does have a cull on seals that affect its shores. Because of that, Scotland and other places with seals are talking about culls. This has to be addressed.

The member is right about the fact that how the 7.4 million harp seals mix with the ecosystem has not been fully addressed yet. We know a lot, but we will need to know more. The seals will play a major factor in the recovery of cod on the east coast, and we have to get to that.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for bringing this issue forward, and for wearing his charming bow tie.

Could the member comment about the troubling issue of people sometimes judging a practice or a cultural element of a society, such as the seal hunt in Newfoundland and Labrador, without having even appreciated, visited or gotten to know the people who engage in that traditional practice, whether that be first nations or Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We all remember the case of celebrities coming onto ice floes and not being sure what province or part of the country they were in, yet condemning this practice that had been a livelihood for people for generations?

Would the member care to comment on how debates like this in the chamber can allow for a thoughtful discussion of how a diverse country like Canada has these unique traditions and heritages that should not be condemned by people who do not even know the people involved or the practice at issue?

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Durham for his comment about my charming bow tie, as I stand here blushing shamelessly. That is very sweet.

The member is correct. Paul McCartney was the celebrity who did not know where he was. He was in Prince Edward Island but claimed to be in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Private Members' Business

All that aside, as the member pointed out, the lack of understanding is part of the problem. These celebrities witness the actual harvest but do not witness the cultural aspect that follows the harvest. That is the problem. If they did, they would probably go back with a greater appreciation. I think of a former governor general who took part in the ceremony of eating the seal meat. It was really something at the time. I wish those celebrities would do that.

A lot of people will say that it is easy for politicians from Quebec or Newfoundland and Labrador to be in favour of the seal harvest because it is a popular thing. However, in Europe, it is a popular thing to be on the other side of the argument. At least I can say that the vast majority of politicians from Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador, and across the country, have a better understanding of the seal harvest than the protesters.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame for hosting our parliamentary fisheries committee tour last week. I and others on the committee toured Newfoundland and Labrador, beautiful St. John's and Gander, as well as Miramichi in New Brunswick.

It is an honour to rise in the House today to speak to Bill S-208. Bill S-208 would mark May 20 as a national seal products day each year. This would allow for the celebration of Canada's rich heritage where for hundreds of years our indigenous peoples and coastal communities have respected the seal harvest in order to maintain healthy wildlife populations and deep cultural traditions.

The Conservative Party is the only major federal political party to explicitly state its support for the seal harvest and its official policy declaration. For my colleagues on all sides, let me just reiterate this policy:

We believe the government must continue to support the Canadian sealing industry by working to eliminate unfair international trade bans on Canadian seal products.

The Conservatives' statement of support has been in the party's policy declaration since it was adopted at the party's very first policy conference in Montreal in 2005. This policy has been featured in virtually every party platform since that time. However, this is not merely a symbolic gesture.

The previous Conservative government pursued legal challenges at the WTO and then the European Court of Justice against the European Union ban on seal products. In fact, our previous government invested millions of dollars in the promotion of seal products and the opening of new markets for these products, as our hon. colleague mentioned earlier.

The seal harvest goes beyond just wildlife management. Archaeological evidence suggests that native Americans and first nations peoples have been hunting seals for thousands of years. Seal meat was, and is today, an important source of fat, protein, and vitamins, and seal products hold significant and traditional values to northern communities and our first nations. In fact, not only did seal meat help meet dietary needs, seal pelts were also vital for warmth when it came to long, cold winters. As was mentioned earlier and a couple of times today, they make great ties as well.

Although much has changed in the 21st century, the fact remains that sealing is still very much an important source of revenue for Inuit and northern communities. Thousands of Canadian families in remote coastal communities depend on the seal hunt as a source of income and food. Sealing in Nunavut alone represents between \$4 million and \$6 million of food source each year. Before the European Union placed an unfair ban on sealing, the income from seal pelts generated close to \$1 million annually.

However, seals are not just used for their fur. As mentioned earlier, seal oil can be used for its omega-3 oils, which have been sold in capsule formula in Europe, Asia, and Canada for over 10 years. This is significant, especially for northern communities that are often limited in the commodities they are able to produce and sell.

Sealing has generated part-time employment for thousands of people. A conservative estimate puts the value of the hunt at \$35 million to \$45 million annually. Unfortunately, though, anti-sealing campaigns have severely damaged the market for seal products. Rural economies, such as Newfoundland and Labrador and parts of the maritime provinces are already fragile, and they have been further weakened as a result.

Just last week, as the fisheries and oceans parliamentary committee conducted our tour in Newfoundland and Labrador and New Brunswick, we heard testimony from Chief George Ginnish of the Eel Ground First Nation on how their communities lived and relied on the lands, the waters, and the resources for their way of life. Their fishery was very much a matter of the physical, cultural, and spiritual survival of their communities. However, because of the downfall of the Atlantic salmon and conditions outside their control, we heard how five of their communities were now among the 10 poorest in Canada, how a commercial seal harvest could provide and boost their local economy, and how it would raise their community.

Sealing is an important cultural and economic driver in Canada's eastern, Arctic, and northern communities. It is a long-standing and integral part of Canada's rural culture and a way of life for thousands of Canadians.

● (1125)

Indigenous people in Canada have a constitutionally protected right to harvest marine mammals, including seals, as long as the harvest is consistent with conservation needs and other requirements.

Promoting the sealing industry by recognizing a national seal products day would have a positive impact on the promotion and education of Canadians and, indeed, the world on this important industry day.

During our visits last week, we heard of the generational loss of culture in our fishing communities. As members know, I come from the beautiful Cariboo, and we see this as well in our farming communities. We are losing that next generation of farmers, and our traditional sport of rodeo is increasingly coming under fire from those who do not understand it and are using their celebrity status against it.

Private Members' Business

We have to do everything we can to promote our longstanding traditional industries, including by sharing and teaching the culture and traditions that are unique to each industry before it is lost. We need to celebrate these industries, engaging and educating our community, our nation, and indeed the world along the way that Canada's sealing is humane, well managed, with rigorous checks and balances in place to ensure that the seal hunt is in compliance with internationally recognized animal welfare principles.

Moreover, we know that the seal hunt is sustainable in the long term. The Atlantic harp seal population is in good shape, as we heard earlier today. It is in the millions, and has more than tripled in size since the 1970s.

Aerial patrols, vessel-monitoring systems, and at-sea and dockside vessel inspections, and processing-facility inspections all ensure that the Canadian seal hunt is ethical and in compliance. The amount of seals harvested is always within the number established by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans under the total allowable catch. In fact, if I could point to one example, the quota for 2011 was 335,000 seals, but only 40,000 were taken.

There will always be vocal opposition to the seal hunt by celebrities and animal rights activists. However, it is our job as parliamentarians to disseminate the facts against the fiction.

I have a quote from Denis Longu  p  e, a sealer in Quebec:

In Canada's remote coastal and northern communities, sealing is an important part of the way of life and a much needed source of income for thousands of families... The revenues generated from this activity are an integral and vital component of the annual income earned by sealers.

Let us embrace sealing as a rich part of Canadian history and a part of the essential way of life for many.

Again, the promotion of the sealing industry will help bring facts to the table to educate people about it, and will possibly provide a well-intended economic impact for those in our northern and indigenous communities. The promotion of this important industry and education of Canadians about it will have a positive impact.

I will be supporting Bill S-208, and I hope all of my hon. colleagues will join me in doing so.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—T  miscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the New Democratic Party's critic for fisheries, oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard critic, as well as the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, I rise in the House to announce that I will support Bill S-208, which would designate May 20 as national seal products day.

As I am sure other speakers will point out, this is a symbolic day. It is symbolic because it is also the date the European Union has designated as European Maritime Day. The two are closely related because the day we want to promote is essentially the flip side of the one the European Union celebrates. The European Union is deeply unwilling to recognize the legitimacy of commercial seal products.

Our political party has long supported a commercial seal harvest, as long as it is humane and free of cruelty. A large part of the problem with how Europeans perceive the seal hunt is that it dates

back to the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Major campaigns were organized in those days to denounce how seals, and especially white coats, were hunted. Many people will vividly recall some of the images circulated by a number of environmental groups and animal welfare groups. This was not necessarily groundless, for there were in fact some aspects that meant that the seal hunt was not being properly monitored, which led to some abusive practices. However, that is no longer the case today.

We have learned a great deal since then, and the seal hunt is an absolutely essential commercial activity. As my colleague from Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame pointed out in his speech, we need to talk about this from a cultural perspective. A large portion of the subsistence incomes, and now the commercial revenues, of Newfoundland and Labrador as well as the Magdalen Islands comes from the seal hunt. This hunt takes place off those two coasts, in the northern Gulf of St. Lawrence, and in Canada's Inuit regions, including Nunavut, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut, and the Inuvialuit region. In addition, the killing of white coats has been outlawed since 1987, so that is no longer a problem.

It is extremely unfortunate that the European Union has taken this position, and I am pleased that Senator Hervieux-Payette has brought this bill forward so it can, in some way, lead the European Union to review this issue.

An embargo has been in place since 2014. I get the impression that there is a type of pervasive protectionism going on and that is really too bad. This decision is driven more by politics and far less by protecting the environment or the animals. According to European Union's definition, seal-derived products are authorized provided they are derived from traditional forms of hunting practised by the Inuit communities or other indigenous communities for purposes of subsistence, or derived from forms of hunting practised solely for the sustainable and not-for-profit management of marine resources. Small quantities can be imported for personal use.

Why are these restrictions imposed on seal hunting? There are no such restrictions for other types of slaughter that do not necessarily involve livestock. I am thinking about deer hunting or moose hunting, or even what we in Quebec commonly refer to as wild game meat. This meat is no longer just the product of a hunt. Commercial zones have been established to market this meat. No one is talking about excluding that meat from the export market, but people are still talking about banning the export of seal-derived products. That is a double standard that the European Union has never successfully explained or justified.

• (1135)

The NDP believes that the first nations, Inuit peoples, and other groups, especially those who have traditionally relied on the hunt for their livelihood, have a right to continue hunting, whether as a tradition or a commercial enterprise. The seal hunt is a way of life and an essential source of food and income for the Inuit peoples and thousands of Canadian families in coastal communities.

Private Members' Business

In Nunavut alone, the seal hunt yields between four million and six million food products every year. Moreover, before the European Union ban, revenue generated by the sale of seal pelts amounted to as much as \$1 million annually.

Seals are hunted not just for their pelts, but also for meat, oil, and derived health products. In addition, there is an emerging market for the oil, now that scientific studies have found it to be very rich in omega-3 fatty acids. This is very interesting from a scientific perspective.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, 5,000 to 6,000 people, representing 1% of the total population of the province and 2% of the labour force, earn income from the seal hunt. Therefore, this activity is an extremely important part of the economy.

However, there is also the issue of controlling the seal population, which is necessary to ensure the balance of the marine ecosystem, especially as it relates to the cod population. I mentioned this in the question I posed to my colleague from Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame.

In 30 years, the harp seal population has tripled. Today there are between eight million and nine million harp seals, which is the most hunted species. According to forecasts for 2030, this population will almost double and reach between 10 million and 16 million individuals. The grey seal population has increased from 10,000 to half a million in 50 years. This indicates the importance of a traditional and commercial hunt, and one that also considers the importance of protecting ecological balance.

This view is reinforced by a very recent study, from January 2015, which was conducted by researchers from Fisheries and Oceans Canada over a period of three years. These researchers conclusively demonstrated that there is a direct link between seal herd growth and the increased mortality rate of cod in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The lack of cod recovery in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence appears to be due to high mortality among larger cod. This study also showed that predation by grey seals may account for up to 50% of the mortality of the cod.

We know that cod is an extremely important resource for fishers and the economic future of these regions. We know the difficulties that the moratorium on cod fishing in some regions off the coast of Newfoundland has caused. What is more, it has been very difficult to significantly increase cod stocks, particularly because of the growing seal population, so population control is necessary.

For a long time, the NDP has been in favour of a truly sustainable Canada and the protection of the Canadian Species at Risk Act. We want to strengthen that legislation and we are fighting for stricter animal cruelty laws. That is why many of us are going to support the Liberal member's bill to combat animal cruelty.

However, it is clear that the seal hunt is well regulated in order to ensure that it is sustainable and humane, for traditional, economic, and commercial reasons, as well as for reasons related to population control and ecosystem sustainability.

That is why I am pleased to personally support Senator Hervieux-Payette's bill, which was introduced here in the House of Commons

by the member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame. The seal hunt must be preserved because it is extremely important to Quebec, in particular the Magdalen Islands, to Newfoundland and Labrador, and to the entire country.

● (1140)

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Acadie—Bathurst and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, I too am pleased to support Bill S-208.

[English]

First, I would like to congratulate the member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame for sponsoring this bill, for his passionate speech, and I will also add, for his beautiful bow tie that he is wearing today. It is very beautiful. I also want to thank other members of the House who will speak or have spoken earlier on this bill.

The designation of a national seal products day would send an important message about Canada's commitment to supporting the sustainability of Canada's coastal and indigenous communities. I believe it is a message that, increasingly, needs to be heard.

[Translation]

The harp seal population has tripled since the 1970s and now stands at 7.4 million. This is irrefutable evidence of Canada's sound management practices and our commitment to sustainability. It is consistent with the Government of Canada's approach, including our commitment to conservation and sustainable development goals.

We can achieve sustainability by balancing the synergies of our economy, our environment, and our cultural and social traditions.

I would like to delve into how this bill addresses each of those priorities, beginning with the economy.

● (1145)

[English]

In 2006, the landed value of commercially harvested seals peaked and reached approximately \$34.1 million, which had a trickle-down effect to other sectors of the industry, including processing, manufacturing, and retail. However, in 2010, we will recall, the European Union banned the import and sales of seal products. This ban had a significant impact on our sealing industry. Indeed, between 2006 and 2015, global exports dropped from a high of \$18 million to a low of \$366,000.

[Translation]

In principle, products harvested by indigenous peoples for subsistence are exempt from the ban. In practice, however, the ban has an impact on all seal hunters whether they are indigenous or they hunt commercially.

Private Members' Business

The government challenged this ban before the World Trade Organization. The WTO's final decision was published in May 2015. It led to the general ban on seal products derived from a commercial harvest. Nonetheless, seal products from the indigenous harvest remain unaffected by the ban.

However, the result of the WTO challenge closed the door to the European market for seal products derived from the harvest. More importantly, this had a negative impact on the global market for all seal products, including those derived from the indigenous harvest.

The Government of Canada has since worked with the European Commission and the Government of Nunavut in order to ensure that products derived from seals hunted in that region can continue to have access to this important market.

We are currently working with the Northwest Territories so that the Inuit and the Inuvialuit peoples of northern Canada can continue to have access in practice to the European Union markets.

In addition to working with the communities in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, the government is continuing to work with all the hunting communities, including those in Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec, as well as with the Atlantic Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers, in order to promote seal products derived from the indigenous and commercial harvest and to deal with the challenges of accessing the market.

[English]

However, we can do more. Canada must seek other public opportunities to make the case for seal products, and that is why declaring a national seal products day is so important. Such a designation would help us draw global attention to the economic impact of the seal harvest and how the ban on seal products is hurting the economies of communities.

A national seal products day could also help expand the appeal of seal products in new markets. Economic arguments alone, however, are not enough to effectively advocate for these important products. Potential customers may, in fact, be sympathetic to the plight of our sealers, but if they remain uninformed of the traditions behind the seal harvest and continue to believe that harvesting is unsustainable, then they may avoid seal products.

[Translation]

A national seal products day could become a rallying point. By promoting the social, cultural, and environmental issues related to the seal hunt, we can set the record straight and emphasize that the seal hunt is humane, well-regulated, and sustainable, and that some communities with no other means of earning a living depend on it for their livelihoods.

Indigenous peoples have depended on marine mammals, especially seals, as a food source for thousands of years. They have lived in harmony with the ocean and its resources for millennia. In doing so, they have come to perceive the seal hunt as a natural part of the life cycle in the north.

This knowledge continues to be passed down from generation to generation. In Canada's Far North today, children learn at a young age how to hunt seal, how to cut up the meat, and what to do with the pelt. They learn to appreciate how the seal hunt sustains their

communities. In other words, for them, hunting seal is not a weekend pastime. It is deeply rooted in the culture of Inuit and Inuvialuit peoples and continues to sustain their communities, both culturally and economically.

No part of the animal harvested by aboriginal hunters is wasted. The meat is prized for its high protein content, and the pelt is used to make warm and waterproof boots, mittens and parkas. Artisans also make arts and crafts out of seal pelts for the tourist industry.

The seal hunt clearly has cultural and economic significance. However, what about the environment? Does this ancient tradition upset the balance of nature? Is it detrimental to biodiversity? Not at all. The seal hunt, whether that of the Inuit or other coastal communities, is sustainable. In fact, through prudent management, the harp seal population is estimated to be 7.4 million. In other words, the population has more than tripled since the early 1970s, as I mentioned earlier.

As the bill indicates, Canada's seal hunt is designed and managed to ensure the sustainable management and preservation of the species, pursuant to the Convention on Biological Diversity's objectives and the principle of sustainable use approved by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

A national seal products day could help us raise awareness about Canada's commitment to a sustainable hunt, one that strikes a balance between economic and environmental needs and our cultural and social traditions.

• (1150)

[English]

The Canadian sealing industry has long been a target of misinformation campaigns by vocal and well-funded activists. By supporting Bill S-208 the government is standing up for the seal harvest and for the rural communities that rely on it. I encourage all members of Parliament to do the same.

[Translation]

In closing, I would like to emphasize that Bill S-208 does not create a legal holiday or a non-judicial day. However, the designation is much more than simple symbolism and would carry a great significance. Designating May 20 as national seal products day is a tangible way to defend the traditions of Canada's indigenous people and coastal communities.

By raising awareness of the cultural, economic and environmental importance of the seal harvest, we can help continue the fight against misconceptions and prejudice, help preserve this ancient tradition, and help it to thrive.

Private Members' Business

[English]

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, like the previous speakers, I am very pleased to support Bill S-208 to declare May 20 as national seal products day and to also support the work of the chair of the fisheries and oceans committee, the MP for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame. He is a good chair of the fisheries committee, which I have the honour to be on, and I see great progress being made.

The bill recognizes the traditions, culture, and economic importance of the seal hunt. The seal hunt began hundreds of years ago and employed thousands of people, and does to this day. These people were and are some of the toughest people on earth who literally risk their lives to provide for their families.

This whole experience was captured in the book, *The Greatest Hunt in the World* by George Allan England who, in the 1920s, took it up himself to sail with the renowned Captain Kean and be part of a sealing crew. The book, illustrated with photos from the era, showed the men working on the dangerous ice flows harvesting seals to feed their families. Their courage was unbelievable.

I had the good fortune to fish in Labrador this summer, and most of our guides were also seal hunters who described to me the importance of the hunt to them and their families. Quite clearly the tradition lives on.

Bill S-208 should not be looked at by itself. The bill is part of the effort by thousands of groups and individuals to protect and defend a way of life that is very dear to many Canadians. Whether individuals are hunters, trappers, ranchers, anglers, commercial fishermen, or guides, they know that their livelihoods depend on the natural world and the products that mother nature provides.

Accordingly, I was very pleased that the previous government under prime minister Stephen Harper passed a bill presented by then MP Rick Norlock creating National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day, which passed with the unanimous support of all parties. I get the sense from the speakers today that Bill S-208 will receive the same level of support, which is very good for the hunting, angling, and animal use community that members from all sides of this Parliament support this way of life. This is a very strong signal that Parliament stands ready to support and defend all legitimate and traditional animal uses. For this, I and my constituents are very grateful.

However, the well-funded and organized animal rights lobby continues its war against rural communities, and this time it comes in the guise of Bill C-246, sponsored by the member for Beaches—East York. It was quite disappointing for me to hear my colleagues from the NDP say that it will be supporting the bill; and yet again, well-funded animal rights groups have mobilized to pass this very bad bill, which will threaten, according to multiple legal opinions, all animal use in Canada.

One of these animal rights groups that supports Bill C-246, Animal Justice Canada, says on its website that it is:

...working to enshrine meaningful animal rights into Canadian law, including the right of animals to have their interests represented in court, and the guarantee of rights and freedoms that make life worth living.

Another group, whose notorious initials I will not say, have said, “Animals are not ours to eat, wear, experiment on, use for entertainment...”.

So much for medical research. By the way, in terms of medical research, people think that these animal rights bills and issues like those we are talking about are all rural issues. They are not. Sixty per cent of cardiovascular research is conducted on animals; so again, all of the entire animal use community has an interest in all of these bills.

Here is a quote from the Animal Alliance, regarding Bill C-246:

The onus is on humane societies and other groups on the front lines to push this legislation to the limit, to test the parameters of this law and have the courage and the conviction to lay charges.

That is what this is all about; make no mistake about it. The animal rights groups have a deeply hidden agenda to eliminate all animal use.

These groups have made millions of dollars on the backs of poor, remote, and coastal communities, and they continue with their dishonest propaganda to this very day by implying that the commercial hunt for seal pups exists when it has been banned for many years.

The previous government conducted a study on hunting and trapping, and we had a number of witnesses who described the importance of the seal hunt, one of whom was Mr. Dion Dakins, chair of the sealing committee for the Fur Institute of Canada, and he made a number of critical observations. He noted that:

...sealing is important not only for economic purposes but also for non-economic purposes and as part of our cultural fibre, whether in an anglophone, a francophone, or an Inuit community where people rely on the resource and these animals for their very subsistence. It has been described as a time-honoured tradition and a way of life among Inuit, francophones, and anglophones, each group of which demonstrates very individual harvesting techniques and expresses cultural pride in the activity.

● (1155)

Mr. Dakins went on to note:

...for four decades seal populations have grown exponentially. Since the European Union ban on seal products in 2009, the annual Canadian seal harvests have fallen well below the DFO-established total allowable catches. [Seal] populations have risen to new heights.

This is was also described by previous speakers.

The economic contributions to the Canadian economy from sealing can be significant. They were around \$70 million in 2005 and 2011. In 2012, Mr. Dakins reports that the seal hunt saved our fisheries approximately \$360 million of seafood that otherwise would have been consumed by overabundant seal populations.

Northwest Atlantic harp seal eat 15 times more fish than the entire Canadian fisheries harvest and the true value of the meat of the hunt is not fully understood. A viable commercial sealing industry is an essential tool in a fisheries management conservation regime. Sealing is part of the solution, not part of the problem.

With about 10,000 licensed sealers in Canada, there is the ability to manage this valuable resource. The problem lies in the bans, which are basically dismantling the seal harvest. The behaviour of the EU in this is disgraceful and given what the previous speaker talked about in terms of the seal harvest in parts of the EU, the hypocrisy is almost overwhelming.

The Fur Institute of Canada takes an active role in defending the important role of sealers in our ecosystem. They are out there making a living. Up to 35% of an annual income can come from the seal hunt. The hunt happens during times of year when few other economic activities are possible. With decreased demand for the product because of the bans, times are tough economically for many families who rely on this industry.

It is highly regulated. Canadian sealing has among the highest standards in the world for animal welfare as was described to me by my seal hunting friends in Labrador.

In Canada, seal hunting is also an instrument for conservation. Our fisheries committee is conducting two studies right now on how to recover the severely depleted populations of north Atlantic cod and Atlantic salmon, as seals are implicated in the declines of those two very valuable species. Research is also being done, and I hope it continues, on the very valuable products that can come from seals and be part of a new seal market.

In summary, I am very pleased to support Bill S-208 and the people who make a living and sustain themselves by seal hunting. I encourage all members to show their solidarity with those communities and vote for the bill.

•(1200)

The Speaker: I would let the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader know that I will be cutting him off at 12:03 p.m. That is the end of Private Members' Business. We will then be going to the orders of the day.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak to what I know is a very important industry. I have had the opportunity to speak with my Atlantic caucus colleagues in particular, but also with caucus colleagues in the province of Quebec. As we know, the industry affects all of us in Canada, but specifically the industry in those communities. I believe it is really important for us to recognize this.

My colleague who introduced this piece of legislation was wearing a wonderful bow tie. That bow tie was made of seal fur. It speaks volumes in terms of the sense of pride that many of my colleagues possess, in particular those from regions that recognize this as an industry that goes far beyond the production of meat and fur. In fact, it is part of Atlantic and other heritages, in particular in the northern regions. This is an industry that has not only provided economic benefits but has also been a very part of the social fabric of

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many northerners. That is something I think all of us in inside the House should recognize.

Our heritage is who we are and how we want to portray ourselves going forward. It is important that we not forget how important our heritage is. When we listened to many of the discussions today, we heard about the economic impact. We heard about how important it is that individuals get a better understanding of the heritage of the seal hunt and the impact it has on so many of our communities.

I would like to believe, at the end of the day, that this is going to be an industry that will be allowed to grow and foster economic futures for many. We heard about the cost of seal fur and how it has somewhat plummeted, but there is an optimistic attitude. That attitude prevails in many regions, but in particular with respect to this industry. In the minds of individuals from Newfoundland and Labrador, of northerners, this is an industry that will not only continue to grow but will see some of the prices go up, which is also very important for the industry as a whole.

When we talk about economic development and regional issues, this is indeed an important issue. In fact a number of colleagues are wearing seal products.

However, I know people are here to listen to our Prime Minister talk on a very important issue to all Canadians, so I will take my seat.

The Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary will have seven minutes remaining in the next hour of debate on this private member's bill.

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•(1205)

[English]

PARIS AGREEMENT

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.) moved:

That the House support the government's decision to ratify the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change signed by Canada in New York on April 22, 2016; and that the House support the March 3, 2016, Vancouver Declaration calling on the federal government, the provinces, and territories to work together to develop a Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have had many opportunities over the past number of years to reflect on Canada's success. Every time we have done something well, whether it was decades ago, with medicare and CPP, or more recently, getting our national debt under control in the 1990s, taking steps to ensure the stability of our banking system, or responding to a global refugee crisis, our success has been rooted in two things.

First, when we see a problem, we do not walk away from it or deny that it exists. Instead, we lean in, we work hard, and we work together to solve the problems that come our way. Second, when we say we are going to do something, we follow through, we live up to our commitments. The world expects that of us, so do Canadians, so do the markets.

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It is in that very Canadian spirit of solving problems and keeping promises that I address the House today and share the government's plan for pricing carbon pollution.

[*Translation*]

After decades of inaction and years of missed opportunities, we will finally take real and concrete measures to build a clean economy, create more opportunities for Canadians, and make our world better for our children and our grandchildren.

We will not walk away from science, and we will not deny the unavoidable. With the plan put forward by the government, all Canadian jurisdictions will have put a price on carbon pollution by 2018. To do that, the government will set a floor price for carbon pollution. The price will be set at a level that will help Canada reach its targets for greenhouse gas emissions, while providing businesses with greater stability and improved predictability.

Provinces and territories will be able to have a choice in how they implement this pricing. They can put a direct price on carbon pollution, or they can adopt a cap-and-trade system, in the hopes that it be stringent enough to meet or exceed the federal floor price.

The government proposes that the price on carbon pollution should start at a minimum of \$10 per tonne in 2018, rising by \$10 each year to \$50 a tonne by 2022.

[*English*]

The provinces and territories that choose cap-and-trade systems would need to decrease emissions in line with both Canada's target and the reductions expected in jurisdictions that choose a price-based system. If neither a price nor a cap-and-trade system is in place by 2018, the Government of Canada would implement a price in that jurisdiction.

Whatever approach is chosen, this policy would be revenue-neutral for the federal government. All revenues generated under this system would stay in the province or territory where they are generated.

Because pollution crosses borders, all provinces must do their part. To ensure that this plan continues to meet Canada's targets, it would be reviewed at the end of five years, in 2022.

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

As we are talking today, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change is in Montreal discussing the details of this plan with our provincial and territorial partners.

Over the next two months, the government will collaborate closely with the provinces, territories and aboriginal organizations to finalize this plan.

These discussions are essential, because we know that no plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions can succeed without the help of our provincial and territorial partners, who have already shown great leadership in tackling climate change.

I am especially looking forward to meeting with provincial premiers and aboriginal leaders on December 8 and 9 to finalize the details of this pan-Canada plan to fight climate change. This

framework will include not only the plan for pricing carbon pollution, but will also pave the way forward to better support innovation and jobs in the clean energy sector, manage the effects of climate change, and improve our capacity for adaptation and climate resilience.

[*English*]

I would like to take this opportunity again to congratulate the provinces who have led on this file while the previous federal government abdicated its responsibility to all Canadians. That era is over.

Of course, a plan is only as good as the principles upon which it is based. So I would like to take a few minutes to talk about why the government has decided to act now to put pricing on carbon pollution. There are many reasons to act now, and I am certain that the members opposite are as familiar with those reasons as the government is, even if their track record suggests otherwise. However, today I would like to identify three of the biggest reasons why pricing carbon pollution is right for Canada and for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

First, pricing carbon pollution will give us a significant advantage as we build a clean-growth economy.

A reasonable and predictable price for carbon pollution will encourage innovation because businesses will have to find new ways to reduce their emissions and pollute less. It will also make our businesses more competitive.

The global economy is becoming increasingly clean, and Canada cannot afford to be left behind. Around the world, the markets are changing. They are moving away from products and services that create carbon pollution and turning to cleaner and more sustainable options.

By giving Canadian businesses the incentives they need to make this change, we are opening the door to new opportunities.

Nobody needs to take my word for it. Last summer, business leaders from across the country spoke out in favour of carbon pricing: retail leaders such as Canadian Tire, Loblaws, IKEA, and Air Canada; energy producers such as Enbridge, Shell, and Suncor; natural resource companies such as Barrick Gold, Resolute Forest Products, and Teck Resources; and financial institutions such as BMO, Desjardins, Royal Bank, Scotiabank, and TD Canada Trust.

These businesses support carbon pricing carbon because they know that, when it is done well, it is the most effective way to reduce emissions while continuing to grow the economy. They know that a clean environment and a strong economy go hand in hand. They are anxious to take advantage of the opportunities inherent in a clean growth economy. They, like the government, recognize that if we do not act now, the Canadian economy will suffer.

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•(1215)

[*English*]

The second reason to move ahead with pricing carbon pollution is the benefit it would deliver to Canadians, especially for the middle class and those working hard to join it. As the business leaders I just mentioned put it, carbon pricing uses the market to drive clean investment decisions. It encourages innovation. That innovation would bring with it new and exciting job prospects for Canadians.

As one example, last year nearly one-third of \$1 trillion was invested globally in renewable power—almost 50% more than was invested in power from fossil fuels. That trend will only accelerate. Simply put, there are billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of good, well-paying jobs on the table for the country to get this right: engineering, design, and programming jobs; manufacturing jobs, whether of solar panels or electric vehicles; and jobs researching and processing biofuels, among many other examples.

If we do not take full advantage of these opportunities now before us, we will be doing Canadians a tremendous disservice.

[*Translation*]

Finally, I think that all Canadians will understand the third reason why we must move forward with pricing carbon pollution.

It has been proven that it is a good way to prevent heavy polluters from emitting greenhouse gases that fuel climate change and threaten the entire planet.

Carbon pricing is an effective way to reduce the pollution that threatens air quality and the quality of the oceans' water. Just last week, the World Health Organization published a report that said that nine out of ten people live in places with poor air quality. The consequences for human health are tremendous and devastating: every year, three million deaths are linked to air pollution. We must and we will do better.

[*English*]

We have seen what can happen when governments take a stand for cleaner air. In Toronto there were 53 smog days in 2005. A decade later, thanks in part to the phasing-out of coal-fired generating stations, there were zero smog days. This is a very big deal if one's child has asthma and cannot go outside to play with her friends during her summer vacation, or if one has grandparents who have to miss family events because they find it difficult to breathe the air in their own backyard.

If one lives in Canada's north or in our coastal communities, or really in any community that is subject to extreme weather conditions and the resulting floods, droughts, and wild fires, the effects of climate change itself cannot be denied. There is no hiding from climate change. It is real, and it is everywhere.

We cannot undo the last 10 years of inaction. What we can do is make a real and honest effort today and every day to protect the health of our environment, and with it, the health of all Canadians.

The Governor of the Bank of England, one of Canada's best exports, by the way, has spoken to this issue on many occasions. Mr. Carney has an interesting term for it. He calls the unwillingness to act “a tragedy of the horizon”. What he means is that the truly

catastrophic effects of climate change will be felt in the future, or as he puts it, “beyond the traditional horizons of most actors—imposing a cost on future generations that the current generation has no direct incentive to fix”.

With great respect to Mr. Carney, because I think that when it comes to climate change we are very much on the same page, I actually believe that current actors, such as the government, do have a direct incentive to fix things.

•(1220)

[*Translation*]

From a more personal standpoint, I have to say that I have three motivating reasons: they are Xavier, Ella-Grace, and Hadrien. I am not alone in worrying about the type of world we are leaving for the next generation and future generations. I have spoken to parents and grandparents in countless communities who shared their concerns for the future and who challenged the government and their provincial and community leaders to take immediate action to prevent the tragic and devastating consequences of climate change.

We hear their concerns and respect their voices. It is because we respect the will of Canadians that we are moving forward with putting a price on carbon to address the pollution it causes.

[*English*]

As members know, the government is not obliged to seek the approval of Parliament prior to ratifying the Paris agreement, nor do we need the House to demonstrate its support for the Vancouver declaration. We have, however, chosen to bring this issue before the House, because we think it is important that all parliamentarians, and through them all Canadians, be given a chance to debate and vote on this crucial issue.

Therefore, I look forward to what I hope will be a spirited yet respectful debate on this important topic, because it is one that will shape the country we live in for generations to come.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, those of us on this side of the House sat back and listened very carefully to the Prime Minister's speech. As usual, his talking points were full of lofty goals and warm and fuzzy platitudes. Then he lowered the boom. He took a sledgehammer and told the provinces that if they do not do it his way, if they do not accept a carbon tax or carbon pricing model, he is going to do it for them.

The House may recall that during last year's election, the Prime Minister talked about not only sunny ways but also ushering in a new era of co-operative federalism. Members may recall that. When we look at the mandate letters that ministers received, including the environment minister, we will notice they are sprinkled with the words “collaboration”, “co-operation”, “partnerships”, and yet here he has lowered the boom on the provinces and said, “I am not going to co-operate with you; it's my way or the highway”.

