



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 148 • NUMBER 163 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Monday, April 10, 2017

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, April 10, 2017

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION PRIVATIZATION ACT

The House resumed from February 17 consideration of the motion that Bill C-308, an act to provide for the incorporation of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Peace River—Westlock has six and a half minutes remaining.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, due to the fact that my debate was cut into two pieces, I will reiterate a bit of what I was saying before. I was talking about the fact that there are definitely a lot of aspects of the CBC that I do enjoy and use from time to time. I was talking about the *Vinyl Cafe* and *The Shepherd*. *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* is another CBC program that I watch from time to time, and I find it very hilarious most of the time. The content of the CBC is not what my argument is about today.

I think there is a role for a public broadcaster, which is for there to be a method by which, in the case of emergency, the Government of Canada can communicate with all Canadians in a hurry. In that respect, I think there is a role for a public broadcaster in this country. I do not think there is necessarily a role for a public broadcaster to produce content. Content production could be done from a number of other sources. I know that, especially now with the modern Internet, there is lots of content being produced all over the world and all over Canada from various areas. If we had an ability to put that content on the platform, that would be great.

The platform may have to be subsidized, particularly CBC Radio, to keep the infrastructure there. I know that CBC Radio is one constant as one drives across the country and in northern Canada. Given that we have satellite radio and things like that, maybe it is not

as necessary as it once was, but I think an argument could be made for that.

I also took in a speech by a Mr. Dwayne Winseck from the Carleton school of journalism, who pointed out that in countries that spend more on public broadcasting, the citizens tend to spend more on media. He said that we should therefore spend more on public broadcasting or public media so that there is a bigger market share for those who are not in the public sphere, because then people spend more. To me, however, he is making the correlation is causation argument, and there is not necessarily that case to be made. I would say the opposite is probably more true.

The very fact that the government is producing media means that it costs more to get an alternative perspective, or it costs more for other groups to even meet the threshold to be noticed or to be heard. I would argue that we should not be funding content or media because it causes the consumer, the everyday Canadian, to have to spend more money to get an alternative perspective.

He showed that Switzerland spends \$150 per person on public media via the government, and then the people of Switzerland tend to spend about \$100 of their own money to get media as well, so there is a media space of \$250. He said that this is a great thing because there is more money for journalists like him to be producing, since money is being spent in both streams.

I would argue that because the government is funding one particular media stream, in order for any other media streams to compete with that, they have to break that threshold of \$150 per person. We want to have broad discussions in this country, and we are now creating a threshold which has to be crossed. In Canada, by the way, we spend only \$33 per Canadian on the public broadcaster. It may be up to \$35 now; my numbers are a little old. There is a \$35 threshold that we have to break, and that needs to be looked at.

As we go through this discussion today, I do not think this particular bill is going to pass, but I will be supporting it because I think that we have to look at the whole marketplace of media in this country and consider how the CBC is affecting it, not necessarily the content of the CBC, but how subsidizing one particular group has an effect. It basically places a \$33 threshold per person on media that every other media group then has to break through in order to be heard.

• (1110)

The United States subsidizes its public media by \$3, so there is a three-dollar threshold that has to be broken. That makes it much easier for alternative media organizations to get off the ground.

Private Members' Business

With that, I conclude my comments.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what a privilege it is to be able to rise on this very important, significant day. As members can see, I am wearing something a bit different, a turban. Today is turban day on the Hill. If I may, I would provide a very brief comment and then show how it is actually relevant to what we are talking about today.

The Prime Minister, and many others, would ultimately argue that Canada's greatest strength is our diversity. We should be very proud of the diversity Canada has. I really do believe that the CBC, whether it is radio or television, is one of the ways in which we can talk about that diversity.

I started by talking about today being turban day. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to get a great appreciation of Sikhism and, in particular, members from the Punjabi community and our Indo-Canadian community as a whole. We get a better appreciation once we attend the many different events, whether it is at the gurdwaras or at special occasions. That allows us to have a better appreciation of Canada's heritage and that very rich diversity we have. Over the years, I have seen first-hand the CBC, for example, getting engaged in issues surrounding the ethnic and religious makeup of our country, promoting tolerance and diversity, and raising issues surrounding that.

I must thank Baltej Singh Gill, who is in the parliamentary precinct today providing the opportunity for members of Parliament to put on a turban. The turban is very important to Sikhism. It is part of the five Ks, which were established hundreds of years ago. It helps identify and gives strength to Sikhism as a faith.

I can appreciate that the debate today is about the CBC. I want to provide my comments in regard to why I do not support what the Conservative Party has put forward. We can see a significant difference between political parties on this issue. There is a certain element within the Conservative Party that genuinely believes that the CBC should virtually not exist, or at least not exist in terms of receiving public finances.

I disagree with that. I believe the majority of individuals inside this House recognize the true value of the CBC, not only in the past and in the present, but also into the future. I have had the opportunity, over the years, to provide comments and to get engaged with the CBC, both radio and television. I believe I have a fairly good understanding and appreciation of the role that our public broadcaster, both in radio and TV, plays in society. I would not want to see us minimize that. In fact, I would suggest that we should be looking at ways in which we can continue to see the CBC playing a strong role going into the future. For example, I look at what has taken place with the Internet over the last decade-plus, and I see that there is a very robust attitude from all forms of media that look at the Internet as a way in which they can communicate with Canadians in Canada and beyond.

When I think of the CBC, I do think of the preservation and promotion of issues such as our heritage. When I was in the military, I would often hear of individuals from around the globe who listened to CBC Radio, for example, and saw CBC Radio as one of the ways to keep in touch with what was taking place here in Canada. I

suspect that if members had the opportunity to talk to the many Canadians who, for a wide variety of reasons, are not living in Canada today, they would see that these individuals in fact go to the CBC in order to keep in touch with what is happening here in Canada. I think that this is a very important contribution in itself.

• (1115)

We have seen numerous documentaries. We will find that public broadcasting documentaries continue to grow and they have a great future. Canada is not alone. There are other countries. In fact, the U. K. has the BBC, and the BBC is fairly well known around the world. The CBC has a very strong, positive recognition. It has demonstrated leadership on the issue of public relations and broadcasting, and it has played that leading role for decades.

Millions of Canadians tune in to CBC Radio and TV, because they understand the benefits, not only of news broadcasting but other programming. The member across the way made reference to other programs that the CBC has had over the years. Not necessarily to highlight any specific programs, but there have been very successful programs that the CBC has made, a part of who we are in identifying parts of Canada's history. Different regions of our country have played an important role in CBC's development. For one, Manitoba is a better and healthier province because of the local attention that is given through the CBC.

Most important, when Stephen Harper was prime minister, he was sending a message to Canadians, if not directly then indirectly, by the cutbacks that he was putting in place and the unwillingness to have members of the Conservative government stand in their place and recognize the valuable role that the CBC has played in our society here in Canada. That is why I was very pleased when this government, in addressing its budget, committed to more than \$500 million over the next five years in terms of investment into CBC broadcasts, both in radio and in television.

I believe that we have a government today that recognizes the valuable role the CBC plays, and we want to be able to support that. I have had the opportunity in the past to have discussions with Conservative members regarding the CBC, and I do not know whether it is unanimous on the other side of the chamber within the Conservative Party; I suspect we might find a couple of individuals who would recognize it.

I have heard commentaries from other broadcast associations, from individuals who are involved in media outlets that many would suggest are in competition with the CBC, compliment and provide assurances that the CBC is in fact a very important aspect of the broadcast industry as a whole. I would not want to diminish in any way CBC's role in the broadcast industry, and it concerns me that more and more Conservatives are feeling bolder on the issue of the demise of this public broadcasting station, predicting or wanting to see its demise.

Most Canadians recognize the intrinsic value of the CBC. Most Canadians would acknowledge that, whether in radio or TV broadcast, or, more and more, in its stronger presence on the Internet, the CBC has a very important role to play and there is an obligation to support the CBC. We do that with budgetary measures. With that, I believe the government is back on the right track in dealing with our public broadcaster.

Private Members' Business

•(1120)

I look forward to having for many years into the future a broadcaster that takes into consideration and supports the industry as a whole, showing just how important our culture and heritage are and ensuring that we have good-quality programming. It complements the broadcasting industry as a whole by having a strong and healthy public broadcasting system.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while I am disappointed that we are speaking about privatization of the CBC today, I am very happy to take this opportunity to strongly oppose this bill and support the continued existence of a stronger publicly owned and publicly funded CBC.

I have a strong history with the CBC. I have done regular spots on CBC Radio for many years and have come to know many of the fine people who work there, so I feel a strong connection with the CBC, particularly with CBC Radio. My comments today will mainly concern CBC Radio and the critical role it plays in both providing a trusted source of news and commentary for Canadians and being a common cultural thread across our country.