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It has become so bad that David Heurtel, the environment minister of Quebec, recently said that Quebec, Ontario, and other provinces have serious issues with the Prime Minister's approach to addressing climate change. In his words, "Quebec, Ontario and other provinces have serious issues because, first of all, a national carbon tax hurts existing systems like cap and trade. And also it does not respect the Vancouver Declaration principles. And also it does not respect provincial jurisdictions".

Henry Ford once said that people can have a car painted any colour they want, as long as it is black. That appears to be the Prime Minister's approach today.

Therefore, my question for the Prime Minister is this. Why is he using a sledgehammer to force the provinces and territories to accept a carbon tax grab, and what happened to his promised new era of co-operative federalism?

● (1225)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that Canadians made a clear choice in the last election for a government that understands that we need to build a strong economy and protect the environment at the same time and, indeed, that we need to actually work collaboratively with the provinces, because for 10 years the previous government was unable to do that.

That is why we were so pleased to sit down with the provinces last March and agree unanimously on the Vancouver declaration, which said explicitly that putting a price on carbon pollution right across the country in every province was an essential part of meeting our climate change targets and our commitments to both the international community, in the Paris agreement, and Canadians. I will point out to the doom and gloom naysayers across the way that 85% of Canada's economy is already based in jurisdictions that have committed to putting a price on carbon emissions, encompassing the four major provinces, and that others have indicated they are open to it.

As we have said, we will not be taking away from the provinces the power to choose how to do that. The provinces can build cap-and-trade systems, as a number of them have, or choose to put more direct pricing on carbon. The money will remain in those provinces. This is going to be revenue neutral for the federal government.

This is the kind of leadership that for 10 years the previous government refused to give to Canadians.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the Government of Canada signed the agreement in Paris, people celebrated. They thought they finally had a government that was going to move on climate change. They were equally delighted that the Minister of Environment and Climate Change took it a stage deeper by encouraging her colleagues from the other nations to take it to only 1.5 degrees centigrade. Yet now we are being asked to ratify an agreement in a similar fashion to what we faced in regard to the Kyoto agreement. Indeed, the current government has backtracked on the reduction commitments it made to Canadians, commitments that drew a lot of support in the election, and it has now said that it is going to adopt the Harper government's targets, which it previously called inadequate, weak, and catastrophic.

Are we now faced with a scenario wherein the government will announce today the kinds of measures it is considering putting in place, but does not actually have the mechanisms in place for it to be able to take them to the United Nations and say, these are our strong measures that will actually meet the targets? Are we looking at Kyoto number two?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, first, it is not just a question of fixing targets. Canada and various governments have talked a lot about targets.

What Canadians expect, what Canadians need, what provinces, businesses, and consumers need and expect, is a clear plan whereby we will be reducing emissions in this country. That is exactly what we have put forward. We have put forward that there will be pricing on carbon across the country that by 2022 will reach \$50 a tonne. This is because it will be good for the economy and for innovation. It will be good for jobs. It is something that we will work with the provinces on the model that they want to implement. We know that the provinces are different in their opportunities, their challenges, and their needs.

We are all agreed that we need to reduce emissions across the country. We look forward to working with the provinces on the model that suits each of them best, as long as they are stringent enough to not disadvantage other provinces.

The fact is, we have the Conservative Party thinking we go too far. We have the NDP thinking we are not going far enough.

I think, like most Canadians will think, that we have the right balance.

● (1230)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Prime Minister, a deep vote of appreciation for the leadership Canada showed in Paris. I was there. I have been at many previous conferences of the parties, one led by our Minister of Foreign Affairs. The last good conference of the parties that actually achieved anything was in 2005, in Montreal. In 2009, I watched the Canadian government delegation engage in sabotage so the world would not have climate action.

It really matters when Canada shows up and works to do the right thing. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change deserves tremendous credit as well, for seeking the 1.5-degree more ambitious goal.

However, here is the problem. With the deepest of regrets, I have to ask our Prime Minister, how can he reconcile adopting the Paris agreement while accepting the Harper target, which will make achieving Paris impossible? These are irreconcilable and incompatible targets if we are to give our kids a livable world, and that is what we are talking about.

The Prime Minister has it exactly right. These children have names. We see them across the table, at breakfast. These are our kids. For the livable world that they want, the opportunity is given to us in the Paris agreement. However, the window is closing rapidly. Where we are right now as a country will not save the planet for our kids.

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Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for her leadership on the climate file and for her passion for the country and for our shared future.

I agree with her. It is not time for just words; it is time for actions.

There have been a lot of targets thrown around by various administrations, various countries around the world. What we need is a plan to actually reduce emissions. On that, we can agree.

That is what we have put forward today: hard targets on pricing carbon emissions, carbon pollution, that will lead to actions by provinces, by businesses, by consumers. Pricing and trusting the free market, the market forces, to reduce emissions to a maximal level, is what has been proven and has been demonstrated to work in the past.

That is why the ambitious target price on carbon of \$50 a tonne by 2022, right across the country, is the kind of real action that Canadians expect and that we are delivering.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for the opportunity to engage in this debate. Over the next three days, we members of Parliament will take up the precious time of the House to debate a Liberal motion which asks us to do two things. First, we are being asked to support the Liberal government's decision to ratify the Paris agreement on climate change. Second, we are being asked to support the Prime Minister's own interpretation of the Vancouver declaration which came out of his meetings with the premiers this past spring. There is a lot of confusion about what the Vancouver declaration actually meant.

Last November, in Paris, the global community met to chart a course forward to address the very real impacts of climate change. Each country was asked to commit to firm targets for reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, developed countries like Canada were asked to help the least and less developed countries of the world to mitigate against and adapt to the impact of climate change. The result was the Paris agreement.

I want to be very clear. On this side of the House, we Conservatives support the Paris agreement. We clearly understand that Canada must do its part to help address the most significant environment challenges facing the planet today. However, there was more that came out of Paris.

Members will recall, freshly invigorated by the champagne and the canapés in Paris, that the Minister of Environment and Climate Change also promised that within 90 days of the UN climate change conference, the Prime Minister would meet with the premiers of the provinces and territories to deliver a pan-Canadian framework to address climate change. The meeting did take place in Vancouver last spring, but to no one's surprise, no climate change plan was forthcoming. The only thing coming out of the meeting was the so-called Vancouver declaration, which was simply an agreement to agree at some time in the future, with some studies thrown in for good measure.

Here we are almost a year later in the House, debating the Paris accord and the Vancouver declaration, and all we get from the Prime Minister is a top-down approach to government where he reiterates that he is going to force carbon taxes on the provinces and territories without their consent.

Indeed, the Prime Minister remembers the Vancouver accord that happened last spring as being one in which the premiers agreed that he could unilaterally impose a carbon tax grab on all of them. I was at the news conference as the Prime Minister and the premiers came out to speak to the media. After the Prime Minister's prepared statement, one of the first questions from the media was whether the Prime Minister and the premiers had agreed to a national carbon tax plan. After some hesitation, and more hesitation, the Prime Minister finally blurted out that they had agreed that a national carbon tax plan would be imposed.

That forced the premiers to come out and challenge that assertion. Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall scrambled to deny that a national carbon tax had been agreed to. Other premiers followed suit, including all three northern territorial premiers, and Premier McNeil of Nova Scotia. All essentially said that they strongly opposed a top-down carbon tax being imposed upon their provinces and territories.

Premier Wall said this: "If there is a notion that comes forward that this [referring to the Vancouver declaration] is some sort of [notion] to pursue a national carbon tax, I'll be in disagreement with that, because that's [certainly] not my understanding." Premier McNeil of Nova Scotia said, "What the national government needs to do in my view is set a national target, and let the provinces achieve that how they best see fit." The three territorial premiers stood united and said, "[We] believe a carbon tax would have a negative impact on quality of life in the North."

Yet, since the conference, the Minister of Environment has used every opportunity to confirm that she plans to impose a massive carbon tax grab on the provinces and territories whether they like it or not, and today the Prime Minister has confirmed that.

● (1235)

Just today, David Heurtel, the minister of the environment for Quebec, stated "Quebec, Ontario and other provinces have serious issues because, first of all, a national carbon tax hurts existing systems like cap and trade. And also it does not respect the Vancouver Declaration principles. And also it does not respect provincial jurisdictions."

The Liberal government is making the same mistake that Jean Chrétien made with the Kyoto accord, by trying to act alone without the support of the provinces and territories. To paraphrase Forrest Gump's mother: Liberal is, as Liberal does. Remember the PM's election promise to usher in a new era of co-operative federalism, of collaboration and respect between the provinces, territories, and the federal government, a new partnership? He even included this in his mandate letter to his environment minister.

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This is what the Prime Minister said in a mandate letter to the environment minister. He stated, “We made a commitment to Canadians to pursue our goals with a renewed sense of collaboration. Improved partnerships with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments are essential to deliver the real, positive change that we promised Canadians.”

“In partnership with provinces and territories”, we will ensure they have the “flexibility to design their own policies...including their own carbon pricing policies.”

What happened? All of those promises of co-operative federalism have gone by the wayside, another one of the Prime Minister's dozens of broken promises. In fact, the last year has been littered with the Prime Minister's broken promises.

However, it goes far beyond just abandoning his promise of co-operative federalism. Without a national climate change plan for Canada, one of the very first actions that the Prime Minister took in Paris was to commit \$2.65 billion of Canadian taxpayers' money to fight climate change. That was not to fight climate change here at home, by the way, but in foreign countries. He had no national climate change plan in place, no plan on how he was going to invest in our efforts to address climate change, yet he made an announcement in Paris that he would be spending \$2.65 billion of taxpayers' money in foreign countries. He was perhaps more concerned about making friends at the United Nations, burnishing his international reputation, complete with the ubiquitous selfies. Whatever the case, the Prime Minister was quick to proclaim that Canada was back. We asked, “Back from what? The 10 dark years of the Chrétien Liberal government, when absolutely nothing got done on the climate change files, except for empty promises and lofty goals?”

Members may recall that when the Minister of Environment was in Paris, she cheekily proclaimed that the greenhouse emission reduction targets that our former Conservative government had carefully selected were somehow insufficient. She called them a floor and implied that she would implement much tougher targets. If we fast-forward to today, the environment minister now admits rather sheepishly that our targets of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 30% over 2005 emissions by the year 2030 is now the standard that the Liberal government will pursue. Therefore, although I do commend the Prime Minister and the Minister of Environment for finally coming to their senses and adopting our ambitious yet achievable Conservative emissions targets, the duplicity with which the Liberal government arrived at that conclusion is breathtaking.

Here we are now, almost a year later. We have seen the Prime Minister propose what he claims is a national climate change plan, which is simply to repeat what he has been saying to the provinces. He wants them to accept a carbon price for their provinces, for their territories, but if they do not, he will jam it down their throats. He will use a sledgehammer to force them to accept a carbon price. All we have is bickering and fighting over carbon pricing between the federal and provincial governments, reflecting the Liberal government's profound disrespect for their jurisdiction and for the unique and pressing economic challenges they face.

● (1240)

What is worse is that the ongoing uncertainty over what that national climate change plan would look like is chasing away investment, resulting in the loss of Canadian jobs and hurting our competitive advantage in the global marketplace. In fact, over the last year Canada has seen a dramatic flight of investment from Canada, with investors choosing to park their capital on the sidelines or invest it elsewhere around the world where more predictable investment environments exist. If the Liberal government is looking for a culprit upon which to blame Canada's current economic malaise, it need look no further than itself.

To be constructive, what would a national climate-change plan look like? Let me respond by proposing five key strategies: first, smart regulation; second, innovation; third, bilateral and multilateral regulatory alignment; fourth, conservation; and fifth, market-based incentivization.

Let me begin with the first one, smart regulation.

Long before the Paris agreement and long before the Liberal government's preoccupation with top-down carbon taxes on the provinces and territories, our former Conservative government had embarked upon a sector-by-sector regulatory approach that allowed us to protect both our environment and the economy. In fact, ours was the first government in Canadian history to actually see greenhouse gas emissions reduced by establishing regulations for two of Canada's largest sources of emission, transportation and electricity. As a result, our greenhouse gas emissions regulations for passenger vehicles and light trucks will result in those vehicles emitting significantly fewer greenhouse gas than 2008 models.

We went on in 2012 to finalize regulations to address carbon dioxide emissions from the coal-fired electricity sector, which made Canada the first country to effectively ban construction of traditional dirty coal facilities. In fact, over the next 21 years, those regulations are expected to result in a cumulative reduction in GHG emissions of about 240 megatonnes, equivalent to removing some 2.6 million personal vehicles from the road. That is a great achievement. We also established an air quality management system, which resulted in ambitious air quality standards for fine particulate matter and ground-level ozone, the main components of smog, as members know.

Under the watch of our previous government, pollutants causing acid rain were cut by 15% as part of this program. I noticed the Prime Minister referred to pollution in addressing air pollution. We support all efforts to reduce the impact of toxins within our air sheds.

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We also invested billions of dollars in science and technology initiatives to address air quality and climate change. These investments included the development of CO₂ capture and storage technologies to reduce atmospheric carbon emissions from large-point sources. We launched the eco-energy biofuel initiative, which invested \$1.5 billion to support the production of renewable alternatives to gasoline and diesel fuel.

However, one note of caution is that when governments raise taxes in order to purportedly invest in green solutions, as I understand the Liberals are proposing to do, history shows that they are notoriously bad at picking winners and losers. Any investments in technology must, to the greatest extent possible, be market driven and free of political manipulation.

We are also proud of our record of working closely with the United States on joint North American initiatives. In 2009, our former Conservative government established the United States-Canada clean energy dialogue to enhance bilateral co-operation on the development of clean energy science to combat climate change, which as of 2015 included over 50 projects either completed or under way. It was through our government that major headway was made in joint Canada-USA electricity connectivity and cross-boundary clean energy research and development.

Through the Canada-United States air quality agreement, we began to work to align our regulations with the United States in order to reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector. The fruits of this labour were announced by the Liberal government early this year in Washington, D.C., and we applaud that.

● (1245)

The long and short of successful bilateral and multilateral regulatory co-operation alignment is that it ensures a level playing field for businesses and industries in Canada that want to do their part to respond to climate change, but do not want to be rendered uncompetitive. I encourage the current government to continue to advance regulatory co-operation, especially with our NAFTA partners, the United States and Mexico.

I have a few thoughts on conservation.

Under our former Conservative government, Canada was the first industrialized country to sign and ratify the Convention on Biological Diversity. We subsequently launched the national conservation plan under which we took significant strides to restore, conserve, and expand Canada's natural spaces. Indeed, over a period of 10 years, we were able to increase by 50% the amount of Canadian parkland that had been set aside for protection.

Alan Latourelle, the former CEO of Parks Canada, recently explained that:

...the last 15 years have seen one of the most significant national park expansion programs in the history of our country...As we prepare to celebrate the 150th anniversary of our nation, we need to stand tall and proud and celebrate the exceptional contributions we have made to conservation internationally, while charting a bold and inspiring path for the future.

Some of the things that we were able to achieve over the last 10 years were the following: the world's first protected area extending from the mountain tops to the sea floor, Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site in

British Columbia; the world's largest freshwater protected area, Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area; a sixfold expansion of the Nahanni National Park Reserve in the Northwest Territories; three new national wildlife areas in Nunavut, protecting close to 5,000 square kilometres of marine coastal and terrestrial habitat, including the world's first sanctuary for bowhead whales; three new marine protected areas under the Oceans Act, Musquash Estuary in New Brunswick, Bowie Seamount off the coast of British Columbia, and the Tarium Niryutait in the Beaufort Sea; and finally, the expansion of Canada's national parks network by creating Canada's 44th national park, the Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve. We also played a major role in the creation of the world-class Great Bear Rainforest agreement through an ecological investment of \$30 million.

Why is conservation so important to us as Conservatives and should be important to the Liberal government? Because our natural spaces are highly effective in capturing and sequestering carbon dioxide.

Indeed, it is estimated that Canada's forests, wetlands, and farmlands absorb significantly more carbon dioxide every year than Canadians collectively emit. Given the size of our country and the nature of our geography and population, we know that improved forestry management practices, such as ecosystem-based management, wetland reclamation, boreal forest protection, and low and no-till farming methods can contribute significantly to not only reducing our national carbon footprint, but absorbing global greenhouse gas emissions.

Any national climate change plan must include a conservation strategy in partnership with first nations, which builds upon the significant successes of the past 10 years. Sadly, most of the Liberal government's discussion of a pan-Canadian framework on climate change has been monopolized by a fixation on carbon taxes: taxes, taxes, taxes.

We should not at all be surprised. Every few years a creature in the form of a Liberal government arises from the ashes and its members immediately morph into the quintessential tax-and-spend Liberal. Such members are characterized by a penchant for raising taxes in order to increase the amount of money their government has to spend on its priorities rather than on the priorities of Canadians. The current Liberal government is, of course, no different. That is why Canadians are hearing so much about carbon pricing, which is nothing less than an effort to tax Canadians into doing the right thing on the environment.

● (1250)

Sadly, most of the efforts to implement carbon pricing at the provincial level play into that narrative and are doomed to failure. It is incumbent upon the federal government to learn from carbon pricing mistakes being made, both at home and in other parts of the world.

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Witness the European experience with cap and trade, in which carbon credit prices effectively collapsed under the weight of corruption, abuse, and favouritism, where we now see countries like Germany building new coal-fired power plants instead of permanently phasing out coal. A number of my environment committee colleagues and I recently met with seven MPs from Norway. They shared what a disappointment the EU's cap-and-trade system had become.

Witness also the failed environmental policies of the Ontario provincial government under Wynne Liberals that have embarked upon a disastrous green energy program, and a cap-and-trade program that will dramatically increase taxes on Ontarians. It has resulted in the most expensive electricity prices in North America, and is chasing thousands of businesses and job creators out of the province.

In light of the recently unsuccessful carbon auction in California, prospects for a successful North American carbon market are becoming even dimmer, and perhaps dumber. Indeed, many are speculating that California might soon be forced to shut down its cap-and-trade system as its legislative mandate expires.

What we can learn from these examples is that increasing the overall tax burden on Canadians will not achieve the desired long-term emissions reductions and will only serve to exacerbate the economic challenges our country faces.

That is why it should not surprise anyone that many of the provinces and territories have strongly resisted efforts by the Prime Minister and his Minister of Environment and Climate Change to use a sledgehammer to force them to accept a carbon pricing system or an additional tax on the existing provincial system.

That said, all federal spending should support a market-driven approach to green energy, enhance Canada's global economic competitiveness, bring our resources to market in an efficient and environmentally sustainable and responsible way, and encourage the creation of high-paying jobs for Canadians. I think that reflects what the Prime Minister said. We just have different approaches to achieve that goal.

I believe Canadians are prepared to do their part to reduce their carbon footprint on this planet. What they will not accept is a Prime Minister and a Minister of Environment and Climate Change whose definition of co-operative federalism is to bludgeon the provinces and territories into accepting an immensely harmful carbon tax grab, one that will only increase the amount of cash that the government has to play with. Increasing the overall tax burden on hard-working Canadians and their families at this difficult time is not the solution.

Returning to the motion before us, let me summarize. The first part of the motion reads as follows:

That the House support the government's decision to ratify the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change signed by Canada in New York on April 22, 2016.

We unreservedly support that portion of the motion. The second part of the motion, however, reads as follows:

...and that the House support the March 3, 2016, Vancouver Declaration calling on the federal government, the provinces, and territories to work together to develop a Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change.

As I mentioned earlier, no one can agree on what the Vancouver declaration actually intended to say. The Prime Minister says that it gives him carte blanche power, the moral authority to actually impose a carbon tax on all the provinces. The premiers are saying that this was not what was agreed to. Clearly, there is no consensus on what the Vancouver declaration actually means.

Just as disturbing is the abject failure of the Liberal government to live up to its promise to deliver a pan-Canadian framework on climate change for all Canadians that is supported across our provinces and territories.

With the second part of the motion, what the Prime Minister and his Minister of Environment and Climate Change are apparently saying to us is "Trust us, we're from government", essentially asking us to buy a pig in a poke.

• (1255)

We as Conservatives will not do that. We never have; we never will. That is why we cannot and will not support the motion as presently worded.

With that in mind, I would like to move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the words "April 22, 2016", and substituting the following: "And that the House call upon the federal government, the provinces and the territories to develop a responsible plan to combat climate change that does not encroach on provincial or territorial jurisdiction or impose a tax increase on Canadians."

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The motion seems to be in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Ottawa South.

• (1300)

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by commending the hon. member for Abbotsford and his past government for the investments that government made in conservation. It is a fair assessment to say that the Conservative government built on the previous investments by other governments, as it is fair I think to say that we will build on theirs when it comes to conservation.

He did allude to the role of conservation, protected areas, and the ability of our natural environment to sequester carbon. When it comes to our natural environment, there is a role for that to play in this regard. However, I want to ask him why the current official Conservative opposition is in contradistinction to all conservative economic orthodoxy.

When Brian Mulroney faced a colossal challenge with acid rain killing eastern Canadian lakes, he entered into negotiations with his conservative counterparts in the United States and facilitated a cap-and-trade system for SO_x and NO_x, harnessing the power of a market mechanism to achieve the environmental outcomes we desired as a continent.

Preston Manning has been calling for the use of either a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade system now for years, claiming that it is Conservative economic orthodoxy to use those market mechanisms to reduce CO₂ and other greenhouse gases.

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Finally, I want the member to address this. There are two billion more people coming to join us on this planet in the next 30 to 40 years. The race that is on globally is about energy efficiency, materials efficiency, and water efficiency, without which, as is widely acknowledged globally, the carrying capacity of this planet will be insufficient to deal with that population. Can he help us understand why as a country we should not just join that race, but lead it?

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, the member's question is very broad. I could probably spend an hour talking about exactly how we are going to address population growth and to ensure that Canada continues on its path to energy efficiency.

Whenever the Liberals come forward with solutions, they invariably include tax increases. This is sucking more money out of the pockets of taxpayers, putting that money into the hands of government, and then government is spending it on its own political priorities. We have seen that time and time again.

I also mentioned in my speech that Liberal governments are prone to picking winners and losers, to think that they are smarter than everyone else, to think that they are smarter than the market and industry. When they pick winners and losers, they invariably get it wrong.

Our Conservative government focused on an incremental regulatory approach. The member will know that in my comments I talked about a broad suite of policies that will include, as he so kindly suggested, a collaborative approach to conservation. It is going to require key investments in technology that have to be market driven. He has quoted a number of economists. Quite frankly, if we sat down and talked to those economists, they would say that if carbon taxes are not used properly, they will simply impose another unmanageable burden on the economy. They will say that increasing the overall tax burden on Canadians is not the way forward.

I would encourage the member to encourage his Prime Minister and his Minister of Environment to go back and sit down with the premiers, who I understand are meeting this morning. I hope they are able to secure an outcome that represents the Prime Minister's stated commitment to a new era of co-operative federalism, because if we leave the provinces behind, we will get litigation, rancour, and fail to get the necessary outcomes.

• (1305)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative member spoke about winners and losers, and I will tell you who are the winners and losers. The decade the Conservative Party was in power, eight years of which I was in this place, was one of complete inaction on their part to address the mounting greenhouse gas emissions in this country. Yet they picked the clear winners and losers. The clear winners were the major industrial emitters, the fossil fuel industry, and the losers were future generations of Canadians and children around the planet.

I was in this place when former environment minister, Jim Prentice, stood and announced he would shortly be issuing regulations to set limits on greenhouse gas emissions by the fossil fuel industry. To show how serious he was about that, he released the draft offset rules. In the entire time the Conservatives were in power, they never moved forward with those measures. The end result is

that emissions have continued to rise, the major emitters are happy, and future generations are losers.

I would welcome a response to that. What great action did the Conservative Party take to address this major challenge we face on this planet?

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that the member did not have a chance to hear my speech. I articulated many different initiatives that our government brought into force and implemented across sectors. We talked about conservation, about technology, and about carbon sequestration, which we invested heavily in. I talked about a biofuel strategy, which we invested heavily in. I talked about coal-fired electricity and regulating that sector so that over time we would move away from coal to cleaner energy. I talked about regulating the light and heavy-duty vehicle sector so we could do our part to reduce the pollution emanating from the vehicles we drive in Canada.

We have a good story to tell as the former Conservative government in setting our country on the path to becoming environmentally sustainable. I would say to the member that rather than attacking and attacking, understand that it is incremental progress that we have made. We acknowledge that more needs to be done. Our party is supportive of many initiatives that are going to move Canada forward to a sustainable future.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, winners and losers were just mentioned. Being a member of Parliament from Ontario, I have been under a government that has chosen winners and losers under the Green Energy Act. As a result of that Ontario act, a lot of the Liberals' friends are winners and all Ontarians are losers. There have been huge increases in hydro rates. It is somewhat ironic that the member, whose brother was premier at the time, asked the question. It is also ironic that the Prime Minister's principal secretary, who was the chief of staff at the time in Ontario, has been so integral in that process.

With the introduction of carbon taxes and a price on carbon, could you outline who we believe the losers will be going forward?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I am sure the hon. member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte meant the hon. member for Abbotsford and not me, the Speaker, when he said "you".

The hon. member for Abbotsford.

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, who are the losers? They are Canadian taxpayers, Canadian families, and Canadian small businesses who will bear the burden of this tax. That is what happens when there is a top-down approach to governing, by not collaborating with the provinces and territories, not understanding that each province and territory has its unique characteristics and unique challenges, as I outlined in my speech. Those are the losers and Ontario is a classic example. These are the mistakes we need to learn from. There were mistakes made in the European Union, which had a disastrous experience with cap and trade. Now we are seeing it with Ontario as well, which has been dramatically driving up taxes on Ontarians, Ontario families, and small businesses.

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I also talked about co-operative federalism and mentioned that the premiers are meeting today with the environment minister. Guess what? This just came out. Apparently, the Yukon environment minister, Currie Dixon, says that when the Prime Minister announced the federal plan to impose a carbon tax on the provinces, the air was sucked out of the room at the Montreal meeting. Need I say more?

• (1310)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in tabling the motion, the government has presented us with a quandary. My constituents, in fact, the majority of Canadians, want Canada to take action on climate change. There was cheering when the Paris agreement was signed. Canadians were delighted when the Minister of Environment and Climate Change took Canada's commitment one step deeper and agreed to take action to limit temperature rises to only 1.5 degrees centigrade.

However, all in this place, including her own colleagues, are faced with this dilemma. Are we facing a repeat of 2002 when another Liberal government ratified Kyoto with no plan to deliver and then did nothing for 13 years? Absent a concrete action plan with measurable carbon reductions to achieve that target, is this just another photo op?

As the Minister of Environment stated in this place, last January, "It would be irresponsible to come up with a new target without actually having a plan to implement it, as the Conservatives did." However, is this not exactly what she agreed to in Paris, deeper reductions?

The Department of the Environment has reported that even with collective action on the commitments made to date by the present government, the provinces, and the territories, Canada will fail to meet even the pathetic reduction target set by Harper.

The motion before us says that the House support the government's decision to ratify the Paris agreement, and second, support the Vancouver declaration, calling upon the federal government, the provinces, and the territories, to work together to develop a pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change.

What exactly has the government committed to deliver under the Paris agreement?

In Paris, last December, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change committed this country to take action to support global actions to deliver deep reductions in greenhouse gases. Canada committed to do our part to ensure that the world can hold the increase and global average temperature to well below two degrees centigrade, above industrial levels, and pursue efforts to a lesser increase of 1.5 degrees.

Less than a year later, the same government is asking members in this place to embrace its decision to backtrack on its promised greenhouse gas reductions. While the Paris agreement allows the parties to adjust their nationally determined commitments, the undertaking is to move to reduce more, not less, greenhouse gases. Paris calls upon parties to expedite action as rapidly as possible, reflecting the highest possible ambition.

Canadians are aghast that the Liberals are seeking support for the decision to ratify the agreement, while simultaneous backtracking on their commitments here at home. The present government is now adopting the same Harper reduction targets that the Liberals called inadequate, the weakest, and catastrophic. Today, it has asked us to vote to adopt them. This we cannot and will not do.

Our glaciers are melting. Arctic ice is receding at an unprecedented rate. I learned last evening that the major glacier in Kluane National Park has receded so far, it is now only feeding one of two rivers. Communities are experiencing catastrophic fires and flooding, with experts advising they will only worsen as the climate changes.

Second, the motion before us calls upon members to agree that Canada has shown sufficient evidence of an action plan to be made binding to our share of reductions by submitting to the Vancouver declaration.

Yes, Paris also commits Canada to recognize the importance of engagements of all levels of government and other actors in addressing climate change. The present government has engaged the provinces and territories in a dialogue and an aspirational agreement for action. However, the Vancouver declaration is just an aspirational document, not an actual strategy for action. It offers no concrete plan with concrete actions to achieve measurable reduction targets. It simply says the signatories will "work together to develop".

The Paris agreement requires that Canada, in ratifying, provide clear, accurate, and transparent information on how exactly it will deliver the reductions. As the Climate Action Network has said, "Show us the tonnes".

We have yet to have presented to us the action plan showing the quantity of emissions that will be reduced under provincial, territorial, and federal initiatives, and by what date. Surely, we are not setting about ratifying another international agreement without a clear, credible action plan, and the legal measures to measure how exactly Canada can and will deliver its commitments. We witnessed that with Kyoto. Surely this time around Canada will not move to ratify the Paris agreement until first finalizing and submitting a credible plan with legislative measures and a timeline to achieve compliance.

• (1315)

Today the announced targets appear encouraging but where is the implementing instrument? The starting point of \$10 a tonne is far below that imposed even by the provinces. What concrete measures if any are actually offered by the Vancouver declaration? The declaration states:

First Ministers commit to:

Implement GHG mitigation policies in support of meeting or exceeding Canada's 2030 target of a 30% reduction below 2005 levels of emissions, including specific provincial and territorial targets and objectives....

Again, as noted, this target backtracks on Liberal promises of deeper reductions.

The Vancouver declaration provides no actual reduction targets nor does it specify the measures that would be taken to achieve those targets. The declaration states that it provides merely a vision and principles. It does not document how any of the commitments would deliver specified reductions. As the Climate Action Network has called once again, "Show us the tonnes".

The provinces, territories, and federal government admit they need to act to address the climate risks facing our populations, infrastructures, economies, and ecosystems, particularly in Canada's northern regions. They all agree our country needs investment in climate-resilient and green infrastructure, including disaster mitigation, but to date, the provinces and territories have merely agreed to develop a strategy. Where are the working group reports? What concrete progress has been made? As far as we are made aware, there is no agreed strategy, most certainly no comprehensive reduction commitments. Where is the accountability?

We still await the federal law that would impose national reduction targets either on emitting sectors or the provinces and territories with potential for equivalency. Some provinces have stepped forward with concrete measures and target dates and in some instances the intent to impose caps on specified sectors. To its credit, Alberta has committed to accelerating the phase-out of coal-fired power and is imposing a cap on greenhouse gases from the oil sands. Is this enough?

The commitment under the Vancouver declaration is to increase the level of ambition of environmental policies over time in order to drive greater greenhouse gas emissions reductions consistent with the Paris agreement. However, the Liberal government is already backtracking to a low bar starting point. The Vancouver declaration also provides no clear timeline for improvement, by how much or by taking what specific actions.

Under the Vancouver agreement, the jurisdictions promise to promote clean economic growth to create jobs. They assert this will be achieved by a transition to a climate-resilient and low-carbon economy but only by 2050. In the meantime, Canada will continue to support their agreed Canadian energy strategy for sustainable energy and resource sector economy as Canada transitions to a low-carbon economy.

The measure of commitment to an energy transition is zero emission target dates and zero commitment of dollars to renewable energy, jobs, and training. We see some evidence of that commitment at the provincial levels by way of an example of the Northwest Territories, which is adopting a renewable energy strategy. Alberta has at long last committed to joining others and establishing an energy efficiency program.

The Vancouver declaration promises the development of an integrated economy-wide approach that includes all sectors, creates jobs, and promotes innovation to be determined at a later date. The same goes for investments in clean technology solutions, especially in areas such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, and cleaner energy production. Few solid commitments are yet stated on achieving reductions.

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While the federal government and the provinces promised to make deep reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, to foster and encourage clean technology, and to implement measures grounded in the idea that clean growth and climate change are of net economic development, we still await the concrete measures.

On the central issue of imposing a price on carbon, we are advised there is no consensus. It is equally important to recognize that the Vancouver declaration specifically references the Canadian energy strategy, a strategy developed through a process excluding the public. It is a strategy that in large part endorses co-operation and continuance of the carbon-intensive energy sectors.

What concrete actions has the federal government taken to reduce greenhouse gases? The federal government committed under the Vancouver declaration to take specific and early actions, including investments in green infrastructure, public transit infrastructure, and energy-efficient social infrastructure. However, the government has yet to release any detailed plan for green infrastructure, including what portion of infrastructure dollars would be dedicated to greening.

• (1320)

During the election campaign, the Liberals promised to tackle climate change and invest in the green economy. However, even their first budget came up far short. After promising over \$3 billion for public transit and over \$3 billion for green infrastructure in the first two years of their platform, budget 2016 was short by over \$800 million for transit and green infrastructure. The budget failed to deliver on their promise to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies, which continue to give hundreds of millions of dollars to polluting industries.

Much of the funding announced in 2016 is just repurposed money, with only \$100 million in new money out of the \$300 million promised for a clean growth economy this year. The investment in Sustainable Development Technology Canada is just \$50 million over four years, far less than previous investments in this entity of \$40 million each year. Is this enough action to deliver rapid change? The Canadian investment in clean tech has fallen by 41% over the last decade, while global investments in this sector grew exponentially, surpassing investments in fossil fuels.

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We have a lot of catching up to do if we hope to provide economic opportunities for our youth. The Liberals promised to advance the electrification of vehicle transportation, foster regional plans for clean electricity transmission, and invest in clean energy solutions for indigenous, remote, and northern communities, yet their budget commits to levels that will not deliver expedited action on any of these. At least their commitment to reduce methane emissions from oil and gas production substantially by 2025 is good news, as it finally plays catch-up with Alberta.

Canadians had hoped for better. Of concern, the thrust of the Liberal action plan to date has, in the majority, been to download the federal duty to reduce greenhouse gases to the provinces and territories, not to mention the municipalities. When asked what actions her government is taking, the minister now repeats the same refrain, that she is consulting the provinces on a plan.

We are expected to agree to ratification without the courtesy of even seeing the working group reports, which I understand may be coming forward today, including, for example, the report on carbon pricing mechanisms. It is important to recognize that the burning of fossil fuels delivers impacts beyond climate change. They emit significant sources of pollutants, causing well-documented impacts to our health and the environment. The Government of Alberta strategy recognizes this aspect in announcing the accelerated phase-out of coal power. Many others are calling for the federal government to follow suit and amend its regulations. It is high time the federal government finally replace its absurd Canada-wide standard on industrial mercury with a binding regulation. Also, when can we expect federal action on harmful particulates?

It is also important that we pursue energy generation alternatives that reduce environmental impacts or impacts to treaty or constitutional rights. The over 190 conditions to the approval of the Petronas LNG plant and the associated pipeline of fracked gas indicates additional significant, and in some instances, unmitigable impacts to the environment and indigenous rights and interests. Government and independent scientists have documented significant environmental impacts from oil sands operations, including localized and long-range pollutant loading. Indigenous communities near the oil sands operations still await a health impact study and have called for action.

What would an ambitious strategy actually look like?

Both the Paris and Vancouver agreements commit the government to a just transition to a clean energy economy. The federal government must contribute more generously to programs already in place, including building Canadian expertise and offering hands-on training in the renewable and energy efficiency sectors. In my province alone, the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, and the Lethbridge College, all provide these programs, and they are oversubscribed.

As the Pembina Institute has said, Canada needs to be at the front of the race for a new global, clean, sustainable economy.

First and foremost, the government must expedite the promised removal of the perverse fossil fuel subsidies. Some have called for a 2050 target of zero-emitting electricity. This could readily be enabled by federal investment into a grid that better serves renewable power

sources, including localized generation sources. While support for cleaner energy research must continue, with particular emphasis on energy storage, I encourage much greater support and attention to increasing the actual deployment of renewable power.

By finally imposing a price on carbon and a steadily rising price, the federal government will provide an important driver for both investments in renewable technology and cleaner technology, but also hopefully for installation.

● (1325)

A report by a parliamentary committee a few years back documented the potential for substantial savings if the government committed greater funds now to retrofit federal facilities, saving in the order of hundreds of millions of dollars. Canada could also mirror U.S. federal directives prescribing efficiencies in energy and water use and purchase of renewable power.

It is long past time the government revised the National Building Code and the National Energy Code of Canada for Buildings. The federal government should also contribute more generously to provincial and municipal energy retrofit programs. Some have called on the federal government to assert its powers to take concrete measures to expedite greenhouse gas reduction in transportation by prescribing targets for Canadian manufacturers of electric vehicles and zero-emission vehicles. People have also called for increasingly stringent low-carbon fuel standards for all transportation fuels.

Where is the promise in the Vancouver declaration for public engagement? What Canadians want more than vacuous consultations is measures to actually help them lower their heating bills or to install solar panels. They want their governments to switch to cleaner energy sources that do not impact their health, their environment, their farming operations, or their treaty rights.

Finally, Canadians want the right to share their voices for a cleaner energy future. Let us expedite the reform of federal law, policy, and practice on environmental protection, assessment, and project review to actually enable that voice. Therefore, I wish to move the following subamendment.

I move, seconded by the member for Trois-Rivières:

That the amendment be amended by:

a) replacing the words “, the provinces, and the territories” with the words “to work with provincial, territorial, municipal and indigenous governments and the Canadian public”; and

b) deleting all the words after the words “combat climate change” and substituting the following: “that commits to targets that deliver on Canada’s undertakings from the Paris Agreement, and finalizes the specific measures and investments to achieve those greenhouse gas reductions prior to ratification.”

Government Orders

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The subamendment seems to be in order.

• (1330)

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a quick question for my colleague. It was a good speech with a lot of interesting ideas, and I was quite happy to hear it.

We all heard last week that the earth has passed the level of 400 parts per million in carbon. That was in the news quite widely. I was wondering if the member could speak to the importance of ensuring that all provinces are participants in the process of getting anywhere on this file.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I am a little puzzled by the question because our amendment is very clear: that the provinces, territories, and indigenous governments and the public should be directly engaged in coming forward with specific measures whereby this country will take action to reduce greenhouse gases in the country.

We have been deeply concerned. We have had a process in Canada whereby provinces, territories, and the federal government have signed on to an energy strategy in which the public has had absolutely no voice. It is absolutely critical that, as we move forward, the public be directly engaged in all decisions. Frankly, that is required under both the Paris agreement and the Vancouver declaration.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question in regard to global emissions and the impact of them globally and what Canada can do. Certainly we want to do our part, and that is why we agree that these targets are important. We agree that we need to work together. We have different ideas on how to achieve those targets, but what has not been talked about is the fact that, even if Canada does meet every one of these targets, we account for 1.6% of all global GHGs. However, other countries that are major emitters, such as China and the United States, have the ability to reduce their GHGs—China specifically—if they replace some of their coal fired production with, for example, Canadian LNG.

Is there room in this discussion and in this plan to account for the impact that Canada can have globally, because I think after all, that is our goal? We want to have a global effect, not just a domestic effect. We want to do our part domestically, but our aspirational goal is to protect our entire earth, so should we not have a goal and have some measurement for what Canada can do to affect global emissions, not just at home, but more important, abroad?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for raising some good points.

As she will have noticed, both the United States and China have stepped forward well before Canada to state that they will take substantial measures to reduce greenhouse gases.

Second, there is absolutely nothing that Canada can do to assure that, even if we do export our gas to China, it will use that gas to replace coal-fired. What I am aware of is that China has made monumental investments, and has committed to additional monu-

mental investments, in deploying renewable energy instead of coal-fired.

What would be really nice is if her government had expedited, and if the Liberal government would expedite, the accelerated phase-out of coal-fired power in this country. I think that would set a far better example than simply asking why China is not doing enough.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech and especially for her proposed amendment. I must admit that before entering politics, I had a moment of pride as a teacher when Canada signed the Kyoto protocol. I say a moment because I later realized that it was all talk and no action. I soon became disenchanted.

Does my colleague think that this is Kyoto, take two?

Indeed, the motion before us is so vague, nebulous, and non-committal that it will make us look good internationally, but will do nothing to solve the problem.

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Trois-Rivières for the question and for his hard work on addressing climate change and protection of the environment, and representing his community.

We have put forward this amendment for the specific reason that we witnessed what happened when the previous Liberal government ratified Kyoto. Absolutely nothing happened. That ratification would still sit here if the previous Conservative government had not shredded that signature.

We do not want a repeat. Regrettably, in the motion the Liberals state that we should stand in this place and vote for them to ratify the Paris agreement based on the Vancouver declaration, but the Vancouver declaration is a rather vacuous statement that we agree to work together toward some kind of action on climate change in the future.

What the Paris agreement compels us to do when we move forward to seek to ratify is to table with the UN the specific targets and the specific measures that will be put in place to reduce specified amounts of greenhouse gases.

We do not have that here. We do not have that in the Vancouver declaration. We have the beginnings of a gleam of hope from the other side of the kind of measures it is thinking of proceeding with, but we do not really have any solid, concrete instruments yet, or what those measurable targets will be.

• (1335)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I commend my friend from Edmonton Strathcona for her dedication in working on the climate for many years.

Government Orders

I do need to correct the record somewhat. It is always awkward for me as leader of the Green Party to insist on historical accuracy, because it will inevitably look as if I am defending a Liberal record. I just believe in telling the truth about things. There was a very good climate plan put in place in the spring of 2005. It would have taken us very close to the Kyoto targets.

Unfortunately, the new government of the day in the spring of 2006 cancelled that plan without any debate in the Parliament, and then also sent the current leader of the official opposition to Bonn in the spring of 2006 as our environment minister to announce that we no longer felt compelled to meet legally binding targets under Kyoto.

It is a very bad record for Canada as a whole, but it is important that we know that targets do work when we adhere to them. We had targets for acid rain. We used targets for ozone. I completely agree with my friend from Edmonton Strathcona that to adopt the Harper target now as our legally binding nationally determined contribution into the UN system is to condemn the Paris agreement to failure before we even get started.

I ask the member if she agrees with me that it would be wise in the ratification document to include language to say that Canada reserves the right, in very short order, to bring forward a more ambitious catcheted-up target?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I cannot accept the hon. member's clarification.

What I stated was that, when the previous Liberal government ratified, it did not have in place any kind of specific plan with concrete measures and the targets they would meet. As the member mentioned, several years later, it came forward with the beginning of a plan. The previous Liberal government was in power, as I understand it, for 13 years. Then it was ousted for different reasons.

We do not want to repeat that. I do not think the hon. member wants to repeat that. We want to go forward to ratification with specific measures that the government is committed to and that it has worked out with not just the provinces and territories but also indigenous governments, and has conferred with the public.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we need to recognize exactly what we have here today, what we are debating.

We have seen recognition, whether it is from young people or political leadership, which incorporates provincial entities, territorial entities, indigenous entities, and world leaders. All of them have recognized that the time has come for us to take some tangible action.

I do believe, as the government has set a very progressive agenda for dealing with the issue of climate change, that we have an opportunity here, through a vote on this particular motion brought forward by the Prime Minister, to send what I believe is a powerful, positive message that not only is Canada in touch with and listening to what Canadians are saying but that we are prepared to act.

My question to the member is very specific. I will not get into Kyoto and what took place there. The member will recall what her party ultimately caused and precipitated as result of Kyoto. Would

the member not at least acknowledge that this is a positive step forward, and something that is worthwhile for all members of this House to vote on, showing that they are actually listening to what Canadians want?

● (1340)

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I have to say that the question put to me has even less certainty than the motion that is before us, which is precisely our problem.

We hope that the government moves expeditiously to ratify the Paris agreement, but in order to do that, as per the Paris agreement, it must come forward with specific measures and targets of how it is going to meet those commitments. Let us hope that it does that in a way that confers with others.

I just have to add that the absurdity continues, that my party is being blamed, unfairly, for the fall of the Liberal government. I do not stand by that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order following discussions with the leader of the Green Party and the other leaders.

I believe that, if you were to seek it, you would find consent to allow the leader of the Bloc Québécois, the member for Rivière-du-Nord, to be the first person to speak when the debate resumes following question period.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*English*]

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to be sharing my time with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

As we know, rapid global climate change is occurring, which will have far-reaching impacts on society, biodiversity, and ecosystems. We have only to look at my own riding of Hastings—Lennox and Addington, which stretches from Lake Ontario to Algonquin Provincial Park. This summer, for the first time ever, a level 3 low water condition was declared by the Quinte Conservation and the low water response team. This is the most severe low water level.

In parts of my region, we have experienced the driest summer since 1888. The rivers are so low, conservationists had to go out with nets this summer to rescue fish trapped in tiny ponds caused by the historic low water levels.

The effects of climate change in my community are real. I cannot tell members how many times I have witnessed farmers pulling tanks of water multiple times a day in order to get enough to take care of their livestock. Wells have dried out earlier than anyone can remember.

Government Orders

This year, those conversations about the weather that take place in coffee shops everywhere across my community have taken on a sadder, more ominous tone. People are worried. These are people who know the land well. They take pride in being the caretaker of their farms to protect them for the next generation.

I have also met with countless people from a wide cross section of businesses, and they have told me of the efforts they are taking to adapt to and tackle climate change. Farmers, businesses, community organizations, and ordinary Canadians are all showing real leadership in combatting climate change. Our government should do the same.

Increasingly, protected areas are being recognized for the important role they play in adapting to and mitigating climate change. There are many ways in which they will form a part of our natural solution to climate change, through the actions of our municipal, provincial, territorial, and federal departments, agencies, indigenous people, also private landowners and not-for-profits.

Canada has a long tradition of establishing and managing protected areas. Whether in the form of national and provincial parks, national wildlife areas, migratory bird sanctuaries, marine protected areas, ecological, or nature reserves, protected areas in Canada safeguard important ecosystems and habitat, maintain the essential ecosystem services, and provide opportunities for personal connections with nature. Protected areas strengthen both our ecological and social resilience to climate change.

Like so many Canadians, I grew up inspired by the wilderness that surrounded us. I have many fond memories of hiking around the forests in Madoc where I grew up and taking my kids to Bon Echo Provincial Park in the north part of my riding near Cloyne.

Those who have visited Bon Echo might have seen the pictograph markings on the spectacular cliff base. There are places like this through time and across culture which draw us in and show us that there is much to learn from our natural environment. It is fitting that these very old indigenous pictographs in Bon Echo show us how Nanabush, the trickster figure, was sent by the Gitche Manitou to teach the Ojibwe people, and who named the plants and animals around us.

We still have a lot to learn. I know I do. The more I speak to indigenous people both in my riding and in my work as an MP, the more I know for certain that there is much we can learn from them about protecting our lands and waters.

Water is sacred, and it gives life. In protecting our watersheds, we protect the life that springs up around them. Yet up to 70% of historic wetlands have been filled in or drained in settled parts of Canada, particularly in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region. This contributes to some of the terrible flooding we have seen along places like Moira River, Thurlow, and Tweed, where a short few years ago, historic spring flooding forced the community to come together to fight against the rising water. The community did come together, because that is what neighbours do, but these types of events have a very large economic cost to them.

By protecting our wetlands and allowing them to do their job of natural flood mitigation, water purification, and provision of wildlife habitat, we not only live in better harmony with our environment but

we also save money, too. We ensure that people continue to benefit from the services that are supported by healthy and diverse terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

Protected areas also support the capture and storage of carbon in terrestrial and marine vegetation, soils, and peat. Conserving and protecting natural areas help to maintain their ability to sequester carbon and avoid greenhouse gas emissions that come from disturbance.

● (1345)

It has been estimated that 15% of the world's terrestrial carbon stock, 312 gigatonnes, are stored in protected areas around the world. In Canada, over 4 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide is sequestered in 39 of our national parks.

We know that climate change will also the risk of extinction for many species. Projected temperature increases may exceed the biological tolerances of many species and ecosystems in Canada. A large, connected, and diverse network of protected areas can help wildlife adapt to a rapidly changing climate by ensuring that the loss of suitable habitat is offset by access to other similar habitat. It will ensure that areas of refuge from climate change impacts are identified and protected for species to migrate to.

The preamble of the Paris agreement notes the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans, and the protection of biodiversity when taking action to address climate change. Article 5.1 of the same agreement requires parties to take action to conserve and enhance sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases.

Last year, Canada adopted the 2020 biodiversity goals and targets for Canada, which described results to be achieved through collective efforts of public and private players. Canada's targets are aligned with the global targets in 2010 under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, which includes a commitment to conserve by 2020 at least 17% of terrestrial areas and inland water and 10% of coastal and marine areas through networks of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.

This target presents a powerful and timely opportunity for Canada to make progress and demonstrate leadership on climate change and biodiversity conservation. At the end of 2015, only 10.6% of Canada's terrestrial area and 0.90% of its marine territory were recognized as protected so far.

Government Orders

Parks Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada are working with provinces and territories to develop a pathway to achieving the land-based target. On World Oceans Day in 2016, the Government of Canada announced a five-point plan to meet marine targets, to increase marine and coastal protection to 5% by 2017 and 10% by 2020. This plan includes establishing areas already under development, including five proposed marine protected areas under the Oceans Act.

Also being explored are possibilities to establish new Oceans Act marine protected areas in pristine offshore areas and in areas under pressure from human activities and to identify existing and establish new other effective area-based conservation measures, such as fisheries closures to protect sensitive coral and sponge concentrations. Budget 2016 allocated \$81.3 million over five years to Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Natural Resources Canada to support this effort.

Budget 2016 also proposed more than \$42 million dollars over five years for Parks Canada to continue the work to create the Thaidene Nene national park reserve in the Northwest Territories and a new national marine conservation area in Nunavut's Lancaster Sound.

To sum up, healthy, biologically diverse ecosystems increase climate resilience. They reduce the vulnerability of communities to climate change and increase their capacity to recover from climate change impacts. The careful management and expansion of our protected areas networks will help Canada protect our biodiversity and help us to succeed in the fight against climate change.

● (1350)

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have enjoyed working with the hon. member across the aisle on the environment committee.

If we were to adapt the carbon pricing mechanisms that would help realize Canada's international commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, should selection of these mechanisms take into consideration the actions of competitor jurisdictions and the impact on Canada's global compliance?

Mr. Mike Bossio: Mr. Speaker, I really do enjoy working with the hon. member on the environment committee. We do some great work together.

Yes, absolutely, this is all part and parcel of the process. Canada needs to provide leadership in the world today to try to use moral suasion to get all member countries in the world to meet targets that will help us reduce the impacts of climate change. Our government is doing that very important work. However, we cannot lead from behind. We have to get out in front, and that is what these proposed changes would enable us to do. They would enable us to take that leadership position in the world and provide an example to the rest of the world that even though the impact might be minimal from an overall climate standpoint, the impact from a leadership standpoint could be huge.

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the big trick on this idea is to in effect price the value of what ecosystems do. Therefore, in the case of swamps, what is the value of sequestration of carbon? In the

case of say forest canopy, what is the value in having an effective forest canopy, particularly in urban settings?

I would be interested in the hon. member's commentary as to how the Paris agreement moves that calculation forward so there is a value attributed to carbon sequestration and a value attributed to forest canopy.

Mr. Mike Bossio: Mr. Speaker, right now our environment committee is studying protected lands and we have seen the tremendous value that protected lands can provide in carbon sequestration, in capture.

In meeting with the Ontario Woodlot Association on the weekend and with many other groups, part of the Paris agreement is the 17 sustainable development goals. That really does work into sustainability within society as a whole. Protected lands and wetlands, etc., play a key part in us attaining that sustainability through carbon sequestration, sustainability through putting a price on carbon so the value of the carbon sequestration can be realized.

All of these things fit together in this puzzle of the 17 sustainable development goals.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, talking about sustainability and ensuring that wetlands and ecosystems are protected, are you aware that many cities across the country have sustainability charters in place to address those issues, and have been addressing them for quite some time, as does the FCM and provincial organizations that deal with cities and municipalities? Could you tell me how this is going to fit into the entire picture without reinventing the wheel and without the federal government getting involved in what is already going on?

● (1355)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before the hon. member gets up, I am sure the hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock meant Mr. Speaker, through the Speaker, not asking the Speaker to answer the question.

The hon. member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Mike Bossio: Mr. Speaker, the last time I looked this federation was a partnership. That is one aspect that has been missing for some time. Our government wants to once again be a leader on the climate file. That means working with our provincial and municipal counterparts, private land owners, different organizations like the Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, anyone we can in order to create a map of where these lands are protected municipality, provincially, federally, in these private organizations so we can get a better understanding of the protected areas and can make them part of the climate resiliency plan that our government is putting forward.

It is really about the partnership and the federal government wants to be a part of that partnership and wants to be a leader in that partnership.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank all members of the House for participating in this important discussion and debate on the Paris agreement.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

Obviously, the Paris agreement is a historic one. According to Laurent Fabius, president of COP21, the agreement is “fair, sustainable, dynamic, balanced and legally binding”. François Hollande, the President of France, said, “It is rare to be given the opportunity to change the world. Seize it so that the planet can live on, so that humanity can live on”.

[English]

What we did in the debates and negotiations at the Paris discussions was to put in place a framework in which we have the opportunity to save ourselves. The Paris agreement by itself does not avoid the most catastrophic impacts of a warming world.

We Canadians played a role in having the agreement made tougher. Our Minister of Environment and Climate Change was the first industrialized country negotiator to say that the agreement must strive to hold global average temperature to no more than 1.5 degree Celsius.

What is the difference between 1.5 and two degrees? It does not sound like a lot to people who do not know climate science. It means a lot to people living in low-lying island states. It is the difference between their surviving and disappearing below the seas. It means a lot when we understand the threat of the loss of Arctic ice, the threat to the Greenland ice sheet. If we lose summer ice over our North Pole, it has a profound impact on climate around the world. If we increase greenhouse gases, we will see increased acidification of our oceans. This is not dependent upon temperature; this is simple chemistry. Carbon dioxide is mixing at upper ocean levels and our oceans are already 30% more acidic than they used to be, with the risk of our marine ice shelves melting and actually killing our oceans. That is the ultimate end if we do not reduce greenhouse gases. We are looking at climatic disaster and ocean acidification as a result. They are separate threats from the same cause.

What faces us here is that we ratify the Paris agreement. That is a good thing to do. It must be done. Yet, we have committed ourselves to trying to avoid more than 1.5-degree increase in global average temperature. It is essential that we stay well below 2°. However, the aggregate total of all of the current commitments by governments around the world, when calculated, takes us to somewhere between 2.7 and 3.5 degrees Celsius. In other words, it was an overshoot from the get-go, from the minute we signed this agreement. If we keep the Harper target, we will not keep our commitments under the Paris agreement. It is about the math.

As Bill McKibben says, “This is literally a math test, and it’s not being graded on a curve. It only has one correct answer”. That answer has to be that we reduce greenhouse gases and accept that we are making a global transition off fossil fuels.

We cannot get out of a hole while we dig at the same time. We cannot approve pipelines or LNG projects and think we can meet the Paris targets.

In the words of Winston Churchill, from a different era:

The era of procrastination, of half-measures, of soothing and baffling expedients, of delays, is coming to its close. In its place we are entering a period of consequences.

● (1400)

The Speaker: The hon. member will have six minutes remaining when the orders of the day resume after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

WORLD HIP HOP DANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. Pierre Breton (Shefford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to inform the House of the great accomplishment of the T. EENAGERS dance crew from École Tendanse in Granby. In August, the five dancers in the company won the gold medal in their division at the world hip hop dance championship in Las Vegas.

These new world champions from my riding are Coralie Dubois, Isanne Fleury, Alison Frendo, Alexia Hébert, and Kiliane Rufiange. They outdid themselves to bring home the gold medal and make Canada's national anthem heard. Like our Olympic athletes, these talented young girls persevered and worked hard for many years, and I am very proud to draw attention to their talent and accomplishments.

Making this announcement fills me with joy on my 50th birthday. I would like to thank my wife and my friends who came to hear my speech in the House today.

* * *

[English]

ROSH HASHANAH

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise today to offer New Year's greetings to Jewish friends in Thornhill, across Canada, and around the world.

Thornhill boasts the largest Jewish population of any riding in the country, and over the years I have had the privilege and honour of working closely with the community in the special celebrations and observances of the Jewish faith.

Every new year cycle begins with a focus on renewal, forgiveness, and reconciliation. It is a time to reflect on the past year, to learn from mistakes, and to commit to work toward a better new year.

I look forward to the celebratory sounding of the shofar and the symbolic foods, the apples dipped in honey in hopes of a sweet new year.

I wish all good health, happiness, peace, and prosperity.

L'Shanah Tovah! Happy Rosh Hashanah.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

KRISTOPHER LETANG

Mr. Michel Picard (Montarville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this summer, Sainte-Julie was honoured for a second time with a visit from the Stanley Cup. Acclaimed Pittsburgh Penguins defenceman Kris Letang gave everyone, especially the Kris Letangs of tomorrow, a glorious opportunity to see the greatest trophy of them all.

Kris is not just a kid from Sainte-Julie; he is a fighter who recovered from a series of concussions determined to make a triumphant comeback to the game.

Kris Letang has given us so much more than the medals and Stanley Cups he has won over the years. He is a role model for the youth in my riding and all young hockey players. He has shown us what it means to fight, to work hard, and to never give up. Most of all, he has shown us what it means to be a great Canadian.

As I stood next to the Stanley Cup, I felt torn between blue, white, and red and black, white, and gold. Nevertheless, I promise to wear my Penguins jersey proudly, at least until the start of the next season.

* * *

[English]

ISLAMIC HISTORY MONTH

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, October marks the occasion of Islamic History Month.

I want to offer all Canadians the opportunity to celebrate and learn with me the rich contribution of the Islamic heritage to our society. Let us take the time to read and share examples of these bountiful contributions, whether in terms of the sciences, humanities, medicines, and arts.

The diversity of the Muslim community across our country is important, because Islamic History Month can be an especially successful undertaking through the efforts of communities across Canada. That said, all Canadians should get to know each other a little better. Building these bridges will only strengthen our multicultural fabric that I am so proud of.

By showcasing these historical contributions, we can advance together in the best possible way. With this knowledge, we can combat ignorance and Islamophobia.

* * *

● (1405)

[Translation]

SYRIAN KIDS FOUNDATION

Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Syrian Kids Foundation is a Canadian charity that offers humanitarian assistance to young Syrian refugees. Services include free education, psychological counselling, social relief, and recreational activities.

The foundation is the result of the hard work of two Montrealers: Hazar Mahayni and Faisal Alazem.

[English]

The Syrian Kids Foundation founded the Al Salam School in Reyhanli, Turkey. It is the first school for Syrian refugee children. To date, the school has accommodated 1,880 students aged 6 to 17, and has 60 teachers. This flagship program is an incredible success despite the many obstacles facing it. We should all be proud to know that a Canadian flag flies over this fine school.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this weekend I attended the Munson and area celebration of the completion of their new community hall.

Like so many places across Canada, and especially in rural and remote areas, the talk is all about the dismal performance of our economy, the high unemployment and the massive spending by our Prime Minister. Here is an example: \$3 billion of Canadian taxpayer cash to developing countries so they can invest in climate change.

The Prime Minister is about to launch a new carbon tax on Canadians, raising the price of everything. The Minister of Finance is meeting this week with economists to find out why the economy is not growing. Liberals want more spending of taxpayers' money and higher taxes on hard-working Canadians, families, and the middle class so they can spend even more next year.

The Liberal plan is not working. Economies do not grow when taxes are raised and new ones are created. Zero economic growth is achieved by sending money to developing nations in a transfer of our wealth. The government needs to pay more attention to the problems here at home.

* * *

BRAMPTON WEST

Ms. Kamal Khera (Brampton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I became a member of Parliament for the sole purpose of bringing the voices of Brampton West to the House, to serve, to represent, and to lead my district.

This summer, I listened. I listened to the voices of the residents. At the doorstep, at coffee shops, at community events, and at our office, I listened.

Over one thousand residents engaged in our series of town halls on key priorities such as democratic reform, national security, climate change, health care, veterans affairs, defence, immigration, and infrastructure. I listened.

As the House sits this fall, I am here to fight for the values, priorities, and the voices of the residents of Brampton West, because with a government that listens to Canadians, better is always possible.

*Statements by Members***TEAM CANADA**

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the productive summer I had in the riding. I held a few town halls and had some pretty great funding announcements and some great community engagement.

However, along came Sidney Crosby from my riding of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour. Since June alone, “Sid the Kid” has racked them up. A Stanley Cup, the Conn Smythe Trophy, and yes, even an Emmy; and now from the World Cup of Hockey, the MVP for the entire tournament.

Team Canada was amazing in the World Cup of Hockey. Nova Scotia's own Brad Marchand's winning short-handed goal was epic, and the chemistry between Brad and Sid was something we will never forget. Also, I cannot forget to give a big shout out to Dartmouth—Cole Harbour's Nathan McKinnon for his amazing performance on Team North America. That is how we do it in Nova Scotia.

Would all hon. members join me in congratulating Team Canada for their amazing World Cup of Hockey title. That is the way the boys brought it home. They are making us proud.

* * *

●(1410)

HEALTH

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this summer, I connected with thousands of Markham—Unionville residents. I heard what concerns them the most.

I hosted an event with over a hundred community leaders and residents. We discussed the prospect of so-called safe injection sites. Markham residents told me that these injection sites are anything but safe. They fear that these injection sites are normalizing illegal behaviour and creating an unsafe environment for children. They are worried that the sites will decrease their property values. They are also offended, that the Liberal government is wasting taxpayer money on purchasing drugs and paraphernalia for addicts.

Markham residents are outraged by the Minister of Health's meth injection plan. If the Minister of Health moves forward with this plan, will she lead by example by having an injection site opened in her neighbourhood?

* * *

ROSH HASHANAH

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, began yesterday at sundown. It is a time of celebration and renewal, a time for Jewish families to come together with friends to rejoice in a new year under God's grace.

Rosh Hashanah is also the beginning of the 10 Days of Awe, culminating in Yom Kippur. Next week, I will be joining friends and neighbours at Temple Emanu-El in my riding for their Yom Kippur service.

I am very grateful to the congregation, its President Pekka Sinervo, and Rabbi Debra Lansberg for including me again this year, as they have in past years.

I want to take this opportunity to commend Temple Emanu-El for their great acts of *tikkun olam*, as they exemplify the best of humanity by raising issues of social justice, child poverty, homelessness, and in their readiness to welcome Syrian refugees.

I wish all members a sweet parliamentary session, and to all my friends and colleagues celebrating Rosh Hashana, *L'Shanah Tovah*.

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[Translation]

GERMAN UNITY DAY

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reunification of Germany took place on October 3, 1990, and since today is also my birthday, I am pleased to rise in the House to commemorate German Unity Day, which is now a national holiday.

When my father brought our family from Germany to Canada, German reunification was still just a dream. History had a surprise for us, however. The reunification of Germany, led by the French and the Germans, represents the belief that real strength comes from inclusion, not division or fear.

President Obama recently commended the exemplary leadership shown by Canada and Germany in the Syrian refugee crisis. This joint effort reminded us that Canada and Germany share important values, both within their own nations and internationally.

I am happy and proud to wish all Canadians of German heritage a happy German Unity Day.

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[English]

WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this coming Wednesday is World Teachers' Day. UNESCO first proclaimed October 5 as World Teachers' Day to promote teachers' status in the interest of quality education. This year's theme is “Valuing Teachers, Improving their Status”.

Teachers play a critical role in the lives of children, educating them for life. There is a Japanese proverb that states, “Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a great teacher.”

What makes World Teachers' Day extra special for me is that my husband Milton, my daughter Meredith, and my son-in-law Jeff are all members of this great profession. I want to recognize them and all teachers, who put their hearts into their calling by doing the wonderful, challenging, and rewarding job of educating our next generations.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October is Women's History Month. This year's theme is "Because of Her". We will be sharing the stories of women who had a major influence on our lives.

With this theme, we are paying tribute to remarkable women who shaped our history. From the beginning, women have overcome obstacles to build their own life and that of their family, shape their communities, and move society forward in a significant and innovative way.

[English]

Leading up to International Day of the Girl Child on October 11, girls in Canada are joining their peers around the world by stepping into the shoes of political, social, and economic leaders at the decision-making table.

This month, I invite all parliamentarians to join the #BecauseofHer campaign and honour an inspiring women.

• (1415)

[Translation]

I wish everyone an excellent Women's History Month.

* * *

WORLD HABITAT DAY

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is World Habitat Day, which gives us pause to reflect on the fundamental right to decent housing.

This is a good time to remind ourselves that the right to housing is still not recognized in Canada even though we ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. We should also remember that Canada is regularly chastised by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights for failing to take action on the housing crisis everywhere in Canada.

More and more households have core housing needs, first nations peoples are living in third world conditions, and homelessness is growing.

The Liberals have initiated consultations with a view to finally creating a housing strategy. We hope that they will take this opportunity to recognize the right to housing and put in place the measures needed to make it a reality.

I introduced a bill to that effect because I believe that a roof is a right.

* * *

[English]

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week marked the 75th commemoration of the Babi Yar massacre, which occurred just outside of Kiev during the Holocaust.

In 1941, on September 29 and 30, there were 33,771 Jewish Ukrainians slaughtered by Nazi forces. Men, women, and children

were ordered to strip before they were marched into the Babi Yar ravine and gunned down in the mass grave. Last week, Ukraine embarked on a series of memorial events, including musical performances, lectures, speeches, and an official state ceremony to commemorate the 1941 massacre.

Let this dark chapter in history reaffirm our commitment to never again allow such atrocities to occur. Let us pledge to denounce anti-Semitism and xenophobia.

Last night was the beginning of the Jewish New Year, so let us stand up with our Jewish friends and celebrate Rosh Hashanah. May this new year be sweet, healthy, and happy. *L'shanah Tovah*. Happy Rosh Hashanah.

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[Translation]

SUPPORTING GIRLS

Ms. Karina Gould (Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this, the International Day of the Girl, we have the opportunity to recognize young women and girls as powerful agents of change.

[English]

As part of the campaign, Because I am a Girl, today and tomorrow, young women advocates from Plan International Canada will step into the shoes of a cabinet minister or an opposition colleague and participate in a busy day on the Hill. We all in this House value the crucial role that young women can and should play.

[Translation]

We all need to work to make gender equality a reality. Canada is proud to help young women meet their full potential and exert a positive influence in their community and throughout the world.

[English]

When girls are educated, healthy, safe from violence, and empowered, they can have a positive impact on their families and their communities. As parliamentarians, we have a role to play in shaping the policies and the laws that will allow all girls around the world to realize their dreams.

To learn more about their journey to Ottawa, follow #GirlsBelongHere.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, I was pleased to participate in the convention of the Fédération Québécoise des Municipalités. The 1,100 people in attendance strongly welcomed the creation of a committee composed of former mayors from our caucus to compensate for the fact that economic development is no longer important to the government. Hundreds of people voiced their concerns. The economies of 135 municipalities depend on the softwood lumber agreement. As children would say, there are nine more sleeps until October 12.

Will the Prime Minister sign a softwood lumber agreement and save 400,000 jobs in Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as members of the House all know, we are working very hard on this issue with the United States.

The previous government neglected this issue and Canada's good relations with the United States for years.

We are working hard to represent the interests of Canadians and the forestry industry across the country.

* * *

• (1420)

HEALTH

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when we came to power in 2006, following 10 years of inaction on the part of the previous Liberal government, we signed a 10-year softwood lumber agreement. That deal expired last year, with a one-year grace period. The reality is that we continued working on a new deal. The former minister worked hard to move forward on this. It is the Liberals who have been dragging their feet for the past year.

Last week we saw the federal Minister of Health and Minister Gaétan Barrette shake hands. It is a good thing it was in September, because it looked as icy as a February morning in Roberval. It was very cold.

I have a good idea that might warm things up a bit. How about the Liberals mind their own business? This is a provincial jurisdiction.

Will the government respect—

The Speaker: The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for 10 years, the previous government refused to talk about health with the provinces. It refused to show the leadership Canadians expect with regard to the Canada Health Act.

That is why we are so pleased to once again be discussing the health care system with the provinces, coming up with solutions, and respecting the provinces and their ability to meet the needs of all Canadians. The federal government will be there for them.

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during our 10 years in power, nobody ever heard any of the provincial health ministers attack the federal government.

Not long ago, we said that we would reduce the provincial transfer increase from 6% to 3%. That must have been a pretty good idea because the Liberals are doing the same thing. We want them to respect provincial jurisdiction. This government is showing contempt for the Canadian federation by interfering in areas under provincial jurisdiction, such as the environment, by imposing a carbon tax, and health.

Will the government stop encroaching on provincial jurisdiction?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservative Party members have shown that they are completely unaware of what is going on in this country.

For 10 years, the provinces and their ministers complained about the federal government's failure to return phone calls, its refusal to

Oral Questions

meet with provincial representatives, and its unwillingness to work with the provinces on issues that matter to Canadians.

Our approach is one of collaboration, co-operation, and engagement with the provinces. We respect their jurisdiction, and we are working with them to solve the problems that Canadians want us to solve.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian families are struggling to make ends meet. The last thing they need is a massive carbon tax forced down their throats. Thankfully, many premiers have stood up for struggling Canadians. In March, the provinces and territories rejected the Prime Minister's plan for higher taxes. Now he is asking this House to sign off on a massive tax grab without provincial or territorial buy-in. Why is the Prime Minister bent on using a sledgehammer to force a carbon tax grab on struggling Canadian families?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of total lack of leadership from the previous Conservative government, we rolled up our sleeves and sat down with the provinces to talk about how we were going to face the important challenges that Canadians in our country are facing. That is why we agreed in the Vancouver declaration that putting a price on carbon pollution was an essential part of moving forward on reducing our emissions and fighting climate change while growing a stronger economy. That is exactly what we have announced today.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is running roughshod over the provinces and territories. He should listen to the Quebec environment minister, who said that a national carbon tax does not respect provincial jurisdictions. The Prime Minister promised to work with the provinces and territories but now has decided to go it alone and impose higher taxes on Canadian families. What ever happened to co-operative federalism? Why are the Liberals forcing a massive tax grab on hard-working Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians understand that in order to build a strong economy, we have to protect the environment. This is what the previous government simply did not understand.

The way to do that is to work with the provinces and respect their jurisdictions. I can highlight the Premier of Quebec, who just pointed out that our approach on carbon pricing respects provincial jurisdictions.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Let us have some quiet.

The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

Oral Questions

● (1425)

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many Quebeckers and Canadians thought they voted for real change, including when it comes to climate change. During the last election campaign, the Liberals committed to working with the provinces to set national greenhouse gas reduction targets. Now this Prime Minister is getting ready to ratify the Paris agreement with the same sorry targets we had under Stephen Harper.

Can the Prime Minister explain this about-face to Quebeckers and Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we just announced our approach, which is to work with the provinces to put a price on carbon across the country. Eighty-five per cent of Canada's economic activity takes place in provinces already equipped with some kind of carbon pricing mechanism. We are going to increase that to 100% with a price of \$50 per tonne of emissions in 2025.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is just more of the same. Under this Prime Minister, environmental assessments still use the same parameters set by the Harper government. With the Liberals and Conservatives it is six of one and half a dozen of the other. They have the same targets, the same plan, and the same environmental assessment system.

How can the Prime Minister justify approving development projects using Mr. Harper's environmental assessment system?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, we see that the Conservative Party and the NDP do not understand that we need to build a strong economy and protect the environment at the same time. New Democrats do not want to grow the economy and the Conservatives do not want to protect the environment. The Liberal Party understands that Canadians expect the government to protect the environment and build a strong economy at the same time.

[English]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister himself admits that the Liberal government failed to implement Kyoto because it had no plan. Now the government claims to have an action plan, but it is based on what they dubbed Stephen Harper's catastrophic reduction targets. The Prime Minister has announced a price on carbon so low it cannot possibly guarantee any reductions in greenhouse gases.

How can Canadians believe that the Prime Minister has learned anything from the previous Liberal failure under Kyoto?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again we see that neither the New Democrats nor the Conservatives understand that we need to build a strong economy and protect the environment at the same time. For the New Democrats, we are not doing enough to protect the environment. For the Conservatives, we are not doing enough to build a strong economy.

The fact is that Canadians know that we are doing both simultaneously. With the resource development Canadians need for

good jobs, and with the strong action on carbon emission reduction that Canadians expect, the Liberal government has it right.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has approved an LNG project under Stephen Harper's environmental assessment system, a project that will add 10,000 additional tonnes of greenhouse gases every year.

It has been reported today that the Liberal government has also broken its promise to create green jobs, particularly for youth.

Can the Prime Minister stand up and explain his dissolving commitment to a clean energy future?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the historic announcement we made today that Canada will be pricing carbon right across the country, up to \$50 per tonne by 2022, is demonstrating that we understand that building a strong economy requires us to protect the environment. It also requires us to think about the green, clean jobs we need to create to build opportunities for Canadians from coast to coast to coast to participate in the new economy that the world expects.

That is exactly what we are doing. That is exactly the leadership we showed today. It builds a strong economy and protects the environment at the same time.

* * *

FINANCE

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of Finance finally woke up to the fact that Canadians are having a difficult time with household costs. What he fails to realize, though, is that the biggest obstacle happens to be his high-tax policies and their complete desire to make sure Canadians do not have the ability to save anything.

When will the minister realize that the only way to make home ownership accessible to Canadians is by giving them a low-tax environment and actually allowing them to save for a down payment?

● (1430)

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for middle-class Canadians buying a home is probably the most important investment they will make in their lifetimes. Since increasing the down payment requirement in December, the minister has been doing a deep dive with his provincial and municipal counterparts.

I am proud to say that what he announced today were preventive measures to ensure long-term stability in the housing market in Canada. These will do three things. They will bring consistency to the mortgage rules, they will improve tax fairness, and they will protect taxpayers. That is what Canadians expect of us. That is what we will deliver.

Oral Questions

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what he does not get is that Canadians cannot actually save up for this down payment the Liberals are trying squelch down even more. The reality is that even if they get that down payment, under a Liberal government home ownership becomes very difficult and quite expensive because every new day there is a new tax coming our way. Maybe the Liberals should take a lesson from their friend here in Ontario, the premier, who has clued into the fact that raising hydro costs actually ticks people off.

When will this Liberal minister realize this and stop committing to this new plan for a carbon tax?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the hon. member would like to hear it again. The first thing we did was to reduce taxes for nine million Canadians. That is the first thing that this government did.

What we have announced today are preventive measures to ensure long-term stability in the housing market. That is what Canadians expect of us. That will bring consistency to the mortgage rules, improve tax fairness by closing loopholes, and protect taxpayers. That is working for Canadians. That is working for the housing market. That is this government.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer tabled a very objective report which indicates that the government has completely lost control of the public purse.

In the first three months of this year, the government spent almost 6% more than the previous Conservative government. That is almost three times the rate of inflation, and that is unacceptable.

Why is the government not managing the public purse like a responsible head of a family would?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my honourable colleague for his question.

We are managing the economy like a responsible family man would. The first thing we did was reduce taxes for the middle class. Next, we introduced the Canada child benefit, and we will now bolster the Canada pension plan while making historic investments in infrastructure and innovation.

Canada is leading the way. That is what the head of the International Monetary fund said, and that is what stakeholders around the world are saying. Canada is leading the way on inclusive growth.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is quite the opposite.

A responsible head of a family would not run staggering deficits like this government is doing. A responsible head of a family would control public spending, unlike what this government is doing.

A responsible head of a family would not, as the Prime Minister so rightly said a few moments ago, impose a new tax on Canadian taxpayers.

These people are the winners of the triple crown in government mismanagement.

When will they take the bull by the horns and finally run the country properly?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a responsible family man plans for the long term.

That is exactly what this government did by investing in infrastructure for future generations, introducing the Canada child benefit, and enhancing the Canada pension plan.

I would say to my hon. colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent that this government is acting like a responsible family man. We are making investments for the children of tomorrow and today's middle class.

* * *

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Albertans are anxious and they are feeling abandoned by the Liberals. Today we launched the Alberta jobs task force because clearly the Liberals are unwilling to do anything. Their only response has been to say “hang in there”. The job situation in Alberta is far past crisis, yet the Liberals refuse to recognize how important the economy is in Alberta. Can any of the four Alberta Liberals explain why they refuse to stand up to the Prime Minister and say that a strong Alberta is a strong Canada?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for raising a very important question. We care deeply about and we understand the people of Alberta and the workers of Alberta. That is why we took a number of actions. Let me list them.

The first thing we did was to reduce taxes for Canadians, and that affected Albertans. After that, we went on to the Canada child benefit. Let me be more specific. In budget 2016, we extended the employment insurance regular benefits by five weeks for all regions of Alberta. We also made a fiscal stabilization payment of \$250 million to Alberta. The Minister of International Trade negotiated market access for—

● (1435)

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

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Except, Mr. Speaker, today the Liberals raised taxes on Albertans.

Today, by contrast, the Conservatives launched the Alberta jobs task force to help desperate, out-of-work Albertans. While we are doing this, again, the Prime Minister has announced new taxes for Albertans and has gutted job-creating investor confidence by adding uncertainty to every aspect of the Albertan economy.

Oral Questions

When will the member for Calgary Centre, and I would love to see him answer this question, start doing his job in cabinet and stop the Prime Minister, who is making a bad situation even worse?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me remind my colleague of what we did for Albertans and all Canadians.

Specifically, what we did for Albertans was to increase the EI benefits for all of the province of Alberta, for all the applicants, for all the eligible members. We made a fiscal stabilization payment. We are going to continue to invest in Alberta. I am proud to say that the Minister of International Trade just expanded markets for Canadian producers and ranchers.

That is working for Alberta. That is what this minister is doing, and all of cabinet, working for the people of Canada, including Albertans. We will continue to do that.

* * *

[Translation]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in January, the government was found guilty of systemic discrimination against first nations children, yet the government continues to fight those children in court and ignore not one, but two compliance orders to protect those children.

Today we learned that the government never came up with a response to the court and that it just went ahead with an unacceptable old Stephen Harper plan.

Why does the minister think this plan satisfied her legal obligations?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is committed to reviewing services to children and families and working with first nations to reform those services.

We are working with first nations communities, key organizations, front-line service providers, and other stakeholders to rebuild the system together so that we can reduce the number of children in care and ensure that our approach is truly child-centred.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am really, deeply concerned by the Prime Minister's indifference to three court rulings ordering immediate action to end systemic discrimination against first nation children. He was ordered to take action in January. Instead, we learned he took a Stephen Harper plan off the shelf and passed it as his own, an outdated plan that will shortchange children \$130 million this year.

It is bad enough that he stole Stephen Harper's energy plan, his environment plan, and his health cut plan, but does the Prime Minister really think Stephen Harper's plan to shortchange first nation children in foster care is good enough, when a court of law says it is not?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our priority is ensuring the health and well-being of first nations children.

We know that the system needs to be reformed in order to put fewer children in care. There are more children in care than at the height of residential schools, and we want to fix that system. We have invested \$71 million, and approximately \$30 million has already flowed.

Mr. Charlie Angus: That is Stephen Harper's plan.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: No.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the Liberals press ahead with their misguided negotiation of an extradition treaty with China, and just as a correction for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines negotiation as "discussion".

We have heard concerning remarks from the Prime Minister's spokesman that Canada is not going to criticize the Chinese justice system. Really? Is that why the foreign minister has been so reluctant to speak out on human rights abuses in China?

● (1440)

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to say to my colleague that he has that wrong. First, discussing is not necessarily negotiating, and there is no negotiation.

Second, the Prime Minister and I are speaking very strongly about human rights everywhere in the world, including in China. The only way to make progress is to engage the world, instead of staying at home as the former government did.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, China executes more people every year than the rest of the world combined. Due process does not exist. White collar criminals are routinely put to death, and the Chinese premier says China will not consider ending the death penalty. Therefore, why are the Liberals talking, discussing, negotiating with China on an extradition treaty?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): When we were there, Mr. Speaker, we explained to the Chinese authorities the rigorous criteria that Canada applies for extradition. In these criteria about all human rights, there is also our steadfast opposition to the death penalty, something that his government dropped and that we brought up, because it is important for Canada to say that it wants it abolished everywhere in the world, in every circumstance.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite confirmation that the Russians downed Malaysia Airlines MH17, the Liberals are still pursuing their asinine policy of normalizing relations with Russia, even though Russia invaded and illegally annexed Crimea and is waging a war in eastern Ukraine, and even though Russia is bombing and killing hundreds of civilians in Syria while it props up the brutal Assad regime.

Oral Questions

When will the foreign minister get his head out of the clouds and realize that any step to rationalize our relations with Russia is a threat to international security and Canadian sovereignty?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that we have more sanctions against Russia than the former government had. We have more support for Ukraine than the former government had. I was very proud to announce an increase of \$8 million for support, for professional police, competent police, who will be shoulder to shoulder in Ukraine, all the way through.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite the Liberals saying "The north is no place for military confrontation or buildup," here is what Russia is doing. It is building a new fleet of nuclear-powered submarines and icebreakers. It is performing snap military exercises in the north. It is opening new military bases in the High Arctic, and it has stood up a 6,000 soldier battle group. In no way is Russia a friend to Canada, and just moments ago, the U.S. suspended relations with Russia.

Will the Prime Minister stand up and put our Arctic sovereignty ahead of becoming BFFs with Putin?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the U.S. suspended its relationship with Russia about Syria, not about the Arctic. That is the point.

About Syria, Russia has a choice: either Russia recognizes the critical and constructive role it must play in the world, or it pursues the appalling course of action that it is taking. Canada will continue to work closely with our allies and bilaterally with Russia to be sure that Russia will be taken into account. The path of dangerous belligerence will not work and will not succeed.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals promised a massive rollback on Bill C-51. Yet it is a year into their mandate and they have absolutely nothing to show for it. Now we learn that CSIS is collecting information on Canadians using consular services without their knowledge or consent. This is exactly what Canada's Privacy Commissioner warned us of last week.

While it is mired in more consultations, can the government at least tell us what kind of information is being shared and what it is doing to protect Canadians' rights and freedoms?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a major step in that regard is Bill C-22, which is before the House right now. It will establish the new committee of parliamentarians to provide greater oversight, to ensure that Canadians are properly kept safe, and, at the same time, that their rights and freedoms are guaranteed.

We welcome the report from the Privacy Commissioner. That report will be an integral part of the national security review, which is under way at the present time, to make sure this framework is consistent with what Canadians want.

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-22 is only one piece of the puzzle to fix the breach in Canadians' rights that that minister voted for.

[*Translation*]

Still on the worrisome subject of Bill C-51, today we learned that CSIS and Global Affairs Canada finalized an information-sharing agreement.

This is despite the fact that the ministerial directive allowing the use of information obtained through torture, which happened recently with Canadian citizens tortured in Syria, is still in place under the Liberal government.

Will the government repeal that ministerial directive or at least give us a good reason for not doing so?

• (1445)

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the vast majority of that ministerial directive, which is a public document, deals specifically with the prohibition of torture. It deals in part with the issue of information sharing. On that point, we have invited Canadians to review that part of that ministerial directive and give us their advice on whether or not those present terms and the offences around them are acceptable.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development.

Over the past few months, northern Manitoba has been hit hard with recent closures, such as the port in Churchill and the pulp and paper mill in The Pas. What is the federal government doing to boost economic opportunities in this struggling region?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Saint Boniface—Saint Vital for his question.

I want to recognize the good work that our members from Manitoba are doing.

[*English*]

Last Friday, I was pleased to be in Churchill to see for myself the impact that the recent closures have had on the community and announced an investment of \$4.6 million for economic development. This is a positive step toward diversifying and sustaining the economy of northern Manitoba and part of our overall growth strategy.

*Oral Questions***GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES**

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is a jobs crisis in Canada, and the Liberals have failed to deliver. This is ironic given the \$200,000 that the Liberals are spending to find a so-called foreign deliverology guru. The last time he delivered for the Liberals, he helped McGuinty and Wynne drive the Ontario economy into the ground.

Why did the Liberals okay \$200,000 for the deliverology wizard when they know how to wreck the economy all on their own?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government was given a mandate by Canadians, and, of course, we are committed to delivering on the mandate that Canadians expect us to deliver on.

Since taking office, our government has lowered taxes on the middle class. We have increased the Canada child benefit for nine out of ten families to help the families with children who need it the most. We have an agreement in principle to strengthen the Canada pension plan, and the list goes on.

We will continue to do the good work that we are doing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is not fooling anyone.

He not only does not know how to keep his promises, but he is also billing Canadian taxpayers \$200,000 for the services of a British communications expert in the art of keeping one's promises. This Prime Minister is costing Canadian taxpayers a fortune. He is trying to dupe us using a media relations exercise.

When will this Prime Minister stop spending so recklessly and start working for the interests of our country?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a mandate from Canadians and we are going to work very hard to keep our promises.

Thanks to the new Canada child benefit, nine out of ten families with children receive more from their government. The list goes on. We are going to keep working for Canadians.

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[*English*]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our symbols, like the national anthem, belong to Canadians. They do not belong to us, as politicians. Yet the Liberals broke the rules in an effort to jam through anthem changes without any public input. However, Canadians spoke and told the Prime Minister overwhelmingly that they do not want this change.

Will the Prime Minister listen to these Canadians whom he refused to consult in the first place?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-210 is an act to render the English version of *O Canada* gender neutral. It aligns with the Government of Canada's

commitment to promote gender equality and the advancement of women's rights.

Bill C-210 was presented by the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, whose dedication to the principles of justice in general, and gender parity in particular, was an inspiration and an example for all of us.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the previous Conservative government proposed to change the national anthem, we told Canadians about it in a throne speech and invited their feedback. We received it loud and clear. They told us to keep our hands off their national anthem. Stephen Harper listened to Canadians, and the proposal was dropped.

Canadians have now told the new Prime Minister that they do not want the anthem changes that the Liberals are sneaking through. Will the Prime Minister show that he can listen to Canadians as much as Stephen Harper did, and drop this proposed change that Canadians oppose?

● (1450)

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the issue is more within the Conservative caucus than with the population of Canada. Therefore, we are very pleased to have brought, through the initiative of the member of Parliament for Ottawa—Vanier, a gender-neutral national anthem. We can all be proud that we made this important decision, which will change the history of Canada.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the veterans ombudsman has made it clear that benefits are still inadequate for those who have served our country.

He has also flagged unacceptable delays in veterans receiving those benefits. We now learn that more than 11,000 disability benefit claims are stuck in the queue. These are men and women who were injured in the service of their country. They deserve better. They were promised better.

Would the minister please explain exactly when this backlog will be fixed?

Hon. Kent Hehr (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, honouring the service and sacrifice of our veterans is at the heart of what we do. Many of our ill and injured soldiers receive benefits through our department. Delivering timely benefits is an area we can and must do better at. Since coming into office, we have received a 22% increase in applications for benefits. This is a good thing.

I can also say that we have plowed through much of the backlog left to us by the former government as a result of it cutting one-third of our front-line staff.

We will continue doing better. We will continue to deliver on behalf of veterans and their families.

*Oral Questions***TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS**

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the temporary foreign worker program is a source of national embarrassment. Today, migrant workers, advocates, and labour brought their calls for status and justice to Ottawa.

The reality is that migrant workers in Canada are exploited. Their rights are abused and they are under constant threat of deportation. We also know that the program puts downward pressure on Canadian wages. This is exploitation by design.

Will the government stop the rhetoric, listen to migrant workers, and end the exploitation?

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will absolutely stop the abuse. We will stop looking at only paper and shuffling it like the previous government, and actually put inspectors on the ground to ensure that every single Canadian worker is protected with the same rights that the rest of us enjoy.

* * *

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister's safe spot to justify his frustrating inaction is more consultation. With whom he consults, and for what purpose, is a mystery. Farmers have been begging for a meeting since April, but the transport minister keeps saying he is "too busy" to meet.

Getting our crops to market is too important for the Liberals to ignore. Why are the Liberals ignoring our producers and the jobs they create?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, grain is extremely important for our western farmers, and indeed for Canada.

I have been conducting meetings for the past five months with our railways, our shippers, and our farm groups. My staff at Transport Canada and certain ministers in this chamber have also been consulting. I am very much looking forward to my visit to Saskatoon to meet with farmers on the 20th of October.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook was reported as saying that the majority of candidates on the Prime Minister's Supreme Court short list are from outside of Atlantic Canada. This confirms that the Liberals are preparing to shut out Atlantic Canada from the court for the first time ever.

Now, if that is not the case, then the minister could simply stand to confirm that the government will in fact appoint an Atlantic Canadian.

Why will she not?

• (1455)

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it confirms no such thing.

Under the previous government, the process for appointment of Supreme Court of Canada judges was opaque, outdated, and in need of an overhaul. In fact, that was the process that resulted in Stephen Harper attacking the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Canada.

We have adopted a new process that is open, transparent, and much more accountable. It is a process that includes candidates from Atlantic Canada and respects regional representation. I am pleased to say that the list that has come forward includes candidates from Atlantic Canada, who are more than capable of competing in a national competition.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice has said that, instead of respecting Atlantic Canadian representation on the court, Atlantic Canadians would be left to compete in a national competition. Does the minister agree with the parliamentary secretary, or is the minister going to respect a 141-year constitutional convention to respect Atlantic Canadian representation, not to mention the unanimous vote of this House of Commons, and appoint an Atlantic Canadian?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the decisions made by the Supreme Court of Canada affect us all. We know that the process used by the previous government was badly broken. That is why we have reformed it.

The advisory committee has been asked to identify jurists of high calibre, ones who reflect the cultural diversity of our country and are functionally bilingual.

As a Prince Edward Islander, I find that a bit rich coming from the party that appointed a Conservative fundraiser from Kanata to the Prince Edward Island seat on the Senate. It is a bit much.

* * *

SCIENCE

Mr. Geng Tan (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last month, the minister of science announced a significant investment of \$900 million to 13 post-secondary institutions, through the Canada first research excellence fund. The minister noted that the fund invests in areas and pressing issues where Canada's post-secondary institutions can become global leaders. Can the minister provide the House with examples of pressing issues the fund might focus on in order to make our country stronger?

Oral Questions

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Minister of Science, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canada first research excellence fund supports Canadian universities to become world leaders in strategic areas. Last month, we announced \$900 million for 13 landmark projects across the country that will not only enhance economic growth but allow Canada to address global issues, such as climate change. The second round of competitions is now closed. I look forward to watching these excellent projects progress.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Kermit the Frog once said, “It’s not easy being green”. The Liberals are proving that. Last week, they passed a motion that said that projects must be run through a green screen to gauge their impact on greenhouse gas emissions. If a project is not green enough it could be punted. With this policy, good luck building new roads, freeways, or bridges for vehicles. Many major projects could croak under the weight of this Kermit permit. How will the Liberals build anything, given this ill-conceived policy?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was in British Columbia on Friday to announce 35 projects for water and waste water infrastructure in the province. We have approved more than 700 projects since taking over. As a matter of fact, in the last four months our government has approved more funding than the previous government did in five years combined. We are delivering on the commitments we made to Canadians. We will continue to do so.

* * *

[Translation]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with just nine days until the old deal expires, all indications are that the Liberals will not be able to reach a new softwood lumber deal with the Americans. In any case, that is what the forestry industry is expecting, and it is preparing for its exports to be taxed. A trade war will likely force plants to close and cost the industry thousands of jobs.

In the absence of an agreement, will the government come up with a plan to support the Canadian softwood lumber industry, such as an emergency loan guarantee program, for instance?

• (1500)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to remember that the softwood lumber agreement expired under the previous government's watch.

For months now, we have been actively involved in negotiations. In fact, we had a very productive meeting in Saguenay this summer with industry producers and workers. I met with Michael Froman, the U.S. trade representative, three weeks ago in Washington, and I will be meeting with him again on Wednesday in Toronto.

We want the best deal for Canadian workers, not just any deal.

[English]

TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, transportation is one of the leading contributors to greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. The residents of my riding are concerned with the emissions from the rail sector that goes through my downtown-west riding of Davenport, where there are not one, not two, but three railway tracks running through it. Could the Minister of Transport kindly update this House as to the steps that have been taken and the progress that the government has made on this matter?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Davenport for her very pertinent question. Of course, in this government we are committed to greener transportation. That is why we are putting in place regulations with respect to air pollutant emissions from locomotives. It is part of a series of regulations that would be progressively more stringent over time. We believe in taking a broad approach to handling the 23% of pollutants and greenhouse gases in this country from transportation.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with the carbon tax and the Liberals' trade record, they will not have to worry about that.

We know the Liberals favour so-called engagement with China despite its appalling human rights record. However, the member for Steveston—Richmond East stepped over the line, which is not surprising given the trouble he has found himself in recently. He draped himself in the red scarf of the Chinese Communist Party as the Chinese flag was raised at the Vancouver City Hall celebrating 67 years of Communist rule.

Do the Liberals realize just how insulting such behaviour is to Canadians of Chinese origin whose families have suffered and died under Chinese communism?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the specific event my colleague is speaking about, but certainly the only way to make improvements in human rights in China is to engage China. It is not to stay here and complain and do nothing. It is to engage our relationship with the Chinese authorities and to tell them the problems we have about universal human rights. Every human being has the same dignity, whether Chinese or Canadian.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we will be ratifying the Paris agreement this week, but we still do not know how the Liberals plan to meet the targets set by the Harper government. There are no new targets, no ceiling, no plan, no agreement. There is a cost, but no ambition.

Instead of making new year's resolutions that are forgotten the next day, can the government take responsibility, make polluters pay, and reward provinces like Quebec that meet their targets?

[*English*]

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is a very proud day for me, as the father of two teenage daughters.

We have taken action in significant ways, including the actions today, to address climate change. We started with significant investments in budget 2016. We worked with the United States on reducing methane emissions. We have made commitments with respect to clean energy across the continent. We have been working on a pan-Canadian strategy with the provinces and territories. Today, we announced a carbon-pricing mechanism that will work across the country.

We are taking action, as Canadians expect us to do, to address climate change while growing the Canadian economy.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while the environment ministers meet in Montreal and members in the House discuss the ratification of the Paris agreement, the Prime Minister has a good opportunity to show that he has a vision for sustainable development and that he is serious.

It is very simple: will the Liberal government agree once and for all to reject the energy east project, which on its own would generate 30 million tonnes of greenhouse gases a year?

• (1505)

[*English*]

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have continued to say in this House, and the Prime Minister said very well today, we know that in order to grow the economy we need to protect our environment. As we go forward with various major projects, we will go forward with our interim measures that we put in place in January to ensure Canadians are consulted and indigenous communities are consulted. I am proud to say that our process is working and we are getting there.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we can grow the economy with clean energy. All it takes is political will. This government must assume its responsibilities and impose a ceiling on greenhouse gas emissions to make polluters pay and reward the use of clean energy.

Will the government recognize and reward Quebec's efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions, or will it once again do as little as possible so as not to alienate western Canada?

[*English*]

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the work that many of the provinces in Canada have done to address greenhouse gases, Quebec being one.

Routine Proceedings

Eighty-five per cent of Canadians already live in jurisdictions that have put a price on carbon. We are taking action, through the work we did today, with respect to showing leadership on carbon pricing. Members will see significant action from this government going forward, to ensure that we have a comprehensive climate change plan that will concurrently grow the Canadian economy.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the hon. Steve Crocker, Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agrifoods for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

THE OMBUDSMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE AND THE CANADIAN FORCES

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the 2015-16 annual report of the Office of the Ombudsman for the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces.

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WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October is Women's History Month in Canada.

This year we have chosen the theme, "Because of Her". This theme reminds us all of the amazing women who have made a difference in our lives and who have shaped our families, our communities, and country since its founding nearly 150 years ago, making significant and positive contributions all along the way.

This month we also mark Persons Day, the pivotal moment on October 18, 1929, when women were declared to be persons under our Constitution, thanks to the remarkable courage of the Famous Five, a small group of Alberta women. Not only did their legal victory give women the same right as men to be called to the Senate, it paved the way for women's increased participation in public and political life. It proved to be a turning point in the pursuit of equal rights that pushed open doors of opportunity for generations of women and girls who would follow in their footsteps.

Routine Proceedings

Like the trail-blazing Famous Five throughout history, much of our progress as a nation can be traced to the determined efforts by women who overcame social barriers, sexism, and deep-seated resistance to change. However, our society's work toward reaching gender equality is far from over. We cannot rest until every woman has an equal opportunity to succeed and reach her full potential.

A record 88 women sit in this chamber, elected in the last federal election. Change has happened too slowly, and we have much more work to do to achieve parity. However, ignoring the progress we have made would be a disservice to all of the women of tremendous courage who came before us in this place.

Nearly a century ago, Agnes Macphail overcame very long odds to become the first woman elected to the House of Commons in 1921, 54 years after Confederation. In 1957, Ellen Fairclough became the first woman to be appointed to cabinet by Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, helping to redefine yet another institution of democracy.

Since then, women have served as prime minister, deputy prime minister, in most major cabinet portfolios, as Speaker and, today, as government House leader and the leader of the official opposition, all positions of great responsibility in our democracy.

This year, on October 11, Canadians will join the rest of the world on International Day of the Girl to celebrate girls and to highlight actions that we can take to make their futures as bright. They are our sisters, our daughters, and our friends. As leaders in our families and communities, they, too, inspire us.

A great example of that inspiration came about most recently at the Rio Olympics this summer. Young Canadian women showed us what girl power was all about. On and off the podium, they achieved great things and inspired girls across the country to dream big.

International Day of the Girl also highlights the fact that young people are not only our future, they are our leaders right now. They contribute every day to our country, their communities, and their families. To celebrate, we invite women and girls to share what they are doing to make gender equality a reality by posting a status update, picture, or video to social media, using #BecauseofHer.

Finally, I invite all Canadians to visit women.gc.ca and discover the wonderful stories of many women who have helped make Canada one of the best countries in the world. We urge everyone to join the Government of Canada's "Because of Her" campaign to share their stories or to honour a woman who inspired them.

During Women's History Month, let us renew our commitment to making a difference in the lives of women and girls so our country continues its incredible journey towards equality. By working together, we will build the healthy, inclusive society that we want to leave as a legacy to our children and grandchildren. Happy Women's History Month, 2016.

● (1510)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since 1992, the Government of Canada has recognized the month of October as Women's History Month. During the month of October, we stand to recognize and honour the contributions of girls and

women who have helped, and who still help, to build and shape our nation.

This year, the theme for Women's History Month is "Because of Her". Throughout this month, we will be retelling our stories and encouraging our next generation to continue to strive toward gender equality in all fields as well as in our everyday lives.

As chair of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, I would like to encourage every member to reflect on the women in their lives and communities who have strived for change, the women who, against all odds, have fought for equality both in Canada and in an international setting.

[*Translation*]

This month of commemorations includes the International Day of the Girl on October 11 and Persons Day on October 18.

The International Day of the Girl is an opportunity to recognize that young women and girls represent our future generations and that they could have a major influence in the years to come. The theme, "Because of Her" recognizes all women and girls from past, present, and future generations who fight for gender equality in Canada.

Persons Day celebrates the decision to include women in the legal definition of "persons" in 1929, a turning point in gender equality in Canada. This decision highlights the contributions of women of past and present generations who worked in the legal and political spheres and helped change Canada's laws and policies.

Women have been present every step of the way, helping to build Canada. From the outset, women worked, innovated, and contributed to the creation of a proud, strong country. A nation's progress is often attributed to its leaders and those who made a contribution. It is important to remember that those leaders and those people who contributed to Canada were often women. The women who came before us advocated for change, despite the obstacles.

It is thanks to the women and girls who came before us that Canada is the country that it is today.

● (1515)

[*English*]

I would like to encourage women and girls to pursue their true interests regardless of stereotypes or gender norms. There are no limits on the opportunities available to women and girls in our day and age. Science and technology fields are becoming increasingly accessible. I would encourage women interested in these fields to pursue their interests.

I was a chemical engineer for 32 years. I am now the first female engineer in the House of Commons. There is no limit to what we can achieve. I hope one day that seeing women in engineering, construction, or even politics is considered normal.

Routine Proceedings

Today, I am proud to stand with 88 other women in the House, one who is leader of the official opposition, two who are House leaders, and several who are committee chairs. I would like to invite every member of the House to participate in this movement on this social media platform.

I would also like to invite all Canadian women and girls to share what they are doing to make gender equality a reality by using #BecauseofHer. It is the women of the past who shaped our present and it is the women of today who shape our future.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, standing today to mark Women's History Month, I am reminded of the lineage of women who have made it possible for me to take this seat here. I think of my Aunt Kim Malcolmson, who has been mixing it up all of her life. She was a pay equity officer in Ontario when I was starting high school. She has been a very good influence on me.

I think also of Rosemary Brown, the first black woman to fill a seat in any legislature in Canada, and her wise words, "We must open the doors and we must see to it they remain open, so that others can pass through", and we have. Over the last 100 years, we have won the federal right to vote, the right to run for office. Women have won the right to serve in the army. Women's equality is now in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Yet there is so much to do. It is all hands on deck to address the ecological and inequality emergencies that our planet and our country face. Women's rights and social justice are key to global sustainable solutions.

I am inspired by the women who are making history right now. We need the ingenuity, creativity, and social justice commitment that young women bring and are bringing right now to our country and our political life. I am deeply inspired by these strong young women, and I see them making history right now as we speak.

I think of the 338 women who have contributed and been part of the Daughters of the Vote process that Equal Voice imagined. They are going to take their seats in Parliament next March on International Women's Day, future leaders of our country.

I think of Melissa Mollen Dupuis, a young Innu performance artist, a Québécois, one of the co-founders of the Quebec movement of Idle No More. It is very inspiring work.

I think of the Olympic women medalists who really blew the men out of the park and the rest of the country as well. We are so proud of them and their leadership. Again, they are making Canadian history as we speak.

I think of my friend and comrade, Avery Valerio from Nanaimo. She is 19 years old and is talking with young women, millennial feminists, across the province and the country about what this next wave of the women's movement looks like and how they themselves will make their mark on history.

For the rest of my time, I am going to share Avery's words. She writes:

"So how do we belong? How do we make Canada somewhere where half of the population can find a place for themselves? A place free of violence and plentiful of opportunity. How do we heal, how do we move forward? We do it together. We do it through education,

through legislation and through conversation. We do it not because it makes for good politics or because it's the flavour of the month. We do it because it's the right thing to do, because it's the responsible thing to do. Because democracies are supposed to be representative of their nations. Because everyone deserves to live a life free of violence. We do it because everyone deserves equal opportunities. Because we cannot wait to do it any longer. It was Emily Murphy who said that there was never a country better adapted to produce a great race of women than this Canada of ours, nor a race of women better adapted to make a great country. And so together it is up to us to move forward, as Canadians it is up to us to continue to work on building a feminist country. It is up to us to build a Canada where everyone belongs."

• (1520)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: The member for Repentigny seeks the unanimous consent of the House to comment on the minister's remarks.

Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the House.

As we observe Women's History Month, I invite my fellow members to recognize and celebrate the contribution that 50% of our population has made to our society and our democracy.

If we take a moment, we can all summon up the image of a woman who has made change on some level. Many of us will think of Léa Roback, Pauline Julien, Madeleine Parent, and Thérèse Casgrain, who, along with their fellow female artists, union activists, feminists, and politicians, improved Quebec society so dramatically.

This is history writ both large and small because women are at once the core of the family unit and the social fabric that binds us.

Many of us will think of a friend or neighbour who cares for a sick parent or child, women being more likely to take on a natural caregiver role. We may think of a volunteer in our riding who gives so generously of herself to make life better for the people around her. There are so many of these women. They are all around us, and at times, we might take that somewhat for granted.

During this month that is especially devoted to them, let us express our appreciation and reflect on what we, men and women alike, can do to support them, whether in our families, in our communities, or in the House.

We all know that more of an effort needs to be made to have more women here in Parliament. Many women who are active in our communities are put off by the idea of becoming actively involved in politics. They think that they can make better changes outside the political arena. Why do they feel that way?

Routine Proceedings

Could we change the tone of our debates? Could we show them that it is possible to balance social life and family with our obligations as parliamentarians? We have to find the answers to those questions and to many others that we could ask ourselves. Finally, we must make the necessary changes to make these aspirations a reality.

During this Women's History Month, let us remember the women who paved the way as artisans of change, but let us also move forward towards a social and democratic life ideal and see how we too can be artisans of change for the women around us and those who will come after us.

* * *

● (1525)

PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the Meeting of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, held in Bodo, Norway, on May 23 and 24, 2016.

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[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, entitled "Report 5, Canadian Army Reserve—National Defence" of the spring 2016 reports of the Auditor General of Canada.

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

* * *

[Translation]

PETITIONS**CHILD CARE**

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would not dare say that I am pleased to do so, but I am honoured to rise here today to represent over 726 people. These individuals are pointing out that the Treasury Board has a current policy on workplace day care centres that includes material assistance for rent.

The Liberal government, however, like its predecessor, refuses to follow that policy. The shortfall has forced some day care centres to shut down and is now threatening the day care centre at the Guy-Favreau complex. The petitioners are calling on the government to simply respect its own policy on workplace day care centres, which would also signal that it indeed takes work-life balance seriously.

[English]

PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the 41st Parliament, the House of Commons unanimously passed a motion calling upon the government to create a national strategy on palliative care. The petitioners state that it is impossible for persons to give informed consent to assisted suicide or euthanasia if appropriate palliative care is not available to them. Therefore, the petitioners are calling upon Parliament to establish a national strategy on palliative care.

CHILD HUNGER

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased today to present a petition for ending child hunger. The following petition has been put together by students at York University enrolled in a course entitled "Social Interaction and Community", taught by Professor Peter Dawson.

According to the "2014 Who's Hungry" report, the greater Toronto area had well over 1 million people visit a food bank between April 2013 and March 2014, and 31% of those people were children.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to take immediate action to end child hunger in our country. One way of approaching is by allocating funding for food banks and other programs to ensure that no child goes hungry.

SENIORS

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour today to rise in the House to present two petitions.

The first petition deals uniquely with my area as critic on seniors issues. Petitioners are calling on the government to recognize the rapidly changing demographics of the Canadian population. Therefore, they call upon the government to appoint a minister for seniors and to develop a national strategy for seniors.

● (1530)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am presenting comes from my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, where the hard-working residents of Shawnigan Lake have been fighting against a contaminated-soil dump in their watershed. The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to start enforcing the Fisheries Act and to ensure that it, the government, works with provincial partners to stop the dumping of contaminated soil in this critical drinking water area.

JUSTICE

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting petitions today from Canadians calling on the government to create a law that recognizes the death or injury of a pre-born child as a separate offence when a criminal attack occurs against the mother.

As Canadians have called on the Minister of Status of Women to support such a law, the head of the agency Status of Women Canada has responded on the minister's behalf, stating, "The government has already expressed its opposition to Bill C-225 for a number of reasons, including the fact that the bill prevents addressing the issue of violence against women and girls in a broader manner".

These petitioners ask how it is possible that a bill addressing a very real and specific gap in protecting pregnant women's rights to carry their children to term would prevent the current government from addressing violence against women in a broader manner. If women and the family of victims who have experienced the need for this law were invited to participate in the government's national strategy consultations, I am sure they would sign up as witnesses in a child's heartbeat.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to table a petition signed by many residents of Winnipeg North, addressing the Prime Minister and all members, indicating that hospice palliative care is an approach that includes the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification, assessment, and treatment of pain and other problems, physically, psychologically, and spiritually. The petitioners are asking that palliative care be taken into consideration with regard to the Canada Health Act.

[Translation]

CHILD CARE

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the electronic petition I am presenting today has to do with the changes to the Treasury Board policy that put Garderie Tunney's Daycare, here in Ottawa, in danger of closing down because of rent increases.

In the end, that day care managed to reach a deal with the Treasury Board, but other day care centres, like the one mentioned by my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie, remain in jeopardy.

This electronic petition is very important because it calls on the Treasury Board and the government to make the work-life balance of federal employees a priority, specifically by keeping quality child care centres in federal workplaces.

I believe it is important to table this petition if we want to ensure that our federal public servants enjoy reasonable, accessible work-life balance.

[English]

PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to rise in the House to present a petition signed by dozens of my constituents calling on the government to establish hospice palliative care as a defined service under the Canada Health Act.

The Minister of Health has conceded that up to 70% of Canadians do not have access to palliative care, and the petitioners are calling on the government to make palliative care accessible and available to all Canadians by taking this step.

Government Orders

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 would ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PARIS AGREEMENT

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement, government orders will be extended by 16 minutes.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for South Surrey—White Rock.

[Translation]

Today, I am pleased to speak to Motion. No. 8 regarding the Paris agreement.

The Paris targets are the same targets that were put in place by the previous Conservative government, so obviously I am not going to try to change them. However, targets without a concrete plan are just dreams. As a new member with over 32 years of experience in business, I want to see that plan.

The Liberal government promised that a concrete plan would be presented within 90 days of the Paris agreement. That did not happen. Then, the Liberal government said that it was going to consult the provinces to come up with a plan. However, it has already consulted them and it still has no plan.

The Liberals said that they would have a complete plan in less than a year, but there is still no plan and no agreement with the provinces with regard to a plan.

● (1535)

[English]

I am pleased to have a chance to correct the misperceptions that exist regarding Conservative views on climate change and the Paris agreement.

I am a scientist. I use fact and evidence-based decision-making as a way of life. As a chemical engineer, the first female engineer to sit in the House, I have the understanding of the science behind what is happening to the planet. Indeed, we are seeing climate change on the planet. The permafrost is melting, extreme weather events are occurring more frequently, and the pH of the ocean is rising as evidence of the change.

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It is clear from research that a combination of natural phenomena and human factors are influencing this issue. A volcano in Iceland erupts and in four days generates more of a carbon footprint than we have erased globally with carbon emissions reduction projects in years. Each year forest fires in North America alone increase the emissions, and clearly, we have emissions from transportation, buildings, industry, and mammals

[*Translation*]

There are ways to absorb these carbon emissions. Scientific data show that 36% of emissions enter the atmosphere, 27% are naturally absorbed by water, and 25% are absorbed by vegetation, with forests absorbing a larger share. Still more carbon is absorbed by carbon sinks through sequestration and convergence.

[*English*]

However, the meeting in Paris was about figuring out how to solve the problem of this global change. The assumption made is that it is all related to the increasing temperature of the planet and that by holding the temperature increase to less than 1.5 degrees we will avert catastrophe. I am not convinced that temperature is the only consideration, but let us deal with that one today.

The linkage is then made that to reduce the temperature increase of the planet, we must reduce greenhouse gas emissions and we are focused now specifically on carbon emissions. Certainly greenhouse gases are a factor and CO₂ a significant portion of these gases. However, when it comes to solving the global problem of carbon emissions, let us be clear on the facts. Canada makes up less than 2% of the carbon footprint of the planet. It is a scientific fact that we could eliminate our entire carbon footprint in Canada and this would have no significant impact on the temperature increase we are trying to solve.

Let me say that again for those who did not get that. We could totally eliminate our carbon footprint in Canada, spending billions of dollars to do it, and it would not fix global warming. The approach of the Liberal government is wrong, especially this newly announced federal carbon tax. This would just kill Canadian jobs and move the carbon footprint elsewhere on the planet.

The scientific fact is that of the 36 megatonnes per year of carbon emissions on the planet, China is responsible for nearly one-third. Between China, India, the U.S., and Europe, they make up 60% of the carbon footprint. Unless their emissions are addressed, the permafrost will continue to melt, the oceans will continue to get more acidic, and weather events will increasingly occur.

While I am supportive of Canada doing its part to lead in helping the planet, it is critical to see that we must move in concert with these other substantive contributors to the problem. Otherwise, we will bankrupt our nation, spend millions to eliminate our footprint, as well as the jobs associated with them, and we will achieve nothing.

[*Translation*]

Canada has superb low carbon energy technologies and tools that could be used to help other countries. We should maximize the potential of Canada's expertise to help countries with higher levels of carbon emissions.

For example, China is still building coal-fired power plants. Canada could help improve the situation by using alternatives, such as liquefied natural gas, nuclear energy, and renewable energy. Promoting carbon sequestration and biotechnology will create high-paying jobs in Canada and help the planet.

● (1540)

[*English*]

However, what we should not be doing are some of the following.

The U.S. is already receiving power from Canada made with renewable energy in Ontario, which we have a surplus in. It costs us 40 cents per kilowatt hour to produce it through the Ontario Liberal green energy program, which it has currently suspended, recognizing it was economically detrimental to the province. It costs us 40 cents per kilowatt hour to produce it, but we are giving it to the U.S. for four cents per kilowatt hour. Quebec is also giving them surplus hydro. We are certainly helping the U.S. reduce its carbon footprint this way, but it is economically punishing to Canada.

Similarly, the cap-and-trade system introduced in Ontario is resulting in us paying California \$300 million per year. Is this helping reduce the footprint? No, it is just transferring money to the U.S.

Within my riding of Sarnia—Lambton, this cap-and-trade tax has already caused one major industry to cancel its \$105-million expansion. All those well-paying jobs are now going to the United States, which does not have a job-killing carbon tax.

We have another \$2-billion polyethylene project under consideration that we believe will go to the U.S. gulf coast, which does not have a job-killing tax or the threat from the Minister of Environment, which is now a reality, of a second forced level of tax. This means another 1,500 construction jobs and hundreds of well-paying, long-term Canadian jobs will go to the U.S., along with the carbon footprint.

Therefore, the planet is not better off and Canada is less well off. This is what will happen if we do not move in concert with our competitors on carbon taxes.

The U.S. makes up 40% of our GDP in trade. Two levels of additional tax in Canada that do not exist in the United States will cause much of our business to move to the United States, especially with the increase in protectionism we expect to see based on what both U.S. candidates for president have said.

The implementation of a greenhouse gas emissions criteria for projects, which has defined no criteria for acceptability, will cause further uncertainty for those thinking of doing business here and will cause additional cost and delay, which will certainly drive business to more friendly environments such as the U.S.

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Therefore, what we need to do to not just lead the world in achieving our targets but to actually work collaboratively with the world to address climate change is to take the efforts that are already happening in Canada and enhance them, where it does not cost us jobs and can further reduce the world's footprint and develop our leading-edge technology, and to leverage that to the substantive contributors of the global problem. We need to move at a pace on reduction that matches those regions that need to do the most.

If we do not adopt this approach, we will feel warm and fuzzy about the climate change initiatives we are embracing, but we will do nothing to prevent the permafrost from melting, extreme weather from happening, and the ocean's destruction.

In Paris, we created an opportunity for the world to come together and do something, but if only we do something, we are doomed to failure and will bankrupt the country. Let us be fact and evidenced based, let us be smart, and let us take an approach that leverages our technology to create Canadian jobs and help the planet.

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Samia—Lambton for her interesting discourse. I come from a family of engineers, including two of my sisters-in-law. I am very happy to hear the scientific discussion.

My only question for the member is an ethical one. How can we expect to collaborate with other countries in reducing the carbon footprint of everyone around the world if we are not taking measures ourselves, if we are not leading ourselves in terms of reducing our own carbon footprint through a carbon tax, which most experts and economists feel is the way to go?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, obviously we are doing things. We have eliminated coal production. We are focusing on renewable energy. We are doing carbon sequestration. There are a number of areas of technology where we are actually leading, and we need to leverage that to places like China, which are still building coal plants and make up one-third of the world's footprint.

• (1545)

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the presentation and the member's scientific knowledge of it.

Could the member go back one more time and explain the relationship between the temperature rising and what we need to do with the carbon footprint? It was an excellent point and I think it needs to be restated.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, the discussion today was premised on what was agreed to in Paris, which is that reducing the temperature of the world will fix the problem. As I said, I do not think that is the only part of the story, and certainly CO₂ is only one emission to talk about.

I believe there is a lot to do, and I think that Canada can lead in leveraging technology. Certainly, we could eliminate our whole footprint and the world is not going to get any cooler.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on a number of occasions, the member has tried to give the impression that we do not have to worry here in Canada because we are just not big enough, that we are not polluting enough. On the

other hand, she talks about leadership. I am wondering if the member could reconcile those points.

Would the member not at the very least acknowledge that in order to be able to provide leadership on the issue, we have to get the job done in our own backyard? We listen to what young Canadians, in particular, are saying. One of the reasons the Conservatives lost touch when they were in government was that they were not listening to what Canadians really wanted.

Would the member not agree that young people in particular have built up an expectation where they want Canada to demonstrate leadership, and that in order to demonstrate leadership we have to play our own role and make our system that much better?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I would say that Canada is already leading in technology, in bio and clean tech, and in a number of areas, carbon sequestration being one of them.

The important thing is not to be warm and fuzzy, only, and forget the facts. The fact of the matter is that scientists will tell us that in Canada of all the emissions that go into the air, 36% are absorbed by the air, 27% by land, 27% by water, and an additional amount for the forest.

With the low population density in Canada, there is actually a very valid scientific argument that we are carbon neutral. We have the technology. We are leading. We just need to attack the ones in the world who cause 60% of the problem and are still building coal plants.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have to say I am a little stunned at that response right there.

I thought that in Paris we finally came forward and said that we would work constructively with other nations instead of attacking them because they are taking action, such as China and the United States, and investing in the cleaner technologies.

One thing that we need to do is to stop talking about developing renewable and cleaner technologies, and actually give the support to deploy them. One thing that I think the member would agree with me on, and I will be interested in her response, is that everybody knows the sooner action is taken to address climate change, the less it is going to cost. We have lost three or four decades, so it is going to be increasingly expensive now.

Surely the member thinks that now is the time, without further delay, to finally take action on reducing greenhouse gases.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member brought up the topic of the cost of renewable energy.

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I live in Ontario, and in my riding, we actually have the largest solar farm in the world. We have a number of wind farms. However, we are selling and signing 20-year contracts for 40 cents per kilowatt hour. We have shut down plants in my riding at four cents per kilowatt hour. We have driven the price of electricity up so high that people in Ontario cannot pay their electricity bills.

The Ontario Liberals have finally realized that and said they are not going to sign any more contracts at that economically bad price. I wish the federal government would get some sense on that, too.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to the Paris climate change accord, which was signed by Canada in April of this year. This agreement confirms that the climate change targets set by the former Conservative government were the right ones for this country. It reaffirms and demonstrates that we are dedicated to the environment through innovation/regulation, sector by sector, clean energy dialogue with the United States, and looking at renewable fuels. The only difference is that we were innovative in our approach and cognizant of taxpayer dollars. We have heard a lot of rhetoric, which I have heard day after day, that we have done absolutely nothing for climate change. That could not be further from the truth.

We know that the targets that were set by the Conservatives were ambitious: a 30% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 over 2005 levels. Obviously, the Liberal government agrees with this assertion as well, as it has adopted our targets in the Paris agreement. These targets reflect Canada's willingness to do its part in addressing the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions. That is why we, the Conservative opposition, are in support of the first part of today's motion, which states:

That the House support the government's decision to ratify the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change signed by Canada in New York on April 22, 2016....

However, the second part of this motion is where further work needs to be done. It states:

...and that the House support the March 3, 2016, Vancouver Declaration calling on the federal government, the provinces, and territories to work together to develop a Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change.

That was something that was promised by the Liberal government within 90 days. We have not seen that, so we will move on.

There is no doubt that climate change is a priority for Canadians. However, I have always said, and will continue to say, that the actions on climate change will happen on the ground, on the front line. The real change will absolutely be made by our communities in our cities. In fact, the work is already happening now and has been under way for many years. That is where we need to put our focus and our support.

As a former mayor, and like many former mayors who sit in this House, I can say first hand that municipalities know what needs to be done, and the mechanisms are already in place for the most part. There are provincial targets that cities have signed onto and agreed to. There are federal targets that cities have signed onto and have agreed to through organizations like the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, which is already doing great work with our municipalities to ensure they have the tools to assist in the reduction of greenhouse gases and reduce our impact on climate change. In

fact, over 90% of the municipalities surveyed by the FCM have already developed or are developing greenhouse gas reduction plans and climate mitigation plans.

In my own city of Surrey, we have completed a number of projects, and we still have a good number under way. As the former mayor, I can say we built an organics biofuel facility, which diverted 70% of waste from the landfill and used the renewable fuel to power our fleet. This was the first closed-loop system in North America. We have also implemented a geothermal system. We have used hydrogen fuel cells, electric cars, and CNG buses. We have LED lights throughout the city. We have always looked for opportunities to reduce our footprint and reduce greenhouse gases, especially when we implemented our sustainability charter in conjunction with many other cities back in 2007.

• (1550)

Many projects helped reduce emissions and protect the environment, and it was entirely driven by the cities. Our green city initiatives spoke about protection of our ecosystems and the preservation of natural living heritage and green infrastructure, and we secured 5,700 acres of land and planted more than 10,000 trees.

However, there is more to do and more issues to deal with when we talk about changing weather patterns and the rise of water levels by two metres. This is particularly relevant when there is farmland in the flood plains and when cities are building houses on the flood plains. It is my belief that, when we talk about sustainable development, along with infrastructure and transportation, it is the overall system we should be looking at.

Communities and provinces are where greenhouse gas reductions are going to take place. In fact, some would argue that sometimes federal intervention can be potentially harmful to the work that is already being done. For example, a private member's motion that was passed last week by the Liberal government in the House will impose greenhouse gas emission screens on infrastructure projects in our communities, which will then prioritize infrastructure funding toward projects that mitigate climate change.

This is all good and all lofty. However, many communities need new roads, new bridges, and better highways. They need these critical pieces of infrastructure that are, unfortunately, going to emit greenhouse gases as they are built, but that does not mean that communities do not have climate change mitigation plans in place. There needs to be a holistic approach of having the ability to look at the entire picture, not just one piece of infrastructure.

The federal government needs to be supporting the work that has been done and the new initiatives and plans that are already in place and being developed. Some of these plans have been in place for decades. We do not need to duplicate the work or add more carbon taxes, especially when Canadians are already paying provincial carbon taxes.

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The Paris agreement commits countries like Canada to do their part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and with this I have absolutely no issue. To have the federal government impose a national carbon tax on all provinces and territories is not working together. The premiers of Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia and the three territorial premiers have all stated their opposition to the imposition of the federal carbon tax in the area of shared jurisdiction. They all dispute the Prime Minister's interpretation of the Vancouver declaration as an excuse for the federal government to impose a carbon tax in their respective provinces and territories.

It is my belief that we need to support communities that already have well-established and effective greenhouse gas reduction plans and climate change mitigation plans in place. We also need to help and support those communities that struggle with these issues to develop more robust plans. That is exactly why my colleague, the member for Abbotsford, introduced the amendment this morning and called on the federal government to work with provinces and territories to develop a reasonable plan to combat climate change that does not encroach on provincial or territorial jurisdiction or increase the overall tax burden on Canadians. Otherwise, we would be duplicating work, potentially encroaching on the rights of provinces; and frankly, we have enough work to do on our own.

Again, the FCM and every provincial organization that deals with cities and municipalities already have that framework in place. In B.C., the UBCM, which just met last week, has also set targets for greenhouse gas and climate change targets for cities. It is important to acknowledge all of the existing work that has been done over the years and look at how we can take the existing system and make it more robust.

• (1555)

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says that the previous government had a credible climate plan.

I spent the last 20 years as an executive in the clean tech industry. I have to tell members that there is nobody in the clean tech or clean energy sectors who would agree with that characterization.

If she truly believes that, how can she explain the fact that if we take everything done up until the end of 2015, from a regulatory perspective and from a carbon pricing perspective, and we forecast forward as to where we will be in 2030, we find we will be 10% above the 2005 level in 2030, and the Conservative target was 30% below?

• (1600)

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: Mr. Speaker, I guess my question would be why they adopted our plan if it is, frankly, not something that the member would appreciate or support.

I am going to say this. We worked on the international climate change adaptation with the World Bank. We did a number of things, actually: established 19 new clean-tech projects under the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate; invested heavily in carbon capture technology; protected a record amount of parkland; made historical investments in wetland and boreal forest restoration; established a clean air regulatory agenda; introduced regulations for cars and heavy-duty trucks; worked with the U.S. on

vehicle emissions, sulphur and gasoline; began to work on any number of fronts; provided supports on the development of carbon capture technology; removed tax breaks for oil sands producers.

The biofuel facility and the renewable energy was, frankly, work that I did as the former mayor, with the Conservative government.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yes, the Conservatives had a plan of sorts and made a lot of promises over the 10-year period. One of those promises, as I mentioned earlier in this place today, was that they would issue regulations to govern the greenhouse gases from the fossil fuel industry. Those were first promised, I recall, by Mr. Prentice, who was the environment minister. Those never came forward.

Other measures that their government could have taken would have been to fast-track the phase-out of coal-fired power. They could have mirrored the measures taken by the premier of Alberta because of the clear evidence provided by the Canadian Medical Association of the serious health and environmental impacts of coal-fired power.

I wonder if the member would respond as to why her government did not take serious measures while it was in power, to actually begin reducing greenhouse gases in a more rapid way?

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: Mr. Speaker, I would say that there were a number of things done. We introduced new regulations to reduce emissions from the coal-fired electricity generation, working to phase that out, as I have heard.

I think there is a lot that can be done, I think there is a lot that is being done, and I think there is an opportunity, on all sides of the House, to do what we need to do to protect the environment.

The point here is to do it right. The point is not to pass costs onto Canadians and implement tax after tax. There are other ways to do. There are regulatory ways to do it. There are incentivizing ways to do it. There is the technology that can be developed, and we should keep that technology here. I was speaking on the plane to a fellow from Alberta who is going to Brazil to work with biomass. All of that technology leaves the country.

We have to switch it around and ask how we can keep that brain trust here and export our technology to places like China, India, and all of the countries where the carbon emissions are off the chart.

That is where we would have the jobs. We would keep them here in Canada, not export them.

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Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for LaSalle—Émard—Verdun.

I am proud to rise today to speak to the motion in support of the government's ratification of the Paris agreement.

This agreement represents the cumulative efforts of 190 countries, civil society partners, private sector companies, and indigenous peoples. Collectively we came together in common cause with the purpose of protecting our planet, and that is what we are here to discuss today.

The critical need to address this issue of climate change is actually a very big part of the reason I got into politics in the first place. I did this to work to ensure a healthy and prosperous future for my teenage children and for future generations of Canadian children, and to ensure that our country pursues a path that will enable us to take advantage of the enormous economic opportunity that climate change represents, and thereby ensure the future prosperity of this country.

For 10 years the Conservatives sometimes talked about climate change, but failed to act. Last October, Canadians spoke and voted for real change, real action on the climate issue. The vote in the House this week represents a significant step in Canada's active international and domestic engagement regarding this critical issue.

At its core, the Paris agreement is an important tool for enabling the world to effectively address climate change. Article 6 of the agreement will be particularly important in paving the way for future co-operation among countries on the issue of carbon pricing and I am proud that Canada played a key role in negotiating this part of the agreement.

Global co-operation on carbon pricing will help to lower the overall costs of reducing greenhouse gases, and thus, has the potential to encourage countries to increase the level of ambition of their nationally determined greenhouse gas reduction targets over time.

In our domestic context, first ministers agreed in March to pursue the development of a pan-Canadian plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and furthering clean growth. Carbon pricing is one element of such a plan. Carbon pricing is an essential tool for reducing greenhouse gas emissions at the lowest possible cost and for stimulating investment in green infrastructure and low-carbon technology. Carbon pricing uses the market to drive clean investment decisions, encourage innovation, and reduce emissions.

Carbon pricing can do all of this for a number of reasons. First, it provides flexibility. Instead of government making the decisions on what actions must be taken, carbon pricing allows businesses and consumers to take advantage of their own least-cost options for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and it provides a clear financial incentive for them to continue to reduce their emissions as long as it is cost-effective to do so.

Second, carbon pricing will help Canada to transition to a low-carbon economy. When manufacturers pay a price on carbon, this encourages consumers to shift their purchases toward less carbon

intensive goods and for industry to respond to the growing demand for low-carbon products.

Third, carbon pricing will help position Canada to compete in a future low-carbon economy. Carbon pricing provides businesses with an ongoing incentive to innovate, especially if they expect the carbon price to gradually increase over time. Business leaders recognize that low-carbon technologies and processes are often more efficient and that reducing greenhouse gas emissions increasingly makes good business sense. This is important for the ongoing competitiveness of all businesses. It also, however, acts as a critical catalyst for the development and deployment of Canadian-made clean technologies.

I spent the past 20 years of my life working as a senior executive in the environmental technology field. I personally witnessed the implementation of Canada's first carbon pricing mechanism in British Columbia by Premier Gordon Campbell in 2008 and experienced first-hand the positive impact that such mechanisms can have in spurring the development of a robust clean-tech industry. There are clearly reasons as to why Vancouver boasts the largest clean-tech business cluster in Canada. One of these is the fact that a price on carbon exists.

In our government's discussions with Canadian industry and finance leaders over the past few months, a common theme emerged: carbon pricing is one of the most efficient ways to reduce emissions, to stimulate the market to make investments in innovation, and to deploy low-carbon technology. Indeed, in anticipation of an increasingly carbon-constrained marketplace, many leading corporations, including Suncor, Canadian Tire, and General Electric, consider an internal price on carbon in all of their investment decisions. In addition, we have received numerous submissions from businesses in support of carbon pricing through our "Let's Talk Climate Action" portal.

In July, the Minister of Environment met with 23 Canadian industry and business leaders about the path toward significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. Following that meeting, this group issued a joint statement with the Government of Canada in support of carbon pricing. Furthermore, all of these business leaders joined the carbon pricing leadership coalition. This World Bank-led initiative is an international voluntary partnership under which 74 countries and over 1,000 companies have expressed their support for carbon pricing.

•(1605)

We also have strong evidence here in Canada that carbon pricing and the pricing of carbon pollution can reduce emissions while maintaining economic growth. Research has shown that British Columbia's carbon tax has led to a notable reduction in fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions at the same time as B.C. enjoyed Canada's strongest economic growth.

In addition to the experience in British Columbia, there is growing momentum for carbon pricing in Canada. As of January 2017, Canada's four largest provinces, representing more than 80% of Canada's population, will have broad-based carbon pricing. British Columbia's carbon tax covers all fuels combusted in the province and revenue from the carbon tax is used to reduce taxes.

Alberta has had a carbon price applied to large industrial emitters since 2007, and Alberta's government is getting ready to put in place an economy-wide carbon levy starting in January next year.

Quebec has had an economy-wide cap-and-trade system since 2013. Quebec linked its cap-and-trade program with California's program in 2014, and the Quebec-California linkage is widely cited as a pioneering example of international co-operation on carbon pricing.

Ontario's cap-and-trade program will start in January next year and Ontario plans to join the Quebec-California cap-and-trade program. Mexico has also announced its intention to join the Quebec-California program.

The government has been working with provinces and territories to build on carbon pricing systems that are already in place and to put a price on carbon across Canada. Last March in the Vancouver declaration first ministers agreed that transitioning to a sustainable low-carbon economy is necessary for our collective prosperity, our competitiveness, our health and security, and that taking smart and effective action today on climate change is essential for future generations. First ministers will meet this fall to develop Canada's pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change. The framework will include a national approach to carbon pricing in which the pricing of carbon pollution plays a central role in reducing emissions and driving innovation over time.

Carbon pricing is a central tool but it is just one of a suite of tools required in a shift toward sustainable, economic growth. In addition to carbon pricing, our government will also be considering a number of regulatory approaches to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to complement a national approach on carbon pricing.

In addition, we have committed to making significant new investments in green infrastructure and in clean technology. These investments and the clear, focused strategy the government has been developing with respect to clean tech and innovation will be critical, not only as part of a comprehensive plan to address Canada's greenhouse gas emissions but also as a critical enabler for putting the Canadian economy firmly on a successful transition path toward a low-carbon future.

Over the past several months I have been personally actively engaged with various federal departments and with companies across the country in discussing and developing frameworks and potential

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measures that will ensure that Canada will be well positioned to capitalize on the opportunities that a low-carbon future will provide.

Our government is committed to putting Canada firmly on a path to achieving its greenhouse gas reduction targets and to enabling Canada's transition to a low-carbon economy. With the ratification of the Paris agreement we will take a very important step, one that will signal to the world our commitment to this global effort.

I am proud to support the motion. I urge all of my colleagues in the House to support the government in taking action to secure the futures of Canadian families, and in particular, the futures of Canadian children.

•(1610)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it looks like we will be doing a lot of chatting back and forth today.

I am looking forward to working with the hon. parliamentary secretary on moving forward on concrete measures.

I understand that he has worked in the clean energy sector, and the question I would pose to him is this. Does he share my concern that Canada has fallen back by 41% in our investments in clean infrastructure, when the rest of the world have their economies based on it and booming in this trillion-dollar economy?

Does he think that the \$10 per tonne tax will spur investments right away in this sector?

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, the question is a very good one. The extent to which the previous government abandoned the clean tech base over the past 10 years is reflected in Canada's clean tech share of overall global GDP associated with clean tech, where it actually shrunk by half in terms of what Canada has actually done.

Part of going forward, we need to certainly make investments in infrastructure-related issues with a green lens to ensure that they are furthering the work that we are doing with respect to reducing greenhouse gas emissions while improving the productivity of the economy. However, we also need a very focused strategy with respect to clean tech in general, where Canada is focused on identifying the areas of technology where we have or can develop a sustainable competitive advantage in the world so that we can effectively participate in what will be more than a trillion-dollar global market.

•(1615)

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was just reading through a recent document from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. One of the things it was wondering, and I would like to ask the same question, is whether the federal government is going to ensure that revenue collected from carbon pricing mechanisms directly facilitate businesses' transition to a lower-carbon economy, and that it does not go into general revenues. Further, the allocation of that revenue should be objective and transparent.

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I wonder if the member could comment on that.

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, ultimately the decision with respect to how the revenue from carbon pricing mechanisms work are going to be the purview of the provinces. The federal government is collecting no taxes and retaining no revenues. It is actually completely revenue-neutral from the perspective of the federal government.

In different provincial areas, governments have chosen to do different things. In British Columbia, the government has chosen to reduce income taxes as a way to utilize those revenues. In Alberta, there is a focus much more on accelerating the development of clean tech and renewable energy.

Members will find differences across the provinces, but thus far, we have seen very little willingness on the part of many of the provinces to look at simply putting it into general revenues. I think there really is an expectation that it will be used to further the transition towards a lower-carbon economy.

Mr. John Oliver (Oakville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the parliamentary secretary about carbon leakage, and the loss of manufacturing jobs to other jurisdictions with less rigorous carbon pricing, carbon costing. Does he have any suggestions on how the pan-Canadian framework could address carbon leakage?

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, on carbon leakage, again, the design of the systems will be largely provincial. However, there are a number of ways in which provinces can choose and some of them have chosen to deal with specific issues around carbon leakage in the past. There are trade-exposed industries that are dealt with in a particular fashion in British Columbia, for example, the cement industry. There are also discussions ongoing about things like carbon border adjustments and those kinds of things.

There are many different types of mechanisms, and that is something each province will work through. However, we are obviously happy to participate and be part of those conversations.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to address the problem that we see with the carbon tax that has been introduced by the Liberal government.

Even though the Liberals are going to pass it off to the provinces and try to isolate themselves from consumers and taxpayers being upset about having to pay more in taxes, we have to remember that a \$50-a-tonne tax on carbon will result in about an 11.5¢ increase in the price of gasoline. Does the parliamentary secretary realize that the hardest hit people by the carbon taxes the Liberals have introduced today are going to be rural Canadians?

It is going to be our farmers. It is going to be seniors living on fixed incomes who often have to drive from rural areas to urban centres to get the health care and medical attention they require. It will be these individuals who will be hit the hardest.

Why are the Liberals not considering the impact on rural Canada and how this would increase the production costs of food products right across this country?

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, the first thing I would say is that any serious climate plan includes carbon pricing mechanisms. The question speaks to the fact that the previous government had no serious plan to address carbon emissions.

The revenue that is raised by provinces is under the purview of the provinces to decide how to actually return it back to taxpayers. They can use it for the purpose of things like generating activity in the clean technology and clean power space. To the extent that a provincial government decides that it wants to return the revenue back, in the same way that British Columbia does, that is certainly up to the province.

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to speak today and to follow the hon. parliamentary secretary. I will try to be as eloquent as he was.

It is important for me to speak to this issue today. It is very important for my constituents, as I found out during the course of a consultation in my riding on climate change. It is also one of the reasons the inaction of the previous government and, indeed, its distrust of science and scientists led me to leave my previous employment in the academy and seek public office.

I have to also admit, on a point of pride, that nothing makes a former teacher prouder than to see one of his students sitting in the House as Minister of Environment and Climate Change, which is precisely what happened.

I would like to elaborate and move the discussion from what my hon. colleague has just said.

First, I would like to acknowledge that Canada is committed to creating a cleaner and more innovative economy that reduces emissions and protects our environment, while creating well-paying jobs for the middle class and those who work hard to join it.

Today, the government is proposing its pan-Canadian approach to carbon pricing, as my colleague and the Prime Minister outlined this morning. Under the new plan, all Canadian jurisdictions will have carbon pricing in place by 2018. The Paris agreement emphasizes how Canada will harness the power of renewable energy as a way of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Canada has to lead on this, and the government is proposing to lead on this, and this measure will lead us there.

However, for those who fear a carbon tax, this will be a good thing for our economy. Canada's renewable energy and clean tech industry will begin to play a much more critical role in our Canadian economy. It has developed a base already, but developing a strong Canadian clean technology industry is paramount to the development of a prosperous and sustainable low carbon economy, and we can help provide solutions globally to address the question of climate change.

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This industry contributed \$11.6 billion to Canada's GDP in 2014 and directly supported over 55,000 jobs across the country. These are quality jobs that sustain Canadian families. Canada's clean technology entrepreneurs are on a mission to innovate and create high-value, high-quality jobs that have a positive impact on climate change and the environment. There are close to 800 Canadian clean tech firms operating in Canada. Over 90% of these firms are small and medium-sized enterprises poised for growth.

These companies play a critical role in creating clean electricity, clean energy, and in reducing the environmental footprint for all of Canada's manufacturing industries, including our natural resource industries, helping them to become more efficient and more competitive internationally. This is a 21st century industry sustaining innovative advanced manufacturing jobs from coast to coast to coast and it is one that a carbon price will help spur, continue to grow, and create incentives to grow.

• (1620)

[Translation]

We want Canadian companies to be world leaders in using and developing clean, sustainable technologies and processes that can be exported worldwide. Achieving that goal will strengthen our economy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The 2016 federal budget announced a number of investments, including \$1 billion for clean energy technology, \$2 billion for a fund that will help us work with the provinces to transition to a low-carbon economy; over \$100 million for energy efficiency; and \$50 million for Sustainable Development Technology Canada.

As part of the new trade and investment strategy and to make the most of the investments in budget 2016 and national plans for sustainable resource development, climate change, and innovation, we consulted Canadian clean technology exporters to find out how the government can help them compete in the global market.

[English]

This is a truly national sector with industry clusters, jobs, and commercial benefits stretching across the country. Canada has a strong industrial process cluster in Quebec, a mature water cluster and a renewable energy cluster in Ontario, and marine energy clusters on two coasts. We are the world's leader in carbon capture and storage, with projects stretching across the Prairies, including SaskPower Boundary Dam project, Shell Canada's Shell Quest project in Alberta, and the world's largest carbon dioxide enhanced oil recovery project in Midale, Saskatchewan.

In the north, clean technology is even changing the way we mine at Raglan's nickel mine complex in Nunavik. Tugliq Energy, a company headquartered in the riding of my hon. colleague and member for Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs, has implemented a new project setting a new standard for industrial scale wind energy in Canada's north. The project features leading-edge energy storage with an Arctic-grade wind turbine and has successfully demonstrated the economic and environmental benefits for Canada's northern mining operations and communities.

Green collar jobs are not low-skill, part-time jobs. They are jobs in innovative fields, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. This new progressive sector is also noteworthy in that

it attracts and employs youth. Twenty-one per cent of employees in the sector are under thirty years of age, a percentage well above the Canadian average.

• (1625)

[Translation]

In global markets, Canadian clean technology businesses punch well above their weight. More than 87% of our small and medium-sized clean technology businesses are exporters, and the clean tech industry as a whole generates more than 50% of its revenue in global markets.

Although the United States is still our largest export market, Canadian exports of clean technologies are very diverse, and more than 40% of those exports go to markets other than the United States. We now expect that exports will only increase with a sharp global shift to low-carbon economies.

In fact, Asia, Latin America and Africa have shown increasing interest in Canadian clean technologies. There are ample opportunities to increase exports. The Canadian Trade Commissioner Service has new programs such as CanExport, which provides direct financial support to small and medium-sized Canadian firms to help them find new markets, and is ready and eager to help these companies prepare to enter global markets and be successful.

[English]

Canadian clean technology firms embody Canadian innovation. The technological dynamism of these firms has contributed to innovations across a broad spectrum of sectors, including renewable green energy, green infrastructure, natural resources, and green transportation.

The Canadian clean technology sector invested approximately 10% of total sector revenue, or \$1.2 billion back into research and development in 2014. That is more than 10 times the Canadian average of 0.9%. It even exceeds research and development investments of well-known innovative sectors, such as aerospace and oil and gas.

It should also be pointed out that three-quarters of clean technology research and development spending was made by Canadian SMEs. They firmly believe that strategic investments in innovation are the foundation for sustainable growth, and so do we.

[Translation]

Environmental protection and economic growth go hand in hand. Clean technologies are a key part of the government's approach to promoting sustainable economic growth, and they play an important role in fulfilling our commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

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This sector has many benefits for the environment. For example, technologies implemented by 66 companies and funded by Sustainable Development Technology Canada have led to a reduction in greenhouse gases of 4.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents in 2014 alone. This is equivalent to taking 950,000 vehicles off the road for one hour.

Canadian businesses in that industry are net exporters and help countries all around the world reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

For instance, I had the opportunity to visit Canadian Solar, based in Guelph, in my hon. colleague's riding. It is one of the largest manufacturers of photovoltaic systems in the world.

● (1630)

[English]

Our government wants to make Canadian firms leaders in the use and development of clean technology, and carbon pricing is a good step to get us there.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 1993 in my community, logging companies were going to log 90% of Meares Island and most of Clayoquot Sound. The chiefs in that community stood up for the environment. They stood up for what was important. They were being told that the land had to be logged for the sake of jobs. Environmentalists, business people, even loggers stood with them, and people from across Canada and around the world. They knew that we could not keep going, that it was unsustainable to continue down this path of destruction. Therefore, they decided to do things differently. They did not have the answers, but they took a bold and important leadership role to stand up for what was right.

Today, we have the answers. We know we can lower emissions through green energy, clean energy, and clean rapid transportation. We can do it right.

Knowing we are facing the greatest crisis of our time, will we share that bold leadership that the chiefs of Clayoquot Sound and the people in the war of the woods did to stand up for the environment? Today, we are not even meeting the U.S. commitment to meet the 30% reduction commitment by 2025. Why can we not at least join the Americans in their commitment to reduce emissions by 30% by 2025? We know Sweden has grown its economy by 50% and has reduced emissions by 25% since it signed onto Kyoto. Therefore, it can be done.

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I share the hon. member's passion for this. I believe we are showing leadership. We led in the signing of the Paris accord. We will lead in the implementation of the Paris accord across the world. We fully intend to continually push our targets. What they are today is not necessarily what they will be tomorrow. We intend to meet the commitment we made under Paris, and we intend to lead along the way.

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba we take climate change very seriously. We are the home base for an organization called the International Institute of Sustainable Development. It has determined that the average winter temperature has increased 3° over the last 40 years. If the trend continues, and unless we move forward with this plan there is little

hope that it will not, we will see winters that are 7° warmer by mid-century.

Is the hon. member aware that the Manitoba Conservative government, which was elected last April in the provincial election, stated in its throne speech that it would adopt a climate action plan that would, "include carbon pricing that fosters emissions reduction, retains investment capital and stimulates new innovation in clean energy, businesses and jobs?" This is the brand new Conservative government in Manitoba, led by a former member of Parliament of this chamber.

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, indeed I am aware. I know that 85% of people in Canada are already living in a province or territory committed to carbon pricing. Most experts say that carbon pricing is the way to go. Therefore, it is not surprising that we would find support on all parts of the political spectrum, including members of the Conservative Party across Canada, and former leaders, such as Preston Manning, who have come out in favour of carbon pricing as the solution moving forward.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the statement by the member. I am sure he is also aware that the Premier of Alberta, who has been brought up many times today, has said that unless Alberta gets a pipeline to tide water, it will not sign on to this agreement; they are done.

● (1635)

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, the process for the approval of pipelines is another way in which we are trying to balance economic need with a primordial mission to protect the environment against climate change. We have established a good set of processes, and we are moving forward in good faith on all of those various projects.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, Canada Revenue Agency; the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, Fisheries and Oceans; the hon. member for Essex, International Trade.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great privilege this afternoon to speak to Motion No. 8, the Paris climate change accord. I will be sharing my time this afternoon with the member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

Canadians coast to coast want a say in this issue of climate change. It is interesting. From the Paris agreement, the Liberal government has all of a sudden adopted the greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets that were set by the previous Conservative government. Imagine that. The previous government, I will just let members know, set the 30% reduction of GHG by 2030 over the 2005 levels.

Granted, this is an ambitious goal, although it gives businesses time for planning to address the global emissions. We need a fair and effective approach to international efforts on climate change, and this must, as we all know in the House, include all of the world's major emitters of greenhouse gases. Keep in mind, Canada represents only 1.6% of the global GHGs. Our government established reduction targets. We went from 1.9% down to 1.6% in our time of government.

The Province of Saskatchewan is trying to be a leader, as we all know, in carbon capture technology. Carbon capture technology can help to minimize CO₂ emissions. While it might not be perfect in certain situations in the eyes of some environmentalists, it is seen as a way for the world to transform to renewable energy. There has to be a balance, as coal-fired power plants may still have sustainable life, not only in my province of Saskatchewan, but next door, in Alberta. Using these facilities will extend the life of many jobs and many local communities in these two provinces, not to mention that there should be some spin-off in selling this technological change worldwide. We can all point to China, as the Chinese are now building one new thermal coal plant every 10 days or so.

Right now, the Boundary Dam near Estevan is one such area in the province that is trying to be that world leader. The Boundary Dam has captured one million tonnes of CO₂ this past year. That is equivalent to 240,000 cars being taken off the road, in a province that only has a population of 1.1 million. Saskatchewan mining operations continue to reduce the energy and water usage, and the GHG emissions, through initiatives such as heat recovery co-generation, continuous mining, remote control mining, and the use of electric vehicles. I saw this first-hand when I visited one of the mines about two weeks ago in Allan, Saskatchewan.

This takes time, and with the economy on the brink of disaster, time is needed. That is why the Province of Saskatchewan and our opposition government on this side of the House do not support the Vancouver declaration. Once the lone wolf of reason, Saskatchewan has recently been joined by all three territories, and now Nova Scotia.

Brad Wall, the Premier of Saskatchewan, said today in the legislature that the level of disrespect shown by the Prime Minister and his government was ridiculous, and that today is “stunning” in the House of Commons. Wall made the comments to the Regina Leader-Post, saying the PM unilaterally imposed the carbon on the provinces and the territories. The premier said that the meeting this morning was not worth the CO₂ emissions it took for all environment ministers to head to Montreal for discussions, and “This is a betrayal of the statements made by the Prime Minister in Vancouver this March.” That was when they had their meetings.

The Saskatchewan environment minister, Scott Moe, also said today that the carbon tax will cost each family in Saskatchewan

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about \$1,250 a year and the province \$2.5 billion, while at the same time threatening jobs in the energy sector, and that the government was forcing a tax that could be on par with Pierre Trudeau's national energy program introduced in the 1980s.

We all know what that led to: ongoing animosity between western provinces and Liberal governments.

• (1640)

I might add that Aaron Wudrick, from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, also slammed the current government, in that an average Canadian family could pay nearly \$2,600 per year in new taxes by 2022. Canadians should hang on to their wallets.

These are the numbers that are now coming out. We had not talked about these numbers until I brought them to the House: \$1,250 per family in Saskatchewan, and nearly \$2,600 per family by the year 2022.

SaskPower, by 2030, wants to be 50% renewables: hydro, wind, solar, and geothermal. There is no guarantee on wind, so it needs to back that up with gas generation.

Saskatchewan, as we all know, and as has been mentioned before in the House, has three coal-fired power plants in the province: Boundary Dam, Shand, and Poplar River. Saskatchewan feels that it is being singled out unfairly over this carbon tax, dealing with agriculture, with vehicles, and with utilities. Other provinces, like Manitoba, B.C., and Quebec, have the advantage with hydro, which may be the cleanest resource of them all. All three provinces are exporting to the United States. Therefore I ask: Would Manitoba sell its hydro to a province like Saskatchewan cheaper than it does to the United States, which it is currently doing today?

I was also reminded on Friday night, when I was going back home, that Saskatchewan companies right now, like many in this country, are exploring all possibilities on new energy. The former Liberal MP, Gary Merasty, is president of Des Nedhe Development. It is in my riding of Saskatoon—Grasswood. Many of its workers were on the same plane that I was, from Toronto to Saskatoon, on Friday night. We had a good handful of officials, and they had been in Germany looking at wind power possibilities. The Saskatoon delegation, somewhat upbeat I might say about their exploratory trip, were feeling that it may help their situation back home in Saskatchewan. This is what companies in Saskatchewan and Canada are doing. They are reaching out worldwide and sharing information.

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We fundamentally oppose efforts by the current federal government to increase the overall tax burden of Canadian taxpayers. I gave members the numbers earlier: \$1,250 for each family in Saskatchewan, and nearly \$2,600 Canada-wide for every family by 2022.

On the overall tax burden on Canadian taxpayers, and certainly over what the plan would look like, we are chasing away investment. This has resulted, as we all know, in the loss of thousands of Canadian jobs in Alberta and Saskatchewan, all dealing with the oil and gas sector. It has had major impacts on those two provinces, along with Labrador and Newfoundland.

What is really disturbing is a recent report released by Meyers Norris Penny, which showed that 64% of people in Saskatchewan and Manitoba are living within \$200 a month of not being able to pay their bills and debt. Laid-off workers and families are not the only ones who are hurting now.

Adam Legge, the president of Calgary Chamber of Commerce, said that, “greenhouse operations [in Alberta] will be taxed for carbon-incentive products they currently use, such as fertilizers”.

The reason that the Saskatchewan government turned down a wind power project near Chaplin, Saskatchewan the environment minister said, was that “potential impacts on migratory birds were [simply] too great”. This is the reason that the government could not approve the project.

I might add that groups like Ducks Unlimited also have a big say in western Canada. We have a great Ducks Unlimited organization in our province. It has done a tremendous amount of work.

A previous Conservative government reduced the carbon emissions and grew the economy. We are stalled right now, and that is why provinces and the territories today are more than skeptical about the Vancouver declaration developing a pan-Canadian network on clean growth and climate change.

• (1645)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is worthy of noting that earlier today we took a strong step forward for the country in dealing with one of the most important environmental issues of our nation, and that is the issue of climate change. Our Prime Minister clearly enunciated how important it is to all Canadians. We, as a government, are listening to what Canadians want, and this is something that we believe Canadians expect of the government.

There have been negotiations and discussions among different provincial and territorial leaders, indigenous people, and world leaders. It is all coming down to a very positive statement from the House

I wonder if the member would acknowledge that the resolution we are debating today is in fact worth supporting. It sends a message that Canadians want to hear, and it sets into place tangible action.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, I do not think the hon. member heard my speech. I talked openly about the premier of Saskatchewan today and the level of disrespect shown by the Prime Minister and the government in the House of Commons today.

The people of Saskatchewan are not happy. When they find out their taxes are going up \$1,250 by Saskatchewan statistics, we are not going to be happy coast to coast to coast.

I was happy about the Paris accord, but I am certainly not happy with the Vancouver declaration and will not vote for it in this.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for sharing his views on this issue. In Courtenay—Alberni, just in the last few years, we have seen flooding in our community. We have seen the banks of the Somass River and the Puntledge River break. We have seen drought, and on Mount Arrowsmith the snowpack was gone by June in 2015. We have never seen that before.

Our salmon could not even make it upstream and it rained just in time for our salmon run. Infrastructure has been stressed in all of our municipalities from drought and flooding. We have seen Humboldt squid from California show up on our coastal beaches. This has never been seen before.

With acidification in Baynes Sound and forest fires, it is an urgent situation we are facing. The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy forecasts that the impacts of climate change will cost us between \$21 billion and \$43 billion a year by 2050.

Would it be fiscally responsible not to transfer the tax burden to future generations but to mitigate that right now and invest in tackling climate change in a urgent manner like other countries, such as Sweden, have done?

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, there are companies in the province of Saskatchewan and elsewhere in Canada that are going worldwide. We all know that we want to work on fair climate change plan, but what does it look like? My province right now has unemployment of nearly 8%. Next door in Alberta it is over 8%. So where are we going? All I am saying is that there needs to be a balance, which takes time because government and business need to get on the same page, which does not happen overnight.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have listened to the speech by my hon. colleague, who has very strong support from his constituents in Saskatchewan. First and foremost, he has talked about the average Canadian, the guy who works hard, pays taxes, and wants to see his wages well used by government.

Today is a bad day for Canadians because, as the Prime Minister said in question period, the government will impose a new tax. More than that, there is a new fight between the federal government and the provinces.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about these new sunny ways of the government.

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•(1650)

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, it is not revenue neutral. We were told today in this place that it is revenue neutral. We already have stories out there. The price of gas is going up 11.5¢ a litre. In my province, we import a lot of vegetables in the winter. We cannot grow vegetables when it is minus 40°, so this is not going to be revenue neutral. We have been told by the premier of Saskatchewan that it is going to cost families \$1,250 a year. We have been told by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation that it is going to cost homeowners over \$2,600 a year by the year 2022. We were told this is revenue neutral. I say to the members across the way, as the premier of Saskatchewan said today, it is not revenue neutral.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise in the House to speak to this issue of climate change. I believe it is one of the greatest environmental challenges of our time. This file has befuddled federal governments for over two decades. I am glad to see that the current government has come forward with a plan.

I note that the current government has adopted the targets established by the previous Conservative government under Prime Minister Stephen Harper at Copenhagen for a 30% reduction in greenhouse gases below 2005 levels by 2030, even though in Paris, I note that the current government said this target was a minimum target and that it would come forward with a stronger target. Clearly, that is not the case.

I would also note that the Liberals promised in their election platform that “targets must recognise the economic cost and catastrophic impact that a greater-than-two-degree increase in average global temperatures would represent”. That is on page 40 of their platform.

To be clear, the House should know that the 30% target adopted by the government does not meet that election commitment to keep global warming to a two-degree limit.

However, I commend the government for coming forward with some plan so that the House can debate it. I have long believed that the federal government needs to do better in reducing emissions. That is something I have said, not just on this side of the aisle but consistently when we were sitting on the other side of the aisle.

The way to reduce emissions is to price carbon, to take what is an externality in our economic system and internalize it by pricing it; but there is a right way to price carbon and there is a wrong way to price carbon.

The right way to price carbon is based upon three important principles. The first is to have consistent prices across all regions of the country and across all economic sectors. The second is to ensure that no backdoor equalization takes place. The third principle is revenue neutrality, not to the government collecting the revenue, but revenue neutrality to the taxpayer who is paying the revenue.

Those three principles are incredibly important.

The first principle, which is to have a consistent price across all economic sectors and across all regions of the country, is important because we would otherwise distort our national economy and do great damage both to consumers and companies.

The second principle, that there be no backdoor equalization, is also equally important because in the constitutional structure of our federation, the provinces own the resources and should enjoy the full benefits of those resources. A province like Alberta, with over 65 tonnes emitted per citizen, or Saskatchewan, with closer to 70 tonnes emitted per citizen, would have money taken out of their jurisdiction by a potential system and redistributed across the country. That cannot be allowed to happen because it would be nothing more than a backdoor equalization program and would be unfair to those provinces that have the resources they are developing.

The third and final principle, I believe, is the most important one. It is the principle of revenue neutrality for citizens and taxpayers across the country. Here is why this is such a critically important question. The government has proposed a \$50-per-tonne price on carbon by 2022. In a 750-megatonne economy, that is the equivalent of close to \$40 billion a year in revenues to various governments and in various schemes. That represents 2% of GDP. If we assume that after 2022, the government's plan is to continue to increase it at a rate of \$10 per tonne per year, we would end up with a price of around \$125 a tonne by 2030. That would be the equivalent of \$66 billion a year, assuming that the \$125-per-tonne target achieves a 30% reduction in emissions to 525 megatonnes. This revenue of \$66 billion a year would represent over 3% of Canada's GDP.

•(1655)

This third principle is the most important one, because if there is no revenue neutrality for the taxpayer and families and citizens across this country, then we are about to embark on one of the largest tax grabs in Canadian history. That \$66 billion a year represents over one-fifth of federal government revenue. It is a huge chunk of change.

Let us judge the Liberal plan on these three principles: the principles of consistent pricing, no backdoor equalization, and revenue neutrality.

On the first principle, the government should be given a checkmark. It has established a consistent price across the country. It has also designed it so that the price would be gradually ramped up in order to prevent a shock to the economy, from \$10 a tonne in 2018 to \$50 a tonne in 2022. Presumably, the price is going to reach closer to \$120 to \$130 a tonne by 2030. On the first principle, the test is met.

On the second principle of no backdoor equalization, the test has also been met. The federal government, by mandating that the provinces collect these revenues and that where provinces do not collect these revenues, the federal government would do it on their behalf and fully remit the transfer back to the provinces without any strings attached, means that the second principle has been met.

However, the third principle of revenue neutrality has not been met. As I said earlier, by revenue neutrality I do not mean revenue neutrality in terms of the government's use of that money for government programs or balancing its budget or other forms of government initiatives. I mean revenue neutrality so that the ordinary Canadian family, the ordinary citizen, will come out no further ahead or behind under any carbon pricing scheme.

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That is not the case here, because the federal government will allow this system to be established in a way that allows governments to spend the money. As I mentioned earlier, by 2022 we are talking about 2% of GDP, some \$38 billion, assuming a 750 megatonne emissions level. It will still be roughly 750 megatonnes in 2022, because every economist and every expert has told us that the reductions in emissions do not really kick in until the back half of the plan, when the price starts getting closer to \$100 plus a tonne. By 2022, we are looking at \$50 a tonne and 750 megatonnes and a cost of \$38 billion a year. That is more than \$1,000 per person in this country. For a typical family of four, we are looking at imposing about \$4,000 in additional costs. By 2030, we could be looking at imposing an additional cost of \$7,000 on a typical Canadian family of four.

In contrast, the much-ballyhooed Liberal middle class tax cut saved those middle class taxpayers just under \$3 billion a year. Compare and contrast the much-ballyhooed middle class tax cut of just under \$3 billion a year with a tax grab in the form of a non-revenue neutral carbon tax of closer to \$38 billion a year in 2022 and \$66 billion a year by 2030.

The federal government has missed a huge opportunity to use these revenues to reduce income taxes. It could have used constitutional power over taxation, over the regulation of inter-provincial trade and commerce, and its powers with respect to the Criminal Code, with relation to toxic substances, and with respect to international trade to convince the provinces to adopt a nationwide scheme that truly would have been revenue neutral.

This plan reminds me of the plan the Ontario Liberal government introduced almost a decade ago, called the Green Energy Act, a plan that used public money to subsidize all sorts of renewable energy in Ontario and that has put a huge burden on Ontario families and cost them an enormous amount of money, with an almost doubling of their electricity bills. This plan will go down the same path, and I fear that the Liberal government has just sown the seeds of its own demise.

• (1700)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on recognizing the fact that climate change is real, for starters, and a problem. I hope I can say the same for the rest of his colleague, but I am not sure if I can.

I listened to his description of the math and the taxes and how they add up, but I think he is missing the fact that the whole reason we want to tie this to the economics is so that it drives incentive within the companies to decrease their emissions, to decrease their contributions to carbon. Therefore his math will not add up because he is basing it on what present day emissions are worth. Give this two years to be phased in and then a gradual increase over the following five years.

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Speaker, we see clearly when we read the economic research on carbon pricing that the initial introduction of a carbon price has little impact on emissions. It is not until the price reaches its final stages further down the line that it actually starts to significantly reduce emissions. In other words, the reduction in emissions is not linear; it is exponential and the significant decreases come at the tail end of the pricing scheme and not at the initial stages.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am a little frustrated by the debate in this chamber between Liberals and Conservatives who are arguing about different ways to get to the same inadequate targets.

We know that the Harper targets that have now been adopted by the Liberals will not save us from the disasters that are looming in our economy, not just in society. I am not talking in general terms about loss of species and all those things that are very important, but we have had the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy advising us that the economic impact on Canada of climate change will be between \$21 billion and \$43 billion per year by 2050.

When the Conservatives talk about the impact of this tax that should be neutral on households, what about the extra insurance premiums they will have to pay? What about all the other costs that climate change will drive into their homes?

I think both sides need to get serious about some targets, some levels of carbon pricing that are real, not \$10, which is half of what the provinces are already doing, and take some real action, because carbon pricing alone will not meet this challenge.

We will also have to have some very serious investments in the public projects we need in transportation to meet the challenge of climate change.

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comment, but I could not disagree more strongly. I believe that setting the price of carbon is the way to go to achieve these reductions in emissions, and using the power of free markets and the private sector to achieve these outcomes has been proven in the past to work.

If the government were to set a price on carbon, allowing free markets to achieve these outcomes, that is the way to go, but what is critical in setting that price is ensuring the revenue neutrality of any revenues to the taxpayer. As I pointed out earlier in my remarks, if we do not do that, we are about to embark on one of the biggest tax grabs in Canadian history, and mark my words, this will have major political repercussions.

This is on a scale that makes the Green Energy Act in Ontario look Mickey Mouse. This is something that, at \$50 a tonne, will cost the equivalent of 2% of GDP, some \$38 billion a year. This is a huge shift in tax policy, and the fact that the government did not insist on revenue neutrality will hammer consumers and companies across this country.

• (1705)

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of my friend, the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills. It was a very well laid out case.

In my riding there are a lot of beef farmers. We have some manufacturers left that managed to survive the Ontario Liberals, especially with the Green Energy Act, which is almost driving them to the point of not being able to compete.

Government Orders

Now I am hearing words here about a likely new carbon tax. We have cattle farmers who want to get their product to market. We have manufacturers competing with economies all around the world. Maybe my friend could explain how Canadian businesses compete now with this new tax scheme they have.

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Speaker, that allows me to briefly touch on something else that I was not able to touch upon during my remarks, which is that not only did the government not bring forward a revenue-neutral carbon tax, but it also failed to come forward with a plan to eliminate all the regulations, the costly and ineffective regulations that put a huge burden on consumers and on companies across this country. These are regulations like the corporate average fuel economy standard regulations, the bio-fuel and ethanol and bio-diesel standards that could all have been eliminated had a proper revenue-neutral price on carbon been implemented.

It would have saved consumers and companies a lot of regulatory burden and a lot of undue costs. However, all that opportunity was missed because the government failed to show leadership on this issue and establish a nationwide revenue-neutral carbon tax using the power of free markets while at the same time cutting red tape and all the regulatory overburden that has been imposed on consumers and companies across this country.

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to announce that I will be sharing my time with the member for Davenport.

[*Translation*]

I am honoured to have the opportunity to rise in the House to speak on a matter of great importance to my constituents in Saint Boniface—Saint Vital.

[*English*]

Climate change is the most important environmental issue of our time. The adoption of the Paris agreement last December was a historic accomplishment in the global effort to address climate change. Why is it so important? If we look at my province, we see that the impact of climate change could be dramatic.

Manitoba's location in the middle of the continent means that we will feel climate change sooner, with more severe changes. Scientists have detailed how Manitoba, already known for its extreme weather, will see summers get much drier and much hotter, and winters much warmer. In fact, the average winter temperature in southern Manitoba has increased three degrees over the last 40 years. Our winters are increasingly caught in a freeze-thaw cycle, which is devastating for our already maligned infrastructure.

The impact on our ecosystem could also increase toxic algae blooms in Lake Winnipeg.

[*Translation*]

This bears repeating: the average winter temperature in southern Manitoba has increased 3 degrees over the last 40 years. Clearly, we must act.

Of the 191 countries that signed the Paris agreement, over 60 have already ratified it. The international will to take action on this is impressive, and Canada must play an active role.

[*English*]

We stood with the rest of the world in Paris to adopt the agreement. We stood with world leaders in New York on April 22, Earth Day, to sign it. Now we must stand with the movers to ratify Paris.

Let us demonstrate that Canada is without a doubt committed to action.

● (1710)

[*Translation*]

The Paris agreement is not the end of the process. It is only the next step in the efforts to resolve the climate change problem.

More steps will have to be taken. Some of them have already been mentioned in the House. The international community will meet again in Marrakesh, Morocco, for the next round of negotiations with the UN.

Canada must remain a leader in the global fight against climate change and help to ensure a positive outcome.

[*English*]

Marrakech is expected to be a celebration of early entry into force. This will trigger the first meeting of parties to the Paris agreement. Canada has supported efforts to have the agreement enter into force as soon as possible. It is my sincere hope that Canada will ratify the agreement and be part of this important moment.

This meeting, or COP 22, as it is known, is expected to focus on implementation and action. It will continue the world's efforts toward the implementation of the Paris agreement. It will focus attention on the action that all countries and other actors are undertaking to address climate change.

There remain many issues that require significant technical work before the agreement is fully implemented. The Paris agreement provided the framework for global action. Now we must fill that frame with details.

Over the course of the past few months, countries have been writing position papers on those details. The papers, which are now available on the UN website, will inform the technical work in November. We must show the world that this work is progressing well and that implementation will be robust. Canada is contributing to this work in collaboration with our provinces and territories.

Another big part of filling the frame will involve providing details on how countries will support each other as they begin to implement the agreement. This could involve technology transfer, capacity building, knowledge sharing, and so on. Canada is extremely well positioned in this area.

Government Orders

For developing countries, implementing the agreement is often linked to the financial support they will need. To realize the goals of Paris, partners at all levels must work together. Financial support for climate action in developing countries is an essential part of this.

[*Translation*]

In Morocco, donor countries will provide more clarity and predictability regarding funding. They will achieve their common goal of raising \$100 billion U.S. by 2020.

Governments have to make progress on their commitment. It is an essential part of inspiring confidence.

[*English*]

COP 22 will provide countries with a unique opportunity to have a frank dialogue on how to unleash financial flows to ensure transformation to a low-carbon economy. Everyone will be expected to demonstrate progress and action in Morocco. It will be a measure of success as the world seeks to maintain the momentum of Paris. As part of this, Canada will showcase our work under the pan-Canadian framework and the significant new investments we are making in the areas of clean tech and green infrastructure.

How will Canada contribute to the success of COP 22? As we were in Paris, Canada will be constructive. Canada will be active. We will advance our positions, and Canada will engage the world to advance the implementation of the Paris agreement and showcase our climate change efforts at home and abroad.

We will demonstrate our commitment to action through the pan-Canadian framework, as well as our international actions, not just under the UN but through complementary fora such as the Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition.

This is not just about emission reductions. We also have much to share about our experiences in adapting to the impacts of climate change. For example, Canada will highlight the climate change challenges faced by indigenous and northern communities. We will tell the world how the different levels of government, private companies, and local communities in Canada are working together to address our short- and long-term climate change adaptation and energy related issues. Our efforts include incorporating indigenous science and traditional knowledge in decision-making, and we have a good story to tell the world there.

To help share Canada's unique perspectives and experiences, we will go to Morocco with an inclusive delegation. That will include provinces, territories, national indigenous organizations, non-government organizations, youth, and individuals from the private sector to join the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

We invite opposition leaders to join the minister and the Canadian delegation.

[*English*]

However, before COP 22, we first must take the next important step.

[*Translation*]

We must ratify the Paris agreement.

[*English*]

Let us give Canada a seat at the table of COP 22 as a founding partner to the Paris agreement.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the member for Saint Boniface—Saint Vital has considered the impact at all of this new carbon pricing that was announced earlier today on industries like farming and transportation. The city in which he resides has a project happening called CentrePort. It is the centre of Canada's transportation distribution centre, north, south, east, west. It is the centre of Canada.

Transportation burns diesel fuel and consumes a lot of jet fuel. There is going to be a huge impact on those two industries. I am wondering if my hon. friend has any answers for those people who are going to see astronomical increases to their cost of doing business.

Mr. Dan Vandal: Mr. Speaker, that is precisely why we are moving ahead with an implementation plan to address climate change. There is an organization in the city of Winnipeg called the Prairie Climate Centre that has determined that if our carbon emissions remain the same, Winnipeg and Manitoba will be experiencing 46 days per year of above 30-degree temperatures within the next 30 years. That is four times the current average of 11 days. That is going to mean extreme weather. That is going to mean increased droughts, increased flooding, increased forest fires. Those are all very good reasons to get serious about climate change, and that is why we are moving forward on this.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have to say that, sitting here today, I am struck by the fact that the commitments are not being honoured that were given to Canadians last year in the election. Most Canadians felt like we were going to see something different with the current government, that we were going to see it address climate change in a way that would impact generations to come. I know that the environmentalists in Essex today would join the list of Canadians who are feeling let down by the Liberal government. This new plan for the environment is no different than the old plan, and that was a weak plan to begin with. There is no difference between what we had and what is being presented here today.

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change has stated several times that the previous government targets were just the floor. However, now the Liberals are backtracking. Suddenly the floor is the ceiling and we are talking about the exact same targets.

Can my colleague tell the House why the Liberals have misled Canadians into believing that they would improve Canada's performance beyond Conservative targets?

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Mr. Dan Vandal: Mr. Speaker, I certainly do not agree with the premise of the question by the hon. member. We have gone to Paris in good faith. We have engaged the world to address climate change. We have brought the whole issue here for a vote. We have put all sorts of incredible details on the next step with an actual price on carbon pollution, which was announced by the Prime Minister today. We are working with provinces.

That is nothing like the previous government, who in its 2008 budget actually had a plan to address climate change but unfortunately no progress was made on that.

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just listened to members on the other side talk about farming and the importance of farming, and that somehow farmers will not progress when we enact a price on carbon. I recently spoke with the Egg Farmers of Canada, and they have managed to reduce their carbon footprint by 50% and to increase, by 50%, their production. This would be good for the residents of Winnipeg where my colleague represents his riding.

Why is it important that we put a price on carbon today, and if we do not put a price on carbon, what might happen in the future?

• (1720)

Mr. Dan Vandal: Mr. Speaker, I have noted some statistics and some valid scientific research that the previous government obviously did not respect from the Prairie Climate Centre and from the International Institute for Sustainable Development. It says that if we do nothing, if we keep emitting carbon at this rate, we are going to be experiencing increased droughts, increased flooding, increased forest fires, none of which is good for any sector in Manitoba or across Canada.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House, today, as a proud member of Parliament, honoured to be speaking on behalf of the residents of Davenport. I will be speaking in strong support of, first, Canada ratifying the Paris accord, and second, the March 3, 2016, Vancouver declaration agreed to by all premiers and territorial leaders.

Davenport is ready. We look forward to Canada ratifying the Paris accord, if it is the will of the House, and achieving our COP21 targets. We look forward to the finalization of the details of the pan-Canadian framework that was established as part of the Vancouver declaration and that the Minister of Environment and Climate Change is currently negotiating in Montreal with, no doubt, great zeal and urgency.

Davenport is ready to step up to the plate to do its part.

Let us start with a short recap.

As we all know too well, climate change is an urgent global priority. International action to address climate change has gained momentum over the last few years, culminating in the successful adoption of the Paris agreement late last year and the 21st conference of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The Paris agreement aims to limit the global average temperature increase to below two degrees Celsius, with efforts being made to keep it below 1.5 degrees. It also has provisions to improve our resilience and adaptation to the effects of climate change. Meeting

these goals will require action by all countries, particularly when it comes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Canada formally signed the agreement in New York City this past April at a ceremony held by the United Nations Secretary-General. It was a momentous day. One hundred and seventy-five parties signed the Paris agreement on International Mother Earth Day, which was April 22. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon declared, “We are in a race against time.... Together, let us turn the aspirations of Paris into action...so that the spirit of solidarity of Paris lives again”. He then urged all countries to move quickly so that the agreement can enter into force as early as possible.

Now, just over five months later, I am hoping that Canada will be moving as quickly forward as possible to ratify the agreement and to join a number of other leading countries in bringing the agreement into force in time for this year's 22nd United Nations climate change conference to be held in Marrakesh, Morocco, in November.

It is important to note that for the Paris accord to enter into force, the agreement must be ratified by 55 parties, representing at least 55% of global greenhouse gas emissions. As of today, 62 parties have ratified, representing 52% of global emissions. We are still not there yet. Canada, by ratifying the Paris accord, will move the world closer to the Paris accord coming into force.

Ratification is but one key step. We all know that we need to take urgent big action right here in Canada. Earlier this year, in early March, the Prime Minister met with the first ministers and indigenous leaders on how we can collectively and collaboratively work together to meet the COP21 targets and agreed to establish a pan-Canadian framework to address climate change. This is now called the Vancouver declaration. Upon reflection, this was a historic moment. After 10 years of almost no action by the previous Conservative government, the Prime Minister met with all the provincial-territorial leaders and indigenous leaders, and they unanimously agreed to work together for the benefit of all Canadians.

I want to pause to recognize what I think is a minor miracle, that this meeting and the subsequent outcome took place. There was the vision of our Prime Minister and the great desire by all first ministers to assemble and to sit at the same table to discuss how to move forward together. This is leadership. It was a historic moment, to be sure.

Here is what the Prime Minister's press release stated after the first ministers' meeting was over:

Building on commitments and actions already taken by provinces and territories and the momentum from COP21 in Paris, we are moving toward a pan-Canadian framework for clean growth and climate change that will meet or exceed Canada's international emissions targets, and will transition our country to a stronger, more resilient, low-carbon economy—while also improving our quality of life.

Government Orders

● (1725)

The Vancouver declaration laid out a process for federal, provincial, and territorial collaboration to create a pan-Canadian framework for clean growth and climate change. It established four key working groups. The first one was clean technology, innovation, and jobs. The second was carbon pricing mechanisms. The third was specific mitigation opportunities. The fourth was adaptation and climate resilience.

I am pleased to say that the working groups have completed their final reports, which will soon be made public. Today, as I mentioned earlier, our Minister of Environment and Climate Change is in Montreal, and together with the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, is reviewing the reports that will ultimately be provided to the first ministers for their deliberation.

All of these recommendations will be discussed at the next first ministers meeting to be held in early December, where I hope the final details of the pan-Canadian framework for clean growth and climate change will be finalized, a framework that will lay out key measures and commitments by federal, provincial, and territorial governments, and will enable us to meet our national climate change target by 2030.

It is also important to note that the minister is incorporating the ideas and suggestions made by Canadians who made submissions online or via a town hall. I am pleased to say that I hosted a town hall in Davenport. In fact, I held two environment and climate change town halls. They were both packed. I knew it would be of great interest to the residents of Davenport, and they had a lot to say.

Here is what I heard. I heard that Davenport is ready. The Davenport riding strongly supports the Canadian government stepping up to the plate and taking leadership on the environment, both nationally and internationally. Davenport supports an ambitious agenda to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Putting a price on carbon is vital to this transition.

By now, Davenport residents will have heard the Prime Minister's announcement earlier today that the pricing for carbon pollution will be set at \$10 per tonne in 2018, and rise \$10 each year to \$50 per tonne by 2022. Revenues will be neutral for the federal government, and any revenues generated stay in the provinces from where they came. I believe this is good news for Davenport and good news for Canada.

During the town halls, I also heard that Davenport is ready for good-paying jobs. We know that moving towards a low-carbon economy will create the kinds of jobs we want to have, while creating a better future for all of us. Putting a price on carbon pollution will encourage innovation, will bring the good-paying jobs that Canadians are seeking, and as our Prime Minister said earlier today, if we do not take advantage of the opportunities before us, we do a great disservice to all Canadians.

Davenport is ready, ready to do its part. We know that taking action on climate change, reducing greenhouse emissions, transitioning how we live, think, and work is a shared responsibility. Davenport is ready to be part of the solution. We support increasing the use of renewables, encouraging more urban agriculture, reducing food waste, and eliminating packaging. We support boosting the

number of bicycles and electric and alternative fuel vehicles on our roads, and improving the efficiencies of our homes and buildings.

Davenport is ready for a timeline, a game plan of how Canada will move forward towards a low-carbon future, and how we will transition to using renewable, clean energy.

Shimon Peres, one of the founding fathers of Israel, who sadly passed away just last week, said in an onstage interview at the World Economic Forum in January 2014, that the world is moving faster than ever before but the opportunity before us is that we get to shape the world that we live in.

The challenge of our time is indeed climate change, but with leadership at the national level, leadership at the provincial and territorial level, working hand in hand with indigenous peoples across Canada, and with Canadians like the residents in Davenport stepping up to do their part, I have no doubt that working together we can reduce our emissions substantially, we can transition our behaviour, transition our lives, and we can meet Canada's COP21 targets.

Our Prime Minister said earlier this afternoon that when Canada is faced with a problem, we lean in, we work together to solve the problem, and we live up to our commitment. As we enter the 150th anniversary year of this wonderful country that we are all blessed to call our home, we are asking all Canadians to lean in, to work together, and to do all we can to create a better future for our children, our grandchildren, and for generations to come.

In today's challenging times, we are called to live up to the motto of Canada, actually it is the motto of the Order of Canada, but it still applies. *Desiderantes meliorem patriam*; they desire a better country.

We, indeed, do desire a better country, and as our Prime Minister always says, in Canada, we can always do better.

● (1730)

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in setting a price on carbon today, the Prime Minister made the assumption that the price would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and hopefully not have any detrimental impact on the Canadian economy. In setting a price, one would assume that the Prime Minister had done a detailed analysis of the inelasticity of carbon prices.

Could my colleague opposite validate the Prime Minister's assumption that a \$50 tax on carbon would actually reduce greenhouse gas emissions by stating the data on inelasticity is for carbon pricing that the government used to make this decision?

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Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, 80% of Canadians already live in a jurisdiction with a price on carbon. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change is working hard to see if we can bring that to 100%.

Carbon pricing is just one of several measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which is currently being discussed by the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change. Carbon pricing policies help to do a number of things, including minimizing the cost of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, providing a continuous incentive to technology, innovation, and transition to low carbon economy, achieving significant emissions reductions, and providing consumers and business with flexibility.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Davenport for talking about solutions and how we all have to be a part of the change. She talked about how we needed to live, think, and work differently. She talked about cycling.

We have been told that if we are to meet targets and reduce emissions by 30% by 2030, that would mean the removal of every car and truck on the road. That is not realistic so we have to come up with new alternative strategies to get people moving differently, to promote active transportation.

Countries around the world like the Netherlands, Denmark, and Germany have developed a national cycling strategy. In Canada right now, 2% of children travel to school by bicycle, whereas in Germany it is 15%, in Sweden it is 20%, and in the Netherlands it is 50%. To be a cycling nation, we need a national cycling strategy to get people using different modes of transportation. This is not the only solution however. We need to take a heavy approach to ensure polluters pay.

Does the member for Davenport support creating a national cycling strategy in Canada with measurable targets to get people cycling, which would bring industry together and promote education, safety, and infrastructure?

Tomorrow I will be tabling a bill calling for a national cycling strategy. I hope the hon. member will join me and support the bill.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, as many know within my caucus and the House, I am a huge champion of cycling and of active transportation. I have talked to the Minister of Infrastructure about the importance of it, particularly in a downtown riding like Davenport where there is so much traffic that the only way to move is on paths. Cycling is important.

My understanding is that the parliamentary committee on transport is currently looking at a national cycling strategy, which I would support.

After two nights of big debate with a lot of members of my riding, there was a clear understanding that we had to always remember that we had to grow and build a strong economy while also protecting the environment. There is always that balance and that tension to keep in mind as we move forward to aggressively achieve our COP21 targets.

I am a big supporter of cycling. I am also a big supporter of a national cycling strategy.

• (1735)

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my hon. colleague for Yellowhead.

I am an Albertan MP who represents families who are standing on the brink in the middle of a jobs crisis. I will not stand in this place and vote to support a significant tax increase that will burden Canadian families for which the government has provided no details. Mark my words, the devil is in the details, which the Prime Minister conveniently left out of his speech today.

First, there is virtually no data on any region in Canada proving the Prime Minister's tax would actually reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Here is the question that the Prime Minister and my colleague for Davenport could not answer. At what price does the demand for gasoline, heating fuel, and other carbon products actually decrease in Canada, by how much and over what time period?

If demand is mostly inelastic, then the Prime Minister's tax will increase government revenue without any reduction in greenhouse gas emissions to show for it. Simply put, if gas is 90¢ a litre or \$2.50 a litre, Canadians are still likely to fill up their cars. If natural gas goes up significantly, and it is -30°C in Winnipeg, furnaces are still going to be turned on. It is just going to cost them more, either in money or opportunity.

Along this line of thought, Mark Lee, a senior economist for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, said this about B.C.'s carbon tax. He said that since 2010, B.C.'s greenhouse gas emissions had increased every year, and as of 2013, they were up 4.3% above 2010 levels.

If the Prime Minister wants to take more of our money, he should be able to tell us where it is going to go. Would revenue from this tax be dumped into the offsetting of the Liberal deficit? Would it fund the development of new technology? How much would it cost to implement the administration of this new tax?

Without any of this information, the Prime Minister cannot tell Canadians what the impact of his tax on Canadian workers and lower income Canadians will be. Without this information, there is no way he can pretend to say that this tax is "revenue neutral".

Because carbon products are highly inelastic and pervasive, the reality is that the tax the Prime Minister announced today is likely to look and act a lot like an increase to the GST. Further, the Prime Minister is not talking about the development or adoption horizon of alternative technology that could alter these assumptions over time, or what the effect of his tax would be on different income brackets and industries will be.

If he cannot answer if one region of the country will be affected more than others, he cannot provide Canadians with assurances that this will work. He also cannot answer if rural and urban Canadians will be affected differently.

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We also need to look globally.

In order to see the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions across the world, major emitting countries need to take action. Nations such as China, which emits over 20% of total global emissions, and the United States with nearly 18% of global emissions, have ratified the Paris agreement. Compared to initiatives like the Kyoto protocol, this is a marked improvement, as previous agreements did not see all major emitters commit to targets.

This is important in the context of Canada's overall greenhouse gas emissions profile, which is 1.95% of all global emissions. Canada has a relatively low greenhouse gas emissions profile.

A question the Prime Minister cannot ignore is that even if Canada imposes one of the most restrictive greenhouse gas emission frameworks in the world, what can we do to make major emitters like Brazil, India, China, and the United States reduce their greenhouse gas profiles? What happens if we implement a framework that makes our industries less competitive than those located in countries that are not taking action? Have the billions of dollars that Canada has spent on global mitigation and adaptation efforts made any impact?

It is completely irrational for the Prime Minister to impose new taxation measures on Canadians and let them pay the cost while the biggest offenders take advantage of our potential economic inferiority as a result. The Prime Minister needs to address this dichotomy to have credibility with Canadians before he raids their pocketbooks with his new tax. At the very least, which he did not do today, he needs to explain how our domestic policy will align in the North American context.

Contrary to the Prime Minister's assertion, Canada's greenhouse gas emissions profile is in a much better place than when the Liberal government was in power. Recent Canadian emissions trends reports shows that regulations on specific high-emission sectors, such as vehicles and the coal-fired electricity sector, have reduced our overall greenhouse gas emissions growth. More important, this has happened while the Canadian economy has grown. The decoupling of economic growth in Canada's natural resource-intensive economy from greenhouse gas emissions growth is significant positive progress.

Any national greenhouse gas emissions framework should set achievable targets. It should be fully costed and measured by arm's-length data collection programs. It should simultaneously reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect the job security of Canadian workers, the jurisdiction of provinces, and lower income Canadians.

● (1740)

This means that presenting a price on carbon as a painless, stand-alone cure-all, as this government is doing, is a costly fallacy in the cold, regionalized, natural resource intensive Canadian economy. That is not to say that we should not take action. Rather, it is saying that the Prime Minister's dogma on a new tax, without any proof that it will actually work, coupled with his intrusion into provincial jurisdiction, will inhibit the development of a multi-faceted approach that recognizes Canada's uniqueness.

Among many instruments, Canada could include phased-in sector-specific regulations, and members will note that the current

government is not talking about repealing regulations put in place by the previous government, clean technology development and adoption. It must leverage energy efficiency standards and incentives, and involve working with conservation groups that understand the importance of the sustainable management of Canada's forests and wetlands. It also must involve first nation communities whose traditional knowledge has long helped sustain our country's environmental health.

If it is going to include a tax, then it has to address the concerns that I have raised here today. I highly doubt the Prime Minister will be able to do that.

The Prime Minister also needs to acknowledge that we are not a European country when we compare international greenhouse gas reduction policy to ourselves. The practical reality is that it is cold here. We live far apart. We are a young country with a developing public transit infrastructure. As such, the plan needs to involve smart long-term urban planning, public transit investments, and investments into disaster mitigation infrastructure.

The Prime Minister's tax will require the financial sacrifice of Canadians, and Canadians should have a say in whether they want to make it. They should be aware of the costs, which should not be hidden in line items on electricity bills to avoid political scrutiny, the way the Ontario Liberals have shamefully gone about doing.

To gain credibility, the Liberals need to move away from mythology on this issue. There is no evidence to back up assertions that a carbon tax would instantly result in the United States allowing us to build projects like KXL. They should admit that the few rich CEOs of Canada's big energy firms probably support their tax because it may force junior firms out of the market, enabling them to make a play for assets. The energy sector is not the CEOs, it is its workers. Right now they are laid off and getting by on their credit card. They are not asking for more taxes.

It is also worth noting that the last time the Liberals were in power greenhouse gas emissions rose by 30%. Therefore, I do not trust the government to be able to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. I certainly do not trust it to do it without killing the jobs of my constituents. That is because in 1980, the father of the current Prime Minister announced a similar pan-Canadian strategy, which used words such as "fairness" and "opportunities" in its objectives. This colossally disastrous social engineering experiment, which was the national energy program, forced thousands of Albertans out of their homes and set the Canadian economy back for a generation.

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Today, the Liberal Prime Minister is embarking down the same path his father did, imposing a significant tax on the provinces without detail and encroaching on their jurisdiction, coupled with other policy that is decimating investment prospects of the development of our energy sector during a time of economic stagnation. Frankly it is history repeating itself.

Notably absent from the Prime Minister's tax announcement today is the corresponding research showing what effect this will have on the energy sector in Canada, and on the millions of jobs dependent on our continued economic success derived from Canada's abundance of natural resources.

Last week, the Liberals stood here and said that the main reason why energy infrastructure projects were not proceeding is because, "right now the issue is low commodity prices." Is that not convenient? This shows a complete ignorance of the criteria that job-creating companies use to make investment decisions in the energy sector. Certainty is needed to make multi-billion dollar energy sector investment commitments. Quasi-changing the environmental assessment process in a closed, unpredictable and non-transparent way, unpredictable increases in taxation, such as the CPP increase and today's new tax, create uncertainty that puts a chill on job creators.

The Liberals refuse to admit that market access is a critical factor in seeing the value of Canada's energy resources translate into things like jobs and social programs, which is made evident by their silence with respect to support for pipelines.

While the Liberal government was busy initiating a new tax on a region that was already struggling to stay on its feet, today we started the Alberta jobs task force.

The inconvenient truth that we are dealing with today is that these questions need to be answered. There is a lot at stake. With the government failing to do so, once again all that the Liberals will have left Canadians is debt, uncertainty, job losses, increases in greenhouse gas emissions, and a dog named Kyoto.

• (1745)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the nostalgic trip down the memory lane of my university days, talking about the elasticity and demand for certain products in the market. However, I think she neglects to realize that it is the tax, the government intervention, which will specifically change the elasticity of the demand of fossil fuels in this particular case.

By government intervening and making it easier for companies to be more efficient, to change the way they do business, to become more environmental friendly and reduce the emissions, it will directly result in the demand becoming more elastic. Consumers can then have a choice, preferably a choice toward making the responsible decision of being environmentally friendly and not polluting.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, for the soccer mom who has five kids and a Dodge Caravan, if the price of gas goes from 90¢ a litre to \$2.50 a litre, she still has to get her kids to school. She still has to get to work. She still has to run errands and do a lot of things. She still has to fill up her van.

The whole point of price elasticity is that there is a price at which demand changes. The government is intervening there. This is the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard.

I really hope that my colleague goes back to economics 101, and I certainly hope that the Prime Minister can stand in this House and answer the most basic of questions. The government needs to show data. In a cold, sparsely populated country, where we have to drive to places and we have to heat our homes, demand will not change because of its tax. It will not affect the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. All it will do is increase the cost of everything.

That is why this is the number one fallacy. This is why economists raise this as an issue over and over again. The Liberals want Canadians to forget this because they want more tax dollars for their ridiculous spending.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. I had the opportunity to work with her on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. Commissioners of the environment and sustainable development have prepared so many reports. They claim that the Conservatives' plan would fail to meet their weak greenhouse gas reduction targets. Nevertheless, I agree with my Conservative colleague that the Liberals are using the same target that they once criticized.

Does my colleague think it is a bit ridiculous for the Liberals to use the same target that they themselves criticized?

[*English*]

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, I think we should have a conversation here about targets. Across party lines, the discussion on greenhouse gas emissions targets in Canada has been "My arbitrary target is bigger than yours."

In order for the government to have any credibility in going to Canadians and raiding their pocketbooks with a new tax, it should be able to say why the target that has been put in place is achievable and what impact it will have on each sector of the Canadian economy. This is a discussion that we have not had in Canada. I wish we could elevate the debate beyond good versus evil on this particular issue.

However, the reality is that unless the government looks beyond the dogma of a revenue grab at ways that actually reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we will never see change in Canada. We also need to look beyond our borders. I think the government has significantly oversimplified this issue, and it is doing it to the detriment of Canadians and their livelihoods.

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today and share this time with the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Government Orders

The details of the pan-Canadian strategy to meet the international commitments in the Paris accord will include some form of carbon tax or cap-and-trade system. After the Paris agreement was adopted in December of last year, all we have heard from the Liberal government is carbon tax, carbon tax. In fact, it met with provincial and territorial leaders to sell them on this carbon tax. Not all of the provinces bought into this, and they should not. The government is moving too quickly, and, in doing so, is not putting together a great deal for all Canadians.

Pricing carbon emissions through a carbon tax, hopefully to encourage companies and households to adopt green practices, is simply a tax grab. A carbon tax puts a monetary price on the real costs imposed on our economy, communities, and planet. Shifting to energy-efficient products would put a demand on industry to develop better technologies. Where are we now, and where does the government think industry is going? I will speak on this a little later.

The cap-and-trade system would put a firm limit or cap on the overall levels of carbon pollution for industry and set pollution targets. There are followers for both systems and arguments from both sides if a set-up works and can work in unison. Personally, I am not in favour of another tax with longer-term effects. I believe Canadians want action now and want to participate in helping to reduce gas emissions. From companies to homeowners, one only has to look to find some who are reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

In my riding of Yellowhead, one can see results. People are reducing greenhouse gas emissions and do not have to be taxed to do it. They are doing it because it is good for the environment. The Liberal government should listen to what industry and individuals are doing and get involved, not by taxing them, but by investing in Canada's industry and the people to develop technologies that reduce our greenhouse gases. Industries are doing this at the present time. Some examples can be found in my riding of Yellowhead.

The federal government must work with its provincial counterparts to develop new building codes to enable developers and home builders to design and build energy-efficient homes and buildings. Financial incentive programs should be in place to assist in using solar and thermal power, so that energy needs are reduced. Government-sponsored resources about best building practices should be at the top of the list. Together with the industry sector, Canada will be a leader.

We should not be giving money to other countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. We should be developing our science and technology to be the most efficient users of energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. By sharing our science and technology with other countries, we not only become greener, but we grow our economy.

I recently built a home and a large workshop on my acreage in Edson, Alberta. I used the best practices out there to make my home efficient. My house is 3,200 square feet, and my workshop is 2,400 square feet. My apartment here in Ottawa is four years old and is 800 square feet. I spend more money on power for my apartment than I do for my property in Alberta. Why? It is efficiency.

People across this great country of ours are doing the right thing in making us greener. Government incentives would encourage more to

do so. The more involved we are, the greener we become, resulting in less energy needed. It is very simple.

In my riding, there is a new college in the town of Drayton Valley. I am very proud of it. It is called the Bio Mile, and Clean Energy Technology Centre. The centre trains young people who are going into the energy work field and provides them with the opportunity to learn the latest scientific and technical ways to reduce industry greenhouse gas emissions. This is where the federal and provincial governments should be investing.

● (1750)

We can reduce emissions. Industry is already a player. Our students want to learn how to be the best in clean fuel technology, clean building technology, and more efficient vehicle technology. The government should and must fund greener science and technology.

One of the big industry sponsors of the Bio Mile and Clean Energy Technology Centre is WestJet. This Alberta-based airline understands that we need to address greenhouse gas emissions as it pertains to the airline industry as a whole. I feel confident that Air Canada and others do as well.

There is 2% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions that come from transportation directly related to air travel. Canada produces, as we all know, less than 2% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. I believe it is about 1.6%. WestJet and others are working at reducing fuel consumption by 1.5% a year, and reducing emissions by 50% from 2005 levels by 2020. They are reducing greenhouse gas emissions and fuel consumption by investing in technology innovation, infrastructure efficiency, operational improvements, and smart economic measures. They are investing billions of dollars on new, modern, efficient aircraft. They are already part of the solution. Why are we going to hit them again with a carbon tax over and above some provincial carbon tax and some cap-and-trade program?

My riding is known as coal country. We are proud of the industry. With several coal-fired electrical generating stations, our riding will see a lot more unemployment for people as the plants voluntarily close down due to government regulations. The Genesee hydro facility is one of the latest state-of-the-art facilities. Its greenhouse gas emissions are the lowest in North America, in fact in the world. This was done through science and technology. I believe that these facilities can be made to emit 0% emissions. This is where government and industry should be working together, and in doing so help the world to be more efficient at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Government Orders

Besides thermal coal, the Yellowhead is blessed with an abundance of metallurgical coal used in steelmaking. Some argue that it is the best coal in the world. This is probably correct, as it comes out of the Yellowhead. Tech industries are a major player in the Yellowhead. They have been active in reducing greenhouse gas emissions by initiating corporate policies, such as an anti-idling policy on equipment, converting diesel-powered trucks to LNG, alternate energy generators, and wind turbines. Their goal is to avoid 450,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions annually by 2030. Again, industry is doing its part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Is adding a carbon tax really the right thing to do? Or, should the government be partners in new science and innovation in the mining sector?

Agriculture is a big part of my riding. We have grain farms and cattle ranches. If one wants to see a group of Canadians who want to protect the environment and work the land, these are our unsung heroes. Ranchers are strong conservationists. They work every day to keep the land healthy, all the while lowering greenhouse gas emissions. It is the same with our farmers.

Farm Credit Canada has contributed \$8.1 million in energy loans to make farmers more efficient and sustainable in their operations. In fact, in-house, it has reduced its air travel by 13.5%, overall travel by 6.7%, and paper use by 9.4%. Again, it is Canadians working together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Farms, by employing minimum tillage practices, save over 170 million tonnes of fuel annually. Animal welfare and caring for the environment are important to people in agriculture. Their livelihood depends on it, now and for future generations. Should our government hit them with a carbon tax, or work with them to help reduce our emissions by investing in science and technology?

I would be remiss if I did not speak about our forest industry. Our forest plays an important role in the carbon cycle. It can be carbon sinks or carbon sources. How we manage our forests is extremely critical. Again, government and industry must and need to work together, using science and technology in harvesting, replanting, and protecting our forests.

• (1800)

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary for Science, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have heard repeatedly that this proposal discussed earlier today is a revenue grab, but I come from British Columbia where the first carbon pricing was instituted and it was revenue neutral, much like the proposal put out today.

In fact, there was an article in *The Economist* in July 2014 that detailed the plan when the first \$10 a tonne amount was put into place in 2008, which rose by \$5 a tonne for the first six years. In those first six years, per person consumption of fuels dropped by 16% in British Columbia while in the rest of Canada per person consumption rose by 3%.

It is also interesting to note that the province with the revenue neutral carbon pricing already in place is one of the fastest growing economies in the country. Is this not a demonstration that carbon pricing works?

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Madam Speaker, it is an indicator but we have to take into account a lot of other factors. In the early stages, British Columbia was going through an economic slump. That was part of

the reason that transportation went down, because there was not as much movement in the province. I was a resident there for 40-some years.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, we have heard from colleagues across the floor and from my colleague from Calgary Nose Hill, in her presentation, that people should simply drive an electric car. We have heard that in Alberta. The response from the Alberta provincial government when it came to imposing its carbon tax was that people should just start using public transit or an electric car. The government suggested that people should just trade in their cars.

I live in rural Alberta. It takes me more than five hours to drive from one end of my riding to the other. In the middle of winter it can be a challenge for certain, but the vast majority of my constituents are ranchers. They will not be using a Toyota Prius to haul their cattle liner down the highway. They will not be using an electric car to haul bales from one field to the next.

What impact does my colleague feel the carbon tax will have on the agricultural sector? This is not simply about changing one's lifestyle. We have a lifestyle that ensures that we are successful. What would a carbon tax mean and what will its implications be for the agriculture sector?

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Madam Speaker, its impact will be great. We heard today that there will be an increase of 11.5¢ for gasoline and around 14¢ for diesel. A farmer who is farming 10,000 acres is really going to feel the impact of adding 14¢ a litre to the amount of fuel he uses in his equipment. It is going to have a large impact. It is going to hurt industry.

As a former commercial pilot, I know that in the airline industry, a carrier like WestJet is probably going to be looking at \$2 million or more just for the carbon tax on fuel alone.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Madam Speaker, we hear a lot of talk about economic problems related to climate change. We hear about fighting climate change, about how terrible it is, about how it causes economic hardship.

Still, we cannot forget the problems we are facing right now. Climate change affects the economy on both individual and social levels. Consider droughts and floods, for example. There was another major flood in Drummondville this year. Many people were affected, insurance companies were overloaded, and there was added pressure on the city to deal with all of the needs. Not fighting climate change has its own set of consequences.

Government Orders

According to the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, doing nothing to fight climate change could cost us billions, much more than it would cost to take action now. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, as they say.

[English]

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Madam Speaker, I am not exactly sure what the member was asking, but most Canadians, no matter which province they are from, believe in reducing greenhouse gases. Yes, we should act now, but we should not act without consulting the provinces, municipalities, industries, and people because they have been doing exactly what we are talking about for a number of years. Lots of companies, lots of municipalities, lots of individuals have been very innovative with greenhouse gas savings. I think we all have to work together.

● (1805)

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Honoré-Mercier.

I am very proud to stand here today to add my voice to those supporting the ratification of the Paris agreement.

We know that our climate is changing. We also know that dramatic changes in our climate have disproportionately affected those most vulnerable in the world, including, most notably, children.

Canada has a responsibility to be a leader when it comes to tackling this very real and pressing issue. In ratifying this agreement, Canada has made a public commitment to set and achieve the climate target the world needs.

Our government knows that transitioning to a sustainable low carbon economy is the only way we can achieve greater economic prosperity in a responsible way. The ratification of this agreement is a historic step to ensuring that we leave the world a cleaner and more prosperous place for our children and generations to come.

I am very proud of the collaborative approach that our government has taken as we negotiated this agreement and the work that has been done since. At every step of the way, we have engaged with our partners at the provincial and territorial level, with indigenous groups, with industry, and with environmental groups. This kind of inclusive decision-making is the only way to achieve meaningful results that will work for Canadians from coast to coast to coast. I know that we will continue in that spirit as we move forward in meeting these obligations.

We go into this agreement with our eyes wide open. Signing and ratifying is the easy part. Then the real work begins. Setting targets is important, but those targets mean very little if there is no plan to achieve them.

I specifically want to thank and commend my colleague, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, for her hard work and leadership on this file.

Our team has been clear. Reaching these targets and helping Canada transition to a low carbon economy will require a whole-of-government approach. From the construction of green infrastructure to responsible management of our natural resources, to ensuring that

we have a workforce ready to thrive in a new global marketplace, we need all voices at the table, working together, to ensure that we are successful.

Earlier today, the Prime Minister announced in the House the implementation of a national price on pollution. This is critically important to meeting the Paris agreement's targets. Our provincial and territorial governments recognize this. In fact, in the absence of past federal leadership, some have already moved ahead. Eighty-five per cent of Canadians now live in provinces that have put a price on carbon pollution. While it is encouraging and impressive, this piecemeal effort is not enough. For Canada to be successful in reducing our emissions overall, we need coordination, support, and leadership at the federal level.

As the Prime Minister announced earlier, the government proposes that in provinces and territories with a direct price on carbon pollution, the price will start at a minimum of \$10 per tonne in 2018, rising each year by \$10 to \$50 per tonne in 2022. Provinces and territories with a cap-and-trade system will also need a 2030 emissions reduction target equal to or greater than Canada's 30% reduction target. By doing so in a responsible way and increasing the price on pollution over the next five years, territorial and provincial governments will have the time they need to design a system of carbon pollution pricing that works best for them. The federal government will work in partnership with them on implementation. I have every confidence in our collective success.

Speaking of partnership, I would be remiss if I did not mention the great work being done at a local level.

Recognizing the need for action, the region of Durham, which includes my riding of Whitby, developed a community climate change local action plan in 2012. This comprehensive strategy lays out detailed actions that can be undertaken across the region to address climate change. It also established an advisory board that is responsible for positioning Durham region as a leader in addressing climate change issues by developing a strategy that includes mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency.

● (1810)

That is the kind of proactive leadership we need to embrace and support at all levels if we are going to make progress. Indeed, the action taken today will augment the good work being done by communities across Canada to strengthen our response to climate change.

While important, putting a price on carbon is just one of several important steps our government is taking to reduce our emissions. Earlier this year, I was honoured to accompany the Prime Minister on a state visit to Washington. From that visit came a comprehensive agreement for our two countries to work closely together to address climate change. By coordinating with our closest ally and trading partner on issues like reducing methane emissions, advancing climate action at the global level, and co-operation on clean energy technology, we multiply and strengthen our own efforts.

Government Orders

I would like to talk briefly about some of the steps our government has already taken to reach the targets in the Paris agreement. Specifically, in budget 2016, we made significant investments that will help us transition to a low carbon economy. This includes \$20 billion to establish the low carbon economy fund, which will support provincial and territorial actions that materially reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, we recognize the vital role that development of clean technology will play in combatting climate change.

Canada can and must be a world leader in developing cutting-edge technologies that will power the planet in decades to come. Accordingly, the budget provides more than \$1 billion over the next four years to support the development of clean energy technology.

Earlier this year, I hosted a climate change town hall in my riding of Whitby. From that meeting, it was clear that my constituents believe that the government's priority should be preparing Canada to lead the clean technology revolution. Budget 2016, along with our ambitious innovation agenda, developed in partnership with educational and research institutions and industry makes the investment to get us there.

Additionally, we are making massive investments to help communities prepare for, mitigate, and reduce the impact of climate change. Budget 2016 proposes to invest over \$5 billion over the next five years in practical infrastructure that protects communities and supports Canada's ongoing transition to a clean growth economy.

The budget also contains more than \$3.4 billion over three years to upgrade and improve public transit systems across Canada. Better public transit means less cars on the road producing emissions. As the MP for a riding where many of my constituents travel to Toronto by car every day, I am thrilled with these investments to reduce emissions while improving my constituents' quality of life.

My 12-year-old daughter, Candice, is an Earth Ranger's ambassador. A couple of years ago, she aggressively raised funds for the endangered Oregon spotted frog. Our young people know the devastation of climate change and are working to combat it.

I am proud that budget 2016 provided up to \$197 million over five years to restore ocean and freshwater science monitoring and research activities. This will ensure that Canada's oceans, coasts, waterways, and fisheries are healthy, sustainable, and profitable for generations to come.

Canadians right across the country are calling for their governments to act urgently on climate change. The ratification of the Paris agreement is just one step, but an important one. It is Canada's public commitment to doing its part. There is much work to come and challenges that will need to be addressed. I urge everyone in the chamber to join me in supporting ratification. I truly believe that it is something that future generations will look back on and be proud of.

• (1815)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is obviously very committed to our finally taking action on climate change.

The government announced today that it would put a price on carbon, but we are getting feedback from a number of people who have worked on these issues for quite some time, like Clean Energy Canada, who are experts on pursuing avenues for cleaner power sources, and the David Suzuki Foundation.

Clean Energy Canada has said that on its own, the carbon price scheduled today will not get the job done. It is only one piece of the puzzle. They argue that the federal and provincial governments will need to pair carbon pricing with smart regs and a transition to clean power across the economy to get Canada on track to hit the national targets.

The Suzuki Foundation has said that the federal government will need to rely on additional policies to reduce emissions to meet the 2030 targets, given the modest carbon price compared to existing provincial policies. These additional emission reduction approaches should include quicker phase out of coal-fired electricity, a national energy public transportation infrastructure, and that the subsidies for the fossil fuel industry be taken away.

The member is saying that the government has said it has done enough and that we can now ratify the agreement. Does she agree with that, or with the people I mentioned who state that more needs to be done?

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes: Madam Speaker, I was very clear in my speech that the announcement today was one step we took to reduce our carbon emissions in this country.

As I mentioned in my speech—and I am pretty sure it was clear—the government has also included in budget 2016, long before today, \$2 billion to establish a low-carbon economy fund, \$1 billion over the next four years to support and develop clean energy technology, \$5 billion over the next five years in practical infrastructure that supports and protects communities, and \$3.4 billion over the next three years to upgrade and improve public transit.

We know that this is not the only solution, that we need to have a whole-of-government collaborative approach when we are dealing with climate change; and we are committed to doing so on the ground with research, with communities, and with our provincial partners.

Government Orders

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Whitby, she has a lot of people who live in urban settings and probably will not see as big a cost associated with this tax grab, which is going to come out with this \$50-a-tonne carbon tax, compared to what rural Canadians are going to face, what northern communities are going to have to deal with, and how it is going to impact agriculture. However, one way they are going to see it, especially those who are living on fixed and low incomes, is in the price of food.

We know that a \$50-a-tonne carbon tax will increase the price of fuel by 11.5¢ per litre. That translates into higher production costs, higher transportation costs for getting products to market, and higher costs for growing those products. It will actually disadvantage locally produced foods over imported foods, since trucks coming in from the U.S. will bring it in at a cheaper rate on cheaper U.S. fuel compared to what our truckers are going to pay here in Canada.

Could my colleague from Whitby explain to me how she will explain to her own constituents why they are going to be paying so much for locally grown produce?

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes: Madam Speaker, Whitby is composed of both a rural and an urban setting. Most of my constituents do travel to Toronto for work, and so they do know how much the price of fuel affects their daily living.

However, what is the alternative? Is it doing nothing?

We know that climate change affects agricultural industries, which will ultimately cause an increase in the price of our food, an increase in the amount of insurance that my constituents in Whitby pay, and increases in fuel charges that will come from the devastating impacts of climate change on our economy.

We cannot sit back and continue to do nothing, as we have done for the past 10 years. We really need to step up our game, and we have done so in our budget; we have done so with this announcement today.

We are working in partnership with our communities, provinces, and territories, and we have a leadership at the government level, which was announced today by our Prime Minister, which allows us to move forward in a very progressive way to be able to tackle climate change across our country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to get back to the Paris agreement because we got a little off topic.

I want to start by saying that our government is committed to strengthening the middle class and our communities from coast to coast. As part of that commitment, we are creating an innovative and green economy.

The effects of climate change are a real threat to Canadians and all of our communities. That is why our government has committed to doing its part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

As the hon. Minister of Infrastructure and Communities has said, the evidence for climate change is undeniable, contrary to what some

of our colleagues say. It is a fact. We see it every day. We must continue to measure these changes and rely on solid, factual evidence.

In addition, the record response rate to the long form census reveals that Canadians realize that these data are an absolutely vital tool. Canadians are ready and willing to take part in this exercise. They want the government to demonstrate rigour and transparency, and they know that this requires reliable data and sound evidence.

That is why Infrastructure Canada and Statistics Canada are working together on a joint data collection initiative. The primary goal is to gather extensive, standardized, evidence-based information regarding the inventory and condition of public infrastructure in Canada, at all levels.

Similarly, the government also made considerable efforts to consult stakeholders all across the country, from every province and region, to ensure that the various aspects of our infrastructure plan meet the priority needs of Canadians.

In early September, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities met with the ministers responsible for infrastructure across Canada. It was the first time that those representatives all gathered around the same table to discuss the needs and priorities of communities and how we want to build the towns and cities of tomorrow. Cities are very much at the heart of our priorities and our future.

The minister worked closely with our partners in order to gather useful information, which was then used to develop phase 1 of our infrastructure plan. We will use the same information to develop phase 2.

Our program is centred around three priorities: public transit infrastructure, social infrastructure, and green infrastructure.

As part of our investment in green infrastructure in phase 1, we plan to integrate the concept of climate resiliency into the National Building Code, which serves as a model. We will do the same for the other codes, standards, and guides relevant to key sectors in public infrastructure.

We will also fund infrastructure development for alternative transportation fuels. This is absolutely necessary. I am talking about electric vehicle charging stations and natural gas and hydrogen refuelling stations. All this will also help us support technology demonstration programs that advance electric vehicle charging technology. We are always looking ahead.

It has been mentioned once or twice before, but we are going to make significant investments in public transit to repair or replace the existing fleet of vehicles.

Government Orders

●(1820)

This is absolutely essential because we are talking about workforce mobility, access to skilled workers for companies, but also a clear reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

We are currently working with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities on improving the capacity of cities and communities to identify and address the challenges related to climate change, and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. For that we created a special fund of \$75 million. We have already mentioned that, but it bears repeating. We are allocating the necessary funding in order to do what we say we are going to do.

Before the launch of phase 1 of the investment program, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities held countless consultations with provincial, territorial, and municipal partners, as well as other stakeholders. That is how to build a plan: by consulting, and by working on the priorities of our cities, of our communities, and of all Canadians. I can assure my colleagues that we are doing the same thing for phase 2 of our infrastructure plan.

A common theme in all these consultations was the need to build sustainable and green communities that use efficient public transit that gets cars off the road. We need communities that capitalize on green infrastructure to grow sustainably and that are resilient to the effects of climate change.

We have collected all that information and we are analyzing the data from this entire consultation process in order to prepare phase 2 of our plan. In phase 2, we will incorporate structural changes when rebuilding our infrastructure, always keeping in mind that the priority is to improve Canadians' quality of life as well as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make our country much greener.

Sometimes we take for granted what we have. We think that things will always be there. We tell ourselves that they will be there. That is how we sometimes think of our infrastructure. We use it every day, without thinking about it, until it no longer works, is no longer accessible, or until it is being rebuilt. Our infrastructure is a valuable asset.

That is why, as I was saying earlier, we are currently working with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to create an asset management fund. It would be a new \$50-million capacity-building fund that would support the use of asset management best practices across the country. We know that asset management plans guide how core infrastructure assets are to be built, renewed, operated, maintained, and replaced. This planning helps maximize the use of public dollars, which is very important.

The information we obtain from all this work will help policy-makers and asset owners to manage, plan, and operate their infrastructure assets. It will also provide data on key results to inform our plan to invest in green infrastructure and public transit, two things that closely align with our climate change objectives.

Generations ago, our nation made strategic investments, for example in the national railway system and the Trans-Canada Highway, in order to improve the future prosperity and quality of life of every generation that followed. We need to continue to do that.

In the coming decades, we know that our communities must become cleaner and more resilient to climate change, no matter where they are. We need to help build communities where congestion and emissions are reduced, buildings are more energy efficient, and green energy is harnessed. That is something that we need to do for future generations. We need to do it for our children and our grandchildren.

●(1825)

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened closely to my colleague from Honoré-Mercier, but I must have misunderstood. He started off saying that he wanted to focus on the Paris agreement rather than infrastructure, but he had a lot to say about infrastructure, so I will ask a question about infrastructure.

Can the member tell us why there is such a big difference, to say the least, between the Liberal Party's campaign promise on public transit and the amount in the 2015 budget, which is about 50% less than what it announced? I think it is once again speaking out of both sides of its mouth when it says it is going to invest. It is investing, but it is not investing nearly enough to make real progress.

●(1830)

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, my colleague might have missed an important piece of information about how we are implementing our infrastructure plan gradually. As my colleague knows, there are two phases to the plan. Phase 1 is more about rehabilitating and repairing our public transit system. Quebec is getting \$923 million for that. We are making major investments everywhere, from Ontario to Vancouver and all across Canada.

Phase 2 investments will be much more structural and long term. We will do what we promised to do. Our word is our bond; those of us on this side of the House do not speak out of both sides of our mouths.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my seatmate is a great man, one who ultimately has done a fantastic job for all Canadians with his efforts in regard to the infrastructure program. Today we are talking about our environment, the Paris agreement, and the whole carbon issue. At the same time, we have seen an aggressive government with my seatmate's minister and his efforts in really advancing infrastructure.

Would my colleague not agree, as I am sure he will, how important it is that we promote, through government initiatives such as infrastructure, and invest in green technology?

Government Orders

[Translation]

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, I have always found my colleague to have excellent judgment.

Obviously, investing in infrastructure is an important part of our strategy to combat greenhouse gas emissions. There are a number of ways to do so, one of which, as I mentioned in response to my colleague's question, is to invest in public transit. Why public transit? Because that gets cars off the road, gives businesses in the regions access to quality skilled labour, and ultimately reduces greenhouse gas emissions. There is a direct link. Just as there is a link between the economy and the environment, there is also a direct link between infrastructure and the fight against climate change.

[English]

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's speech, but again, we are focusing a lot on funding public transit.

We heard a lot about working with provinces and municipalities. I would say, referring to my other colleague's statement, this is an aggressive government. This is a government that is imposing this on the provinces. The vast majority of Albertans do not want a carbon tax. The vast majority of Saskatchewan residents do not want a carbon tax.

The government will be funding infrastructure for public transit. There is not a lot of public transit in rural Canada. In my entire riding there is not one single bus service. There is barely a taxi service. I would like to see how the Liberals would feel about addressing the disproportionate impact on rural Canada this program will have.

[Translation]

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, clearly, the infrastructure program is much broader than that and includes investments in public transit as well as investments in things like water, waste water, local infrastructure, and social housing. All of these program elements will directly benefit my colleague's constituents. They will have a direct and immediate impact on his riding. That is why this huge program brought forward by the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities is so important to building the Canada of tomorrow.

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with an hon. member who is speaking tomorrow to this debate that is being held over three days. This debate is very important for the future not only of our country, but also of our society and of our young people, our children and grandchildren.

I am pleased to speak to this motion to ratify the Paris agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. This agreement was signed by Canada in New York on April 22, 2016. Then there was the Vancouver declaration on March 3, 2016, when the Prime Minister met with his provincial counterparts.

Unfortunately, while provincial ministers were gathered in Montreal today, the government made an announcement without having consulted them. It is hard to believe, and I am sure that they were shocked when they found out. That is a poor way to engage in politics if the government wants to sit down with its provincial

counterparts and make progress. The Liberals said they wanted to do politics differently.

The Paris agreement and the fight against climate change are of vital importance. Earlier, several reports were mentioned, including the report set aside by the Conservatives. Unfortunately, the Conservatives disbanded the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy. The only table that for years brought together the economy and the environment was abolished. It had reported that inaction on fighting climate change could cost up to \$50 billion over the coming years.

There have been droughts, forest fires and floods. Unfortunately, there was a flood in the municipality of Drummond this summer that resulted in huge costs not just for citizens, but also for our towns and society as a whole. We are under tremendous pressure to adapt to climate change.

That is why we have to take the bull by the horns, to take our medicine, as I always tell my girls. Though they may not like the taste, we have to find an effective remedy for what ails them.

This is not the first time that the NDP has called for real measures to combat climate change. In fact, we are pioneers in this area. A famous and honourable member of this place, our late leader, Jack Layton, introduced a bill to combat climate change on two occasions. The second time, in the mid 2000s, the House of Commons passed the bill.

Jack Layton tried to pass the climate change accountability act on two occasions, and the Liberals were in agreement at the time. However, when the bill went to the Senate the first time, it died on the Order Paper when an election was called.

The second time, the bill was killed by the Senate, the chamber of unelected senators then dominated by Conservatives. It was scandalous and Jack was furious. It was a truly unique situation that we never want to see repeated in the history of our modern democracy.

● (1835)

Unfortunately, it did. Matthew Kellway, who was my colleague, introduced this bill again. Everyone agreed to support the bill, but, unfortunately, we did not have time to get through all the stages and pass it.

What did the bill that the Liberals supported several times say? It set out the commitments that we need to make if we are taking this issue seriously, and they are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050 or by 34% by 2025, compared to 1990 levels. I am talking here about old dates, the old Copenhagen targets that the Conservative government was aware of. I will come back to this.

I am going to engage in a bit of whimsy. Let us imagine that, in 2015, Canadians voted for an NDP government. Our leader would have gone to Paris with the other leaders or delegates of the opposition party. We would have said that we were very happy to limit global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius and even better if it was below 1.5 degrees Celsius. Then, we would have come back here to the House of Commons and ratified that agreement. We would have re-introduced Jack Layton's climate change accountability act. We would have been happy to do this because we would have been serious about it, we would have had serious targets, and we would have led the way.

However, the people chose a Liberal government. That is democracy.

At that point, we told ourselves that the Liberal government would practice politics differently, that it would have a different way of doing things, and that it would set much higher targets. However, from looking at the targets, we see that this government is still going forward with the target from 2005. It is no longer the 1990 target. It is the target that the Conservatives set in 2005 to reduce emissions by 30% by 2030.

We do not understand. What happened? Was it the Liberals or the Conservatives who got elected? We are thoroughly confused when it comes to the target. It is six of one and half a dozen of the other. It is the same old story.

This is so disappointing. We recently got some bad news on the climate change front because the Liberal government had promised that major projects would be subject to a proper environmental assessment going forward.

I was a member of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development in 2012 and the years that followed, during which time draconian changes were made to environmental assessment. For one thing, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act was totally gutted. It was stripped of its teeth, its soul, its energy, its power, and its credibility. The Liberals told us they would fix the problem, but major projects are still being assessed using the Conservatives' process. Greenhouse gas emissions are still not part of the equation.

Recently, the Liberals' application of the Conservatives' process resulted in approval for Pacific NorthWest LNG, a liquefied natural gas project. Actually, not natural gas, but rather gas extracted by hydrofracking. There was a big debate about this in Quebec. Our leader has long been calling for the secret ingredients that go into frac water to be made public. Knowing what comes back out is also important. The water that comes out has created some huge pollution problems.

I will close by saying that we still have a lot of work to do. We will support ratification of the Paris agreement, but so much more must be done. For example, it is urgent that we change the environmental assessment process for major projects.

•(1845)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, listening today to my friends in the NDP and my

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friends in the Conservatives, one gets the impression that the government of the day has actually gotten it right. When we hear the Conservatives speak, they say that we have gone too far and that we are going to be damaging the economy. When we hear the New Democrats stand in their places, they say that the government has not gone far enough and we should be doing more in regard to the issue.

Would the member not acknowledge that it is important that we recognize that we can in fact do more for our environment and have a healthy economy, that we can in fact do both at the same time? Would he not acknowledge that fact?

[Translation]

Mr. François Choquette: Madam Speaker, I will respond very quickly.

Absolutely, we must do more. One of the things I would like to see the Liberal government do immediately, for example, is to not go ahead with the Pacific NorthWest LNG project, because it did not take greenhouse gas emissions into account.

The increase in greenhouse gas emissions is going to be huge. If the government wants a serious plan, it needs to be serious about assessing major projects like the Pacific NorthWest LNG project.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member for Drummond will have three and a half minutes remaining for questions and comments when the House next considers this matter.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[Translation]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Madam Speaker, the issue I want to debate here this evening has to do with a question I asked the Minister of National Revenue in the House on September 26 regarding the Panama Papers.

The matter of the Panama Papers, like that of tax evasion and tax havens, should be a primary concern for the Canadian government. Unfortunately, in this case, as was the case with past leaked documents concerning banking institutions in Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Switzerland, and, with respect to KPMG, the Isle of Man, the federal government appears to have very little interest in getting to the bottom of these matters. Of course, the Liberals claim otherwise, saying that they are making investments. At the end of the day, however, their efforts are completely ineffective because they are not addressing the underlying issues.

I recognize that the current Liberal government is not to blame for this problem. In fact, this problem has been perpetuated by the various successive governments we have had over the past several years.

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The Panama Papers are problematic because, as everyone knows, the government has information on the taxpayers who used the firm Mossack Fonseca and who used shadow companies, not systematically but in many cases, to get out of paying taxes here in Canada.

The government, like other governments before it, does not seem to be in much of a hurry to investigate all this or report on investigations it has completed.

This reminds me a lot of the KPMG and Isle of Man situation, which was even worse, in my opinion. In that case, as in the case of the Panama Papers, the government said it exposed KPMG's scheme. It also said that it went to great lengths to investigate.

Thanks to the work of journalists at Radio-Canada and CBC, we learned that what actually happened was that the Canada Revenue Agency offered amnesty to those who were caught bending the rules, and as a result they would have to pay only the taxes they owed anyway, without penalty or interest.

When middle-class taxpayers make a technical mistake, which is often unintentional, and are flagged by the Canada Revenue Agency, I can assure the House that they are asked to pay not just the amount owing, but interest as well. In some cases, that can be double or triple the original amount.

However, wealthy Canadians who voluntarily used a tax scheme, face no consequences, are told not to do it again, and just to repay the money originally owing. In my opinion, the fact that the government does not take this situation seriously is truly unfortunate. Although the government says that it is taking action, there is no evidence of that. There is no way we can see any action.

The government is also not tackling other problems at the Canada Revenue Agency, namely transparency and accountability. It is impossible to obtain any information from this agency because it hides behind privacy issues. This may sometimes be legitimate, but in many cases it is an excuse. The agency hides behind various excuses to avoid being accountable for its activities to the Parliament of Canada. I witnessed this several times at meetings of the Standing Committee on Finance.

I would like the government to expand on the answer given by the minister, who did not really say much, about what the government is doing in the case of the Panama Papers.

• (1850)

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have had discussions with my colleague about the Panama Papers, tax evasion, and international tax avoidance on several occasions. This evening, I am pleased to once again talk about some of the measures that the Liberal government is taking to combat tax evasion and international tax avoidance.

First, we began by making a significant investment of \$444 million to enable the Canada Revenue Agency to do more to combat international tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance. That is the promise that we made to the middle class and that is what we are doing.

Canada has the opportunity to detect, audit, and prosecute tax evaders within the country and abroad. Our government continues to

work to combat this phenomenon and maintain a fair taxation system for Canadians.

With regard to my hon. colleague's comments on the Liechtenstein list, I would like to reiterate the facts. After examining this list, the Office of the Auditor General indicated that the Canada Revenue Agency had used the information from that list correctly. In the report that he tabled in the spring of 2014, the Auditor General also confirmed that the CRA had the tools it needed to detect, correct, and deter non-compliance among taxpayers who engage in aggressive tax planning and that it was using those tools effectively.

Our government took measures regarding the names divulged in the Panama Papers and made them a top priority. The CRA is examining over 2,600 cases related to the Panama Papers and has identified 85 high-risk taxpayers so far.

In addition to the work related to the Panama Papers, the CRA is also currently conducting 750 audits and 20 criminal investigations focused on individuals who own property abroad. The CRA was able to do this because of the many effective tools it uses to collect intelligence, including information from international money transfers, the offshore tax informant program, treaty partners, and the analysis of data received from other intelligence sources.

The additional investigations launched since April have uncovered 20,000 transactions between Canadian taxpayers and three foreign tax administrations, totalling \$7 billion. The Agency has started contacting these taxpayers, and investigations are under way.

In closing, I can say that, starting now, the Agency will be targeting four other tax administrations and financial institutions a year, without giving notice, to ensure that the tax system remains a fair and equitable system.

Mr. Guy Caron: Madam Speaker, none of that answers my main question on the problem of accountability and transparency at the Canada Revenue Agency.

For example, I want to relay a conversation that took place at the Standing Committee on Finance between the Minister of National Revenue and a senior official. That conversation was about a letter that had been signed by another official at the CRA. The letter was in fact an offer of amnesty to taxpayers who had been caught in the KPMG scheme on the Isle of Man.

We asked the minister whether the letter was genuine. She said that she could not confirm its authenticity. We asked whether she had looked into whether it was genuine. She said she could not comment on the authenticity of the letter. I asked her whether it was true that 21 taxpayers had already signed that letter. She said she could not comment on the authenticity of the letter. When we asked her the question again, she referred the question to the official who was there with her, Mr. Gallivan. He said that 16 people had signed the letter. That leads us to believe that 16 people signed a letter for which the minister cannot confirm—

•(1855)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue.

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg: Madam Speaker, my colleague knows perfectly well that section 241 of the Income Tax Act is about confidentiality of information. We cannot disclose personal information about a taxpayer or an individual. That is why he got an answer that provided general information about 16 taxpayers. Protecting personal information is an absolute priority for us. We have to protect that information.

We are determined to crack down on tax cheats who choose to participate in tax schemes that place an unfair burden on middle-class Canadians. The CRA has received funding to update those tax schemes and find the people who are threatening the integrity of our tax system.

[English]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am following up on my earlier question this year about the Liberal government's decision to appeal the Federal Court decision to ban fish farms in B.C. from using diseased Atlantic salmon in open net pens. I simply could not understand why the Liberals would continue with this Conservative approach and put wild B.C. salmon at risk.

The minister responded that he would discuss the matter with the Minister of Justice. Following my question and mounting public pressure, the government announced it would be postponing the appeal hearing until October.

Well, it is now October and I would like to know if the government will be continuing with its appeal or if it will do the right thing and protect wild salmon?

Stopping the transfer of diseased fish is very important because heart and skeletal muscle inflammation, or HSMI as it is known, is a serious disease that devastates farmed salmon populations.

Scientific evidence suggests that HSMI poses a serious threat to wild populations. It causes severe lethargy, ultimately robbing salmon of their ability to feed, swim upstream, spawn and rendering them helpless against predators.

Open net farms are located on critical wild salmon migration routes, including in the Discovery Islands. If this disease were to spread to wild salmon, which are already under threat, the results could be catastrophic.

When biologist Alex Morton first discovered the piscine reovirus, or PRV as it is called, which is believed to be the precursor to HSMI in farmed salmon in B.C., the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the B.C. government insisted the virus was harmless.

Alex Morton, with the help of Ecojustice, took the department to Federal Court over its aquaculture licensing practices. The department insisted PRV did not threaten wild salmon.

The court ruled in favour of Alex Morton and ordered the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to stop granting licences that

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allowed companies to transfer disease-carrying fish into open net salmon farms in the ocean.

The government appealed this decision and was set to return to court on May 26. That is when the government claimed that it needed more time to review the case and announced that it would be delaying its decision until October.

Days later, DFO scientist Dr. Kristi Miller confirmed the presence of HSMI by testing Atlantic salmon samples collected at a B.C. fish farm. This finding confirmed action must be taken to prevent the spread of this deadly salmon disease.

Even if it has dropped its appeal, I hope the parliamentary secretary can clarify a few things for me with respect to the dangers posed by diseased farmed Atlantic salmon.

The government claims to embrace the recommendations of the Cohen Commission of Inquiry. Recommendations 18 and 19 state that if salmon farms in the Discovery Islands pose more than a minimal risk of serious harm, those farms should cease operations, and no new farms should be created.

Will the department respect the precautionary principle and prohibit salmon farming in the Discovery Islands? If not, why does HSMI not qualify as more than a minimal risk?

•(1900)

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam for his interest on this file, and also for the great work he is doing on the fisheries and oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard committee.

I will start by saying that I can assure the member that the Government of Canada is committed to protecting the health of Canada's wild and farmed fish from aquatic animal diseases.

[Translation]

The Department of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard is working with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to complete all aspects of the national aquatic animal health program in order to prevent the introduction and propagation of aquatic animal diseases in Canada.

Under the Health of Animals Act and its regulations, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is responsible for regulating and administering the program. Our department supports the CFIA by carrying out diagnostics and research and providing scientific advice.

[English]

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency uses a risk-based disease management approach. It tests for diseases that are known to seriously impact wild fish. These diseases are listed by the World Organisation for Animal Health. We also focus on species deemed susceptible to the listed diseases.

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Our government has also implemented the Pacific aquaculture regulations. These regulations are a key component of the strong regulatory system in place for aquaculture in B.C., one of the most rigorous in the world, to ensure that the aquaculture industry is safe and healthy, and to ensure the sustainable use of our marine resources.

[*Translation*]

In British Columbia, the minister regularly monitors the aquaculture industry to ascertain compliance with permit conditions and the Pacific Aquaculture Regulations.

For example, the DFO Fish Health Audit and Surveillance program monitors the health of farmed salmon, mainly by taking samples of farmed fish in order to identify known and emerging illnesses. DFO veterinarians and animal health specialists conduct more than 100 assessments of fish health and look for the presence of sea lice.

The conditions of aquaculture permits require the permit holder to keep up-to-date files on the health of the fish at their facility in order to minimize the potential propagation of pathogens when infectious diseases are suspected or diagnosed.

DFO continues to apply the best available science to adapt and improve its Fish Health Audit and Surveillance Program. For example, under the Strategic Salmon Health Initiative, the minister conducted research, in collaboration with the Pacific Salmon Foundation and Genome BC, to better understand microbes present in wild and farmed salmon in British Columbia.

[*English*]

The research conducted under this initiative revealed new information relating to matters raised on the appeals in the case referred to by the member. Our department needs more time to analyze and determine if this information affects the crown's position in this case. This is why an adjournment has been sought with the consent of all parties.

[*Translation*]

Canadian seafood is known for its excellent quality, and we built that reputation by protecting our wild and farmed aquatic animals against potentially serious infectious diseases. We take that responsibility very seriously, and that is why we are going to invest an additional \$197.1 million in ocean and freshwater scientific research over the next five years.

[*English*]

We are investing in people, technology, and partnerships to ensure that we have the scientific evidence to answer questions that are relevant to Canadians today and in the future. This investment will bring real benefits to Canadians by helping us make more informed decisions about our oceans, waterways, and fisheries, including aquaculture.

● (1905)

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Madam Speaker, the government should immediately drop the appeal. HSMI has been confirmed on the coast of British Columbia, and we need to remove the threat to wild salmon posed by diseased fish.

The government claims to respect science. The Liberals claim to embrace the Cohen Commission recommendations and the precautionary principle. If science can demonstrate the existence of more than a minimal risk, then the government has an obligation to protect wild salmon. The science is clear: wild salmon are under threat from diseases like HSMI.

In closing, would it not make more sense for the minister to remove the threat of disease altogether, to do right thing, and to transition open-net salmon farms on the west coast to closed containment?

Mr. Serge Cormier: Madam Speaker, let me be clear again. I think that the member opposite knows this. The Canadian aquaculture industry operates under some of the strictest regulations in the world to minimize risks to the environment. All aquaculture operations are subject to frequent monitoring to ensure a high standard of environmental performance.

[*Translation*]

Our regulations are based on the most recent scientific studies, which tell us that it is possible to control the environmental effects on aquaculture.

[*English*]

However, as a result of new information, our department needs a little more time to analyze and determine the implications for the crown's position in the case raised by the member opposite. Again, this is why an adjournment was sought, with the consent of all parties.

As this matter is before the courts, it would inappropriate for me to comment further at this time.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Madam Speaker, in my question for the minister in May, I highlighted the concerns raised by Canada's tech sector about the impacts of the TPP. Earlier this year, Tobi Lütke from Shopify stated that the deal would undermine Canada's autonomy to adopt its own software patent rules. Open-Media is mobilizing its members to stop the TPP because of its infringements on digital rights.

Jim Balsillie, former CEO of Research in Motion, a great Canadian tech success story, perhaps the largest we have experienced, is also very concerned about the TPP. In his presentation to the international trade committee, he warned that TPP would lock Canadian innovators into a perpetual second place in the IT sector and the knowledge economy. He said, "I guarantee you there will never be another Canadian tech company like RIM under the framework of TPP....The best thing for a Canadian innovator to do under TPP is to move to the United States."

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On the west coast, we have a burgeoning tech industry that is constantly losing young people to the U.S. tech sector. The thought that the TPP will cause us to lose talented Canadians and potential innovation to the U.S. or abroad is not a positive for growth in the sector here in Canada. This is a sector we should be focusing on and growing, not signing trade agreements that threaten its viability and future. Indeed, the committee was told that Canada is lacking a cohesive plan. What is desperately needed, as with other sectors, is an innovation strategy.

Jim Balsillie raised a lot of good points in his presentation to the committee. He highlighted how the TPP is not a traditional free trade agreement and that being opposed to the TPP does not mean that one is opposed to the concept of trade. It is simply a bad deal that runs counter to Canadian interests.

I would like to point out some of the issues around the TPP modelling that has been done. Most models show that the TPP will have a negligible effect on growth. We see a lot of flaws with models that assume full employment or that fail to account for intellectual property and ISDS provisions.

I was shocked to see that the government's own long-awaited economic impact study was full of holes. Most of the headlines around the study suggested that although Canada would not gain much from joining the TPP, it stands to lose if we do not join. However, as I said, the study is full of holes. It makes unreasonable assumptions, such as full employment, and does not look at the billions in promised compensation to the supply-managed sectors. It ignores the cost of ISDS and intellectual property changes, and glosses over the potential loss of tens of thousands of good-paying auto jobs across Canada and how deeply that would be felt in communities across my region.

It has been exactly one year since the TPP was concluded. The Liberal Party talks the same as the Conservatives on trade. They criticize me and my party for stating the obvious, that the TPP is a bad deal for Canada. I challenge the Liberal Party for its lack of leadership on this file. It says it wants to study the deal and consult on it. That work is nearly done.

After unloading the task on the trade committee, it spent over \$300,000 studying the TPP and over 260 witnesses appeared. It has been a year. The conversations have happened, the money has been spent, but the Liberals still cannot make up their minds about this deal. Both presidential candidates in the U.S. think it is a bad deal. It is about the only issue that we will hear them agree on.

I challenge my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, to push his government to finally show leadership on this file and be up front with Canadians on where Liberals stand on the trans-Pacific partnership.

• (1910)

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to address this issue, and I thank the hon. member for Essex for her question.

The government has delivered on its promise to share with Canadians the independent economic impact assessment completed by the office of the chief economist at Global Affairs Canada.

On September 9, the report on the economic impact of Canada's potential participation in the trans-Pacific partnership agreement was shared with the committee on international trade and made available on the website of the office of the chief economist. There are many reports by leading think tanks and academics seeking to analyze the potential impact of the TPP, which the government will continue to review. The study by the office of the chief economist of Global Affairs Canada contributes to an existing body of research and literature and will help inform our ongoing dialogue with Canadians as we assess Canada's potential participation in the TPP.

As regards innovation, I agree with the hon. member for Essex, as well as Mr. Jim Balsillie, that Canada needs an innovation policy. That is precisely what my colleagues have begun to introduce in this House over the past year.

[*Translation*]

With regard to innovation, we recognize that the current global economy presents both opportunities and challenges to Canadian creators and innovators who do business on the global market in various areas, particularly with regard to the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights .

Canada's approach to intellectual property recognizes that the interests of Canada as a whole are best served when our intellectual property regime strikes a fair balance between the interests of innovators and creators and those of intellectual property users. That is what the Supreme Court has said on a number of occasions.

We have heard various opinions about whether the intellectual property rules set out in the TPP strike a fair balance for users and creators. We are continuing to hold consultations on that issue with a variety of stakeholders with diverse interests. More generally, our government is introducing an innovation agenda, which, under the direction of the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, seeks to support Canadian innovators and entrepreneurs.

[*English*]

Since November, the government itself has received over 30,000 letters and emails through the consultation process. We have also had over 250 interactions with over 500 different stakeholders.

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The Minister of International Trade and I have been to more than a dozen cities across Canada to hear directly from Canadians on the TPP. Consultations have taken place in Edmonton, Vancouver, Montreal, Halifax, Oakville, Windsor, Regina, Winnipeg, Quebec City, St. John's, Fredericton, Charlottetown, Toronto, and Guelph. These visits have included meetings, round tables, site visits, and public town halls.

A broad cross-section of Canadians have been involved in these consultations. This includes provincial representatives, female entrepreneurs, innovation firms, farmers, think tanks, the forestry and wood products sector, the fish and seafood sector, indigenous groups, environmental groups, small and medium-sized enterprises, labour unions, auto workers, auto parts manufacturers, port authorities, civil society organizations, academics, students, business leaders, and citizens.

On September 9, the Minister of International Trade and the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs initiated a dialogue with indigenous groups on international trade and investment initiatives, including the TPP.

We are still learning. We are still consulting. We will make a decision when we have to.

• (1915)

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague across, the parliamentary secretary, for his comments, but we cannot afford to continue to have no position in Canada.

It is important that the Canadian government shows leadership on the trans-Pacific partnership. We simply cannot afford the risks that are entailed inside the TPP. We cannot afford to take risks in any sector, certainly not our innovation sector, which is very important in our economy. When we think about the potential innovations of the future, we cannot undermine them by signing a trade deal that has

negligible benefits, that will end up harming this sector, among others that we have heard at the committee.

When we look at the response that we received on the economic impact, .127% over 24 years, \$4.3 billion, we know that was the exact amount promised in compensation to our supply managed sectors over 15 years.

I am certainly not a mathematician, but I can do the math, as most Canadians can, and see that we will be losing in the trans-Pacific partnership, both economically, and in jobs across many—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order, please. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade.

Mr. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, we are trying to assess the various risks of the agreement under a variety of different scenarios. Those scenarios continue to evolve.

We are within the time parameters that have been established within the treaty. Not a single country has yet to ratify of the 12. We are still moving through the process. The assessment of risks and benefits will change depending on the various scenarios as they move forward.

We are keeping an eye on all of that as we go through and consult. We promised to consult and that is what we are doing. When we are in a position to make a final decision, we will. We will put it before the House.

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

(The House adjourned at 7:17 p.m.)

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