I represent the riding of South Okanagan—West Kootenay. It is a relatively large riding, about 500 kilometres across. It comprises a series of isolated valleys and intervening mountain ranges. When I drive across my riding, it is CBC that keeps me informed and entertained over five hours and five mountain passes. Because of the terrain, I have to regularly change stations to keep in touch. My car radio is set up so that it starts with Penticton, and switches frequencies at Oliver, Osoyoos, again at Rock Creek, Grand Forks, again at Christina Lake, and finally at Castlegar, Trail, and then fades up the Slocan Valley until I have to switch to 900 AM in Nakusp and Arrow Lakes. Just as these stations on my car radio link my trips across South Okanagan—West Kootenay, the CBC links Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Like many Canadians, I have friends in all parts of the country, and they all listen to CBC Radio. My friends on the Cape Shore of Newfoundland listen to CBC Placentia at 94.1. My friends in northern Baffin Island listen to Pond Inlet 105.1, which coincidentally is the same frequency that my Yukon colleagues at the Arctic Institute on Kluane Lake tune into using the Destruction Bay repeater. My friend Peter Hamel in Masset on Haida Gwaii, or greater Masset, as he likes to call it, listens to CBC at 103.9. My Bird Studies Canada colleagues in Long Point on Lake Erie tune in to Tillsburg 88.7, although the signal is a bit sketchy out there on the lake and it is easier to listen to stations from Erie, Pennsylvania.

These are not money-making stations or repeater services. They would not survive privatization and we would lose that unifying voice that the CBC provides, but they give my friends and me a common thread to this country.

We used to talk of Peter Gzowski's interviews and, in recent years, the wonderful stories of Stuart McLean. I was deeply moved by the heartfelt tributes in this place when Stuart passed away earlier this year. All of us here and all Canadians lost an important friend who knew what it was to be Canadian, who worked throughout his career to bring us together through his stories and the stories of listeners that he would read on air.

During the election campaign in 2015, the CBC came up in every all-candidates forum I attended. People were concerned about cuts to the CBC budget. When I replied to those concerns that the NDP would restore the CBC's budget, I was greeted with loud applause. It was clearly something the audience fully supported. The Liberal candidate would stand and repeat that pledge, as the Liberals did with everything the NDP said in that campaign, and get the same strong response from the audience.

Canadians overwhelmingly and unequivocally support the CBC. I would like to repeat here some of the poll results in recent years regarding the CBC.

In 2014, a Nanos Research poll found that 72% of Canadians had high trust and confidence in the CBC. Eighty-seven per cent of Canadians said they were in favour of increasing or maintaining funding. Only 10% said they wanted to see the broadcaster's funding cut.

A 2013 Nanos Research poll found that 80% of Canadians believe the CBC plays an important role in strengthening Canadian culture and identity. This poll also found that 80% of Canadians supported increasing CBC funding or maintaining it at its current levels. Only 16% said they would decrease it. Moreover, 57% of Conservative Party supporters said they would increase or maintain CBC funding, while only 37% would decrease it.

•(1125)

A 2009 Pollara survey, according to the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting, said that 78% of Canadians tune into some form of CBC programming. Seventy-six per cent rate the CBC's performance in fulfilling its mandate as good to excellent. Eighty-three per cent believe the CBC is important in protecting Canadian identity and culture. Seventy-four per cent would like to see the CBC strengthened. Sixty-three per cent believe that the CBC provides value for taxpayers' money. Eighty per cent believe the CBC is best suited to provide Canadian programming on television. Seventy-four per cent believe that annual funding to the CBC should be increased. Fifty-four per cent support the Commons' heritage committee recommendation that CBC funding should increase to \$40 per Canadian, and 20% believe that \$40 per Canadian is too low. Finally, 70% of Canadians believe the CBC should be most responsible for ensuring that Canadian programming continues to be an integral part of the Canadian economy and culture, and only 18% favoured private broadcasters.

Private Members' Business

Last, when asked, “Assume for a moment that your federal MP asked for your advice on an upcoming vote in the House of Commons on what to do about CBC funding”, as we are doing now, 9% of Canadians said they would advise their MP to decrease funding, only 9%. Thirty per cent said they would advise to maintain funding at current levels, and 47% said they would advise their MP to increase CBC funding.

The member for Saskatoon—University actually said, perhaps in jest, that privatizing the CBC would ensure that Canadians can actually participate and own it. Canadians already own the CBC and they participate in it every day by the millions.

The CBC is one of the iconic institutions and policies that define Canada, just like universal health care. It celebrates our common culture and gives full voice to our diversity.

I think that the member for Saskatoon—University has introduced this bill to play to a very narrow base of support in his Conservative leadership campaign, and I do not think that this chamber is the right forum for this kind of messaging. Our time would likely be better spent discussing more relevant issues that are of concern to a broad spectrum of Canadians. However, I am very happy that this debate gave me the opportunity to speak strongly and unequivocally in favour of a publicly owned CBC. Our country would be infinitely poorer without it.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am speaking today as the official opposition critic for Canadian heritage and national historic sites. In that capacity, I of course have responsibility for such files as the Canadian public broadcaster, the CBC. Therefore, let me state clearly from the outset what the Conservative Party's position is, as endorsed by our delegates at party conventions: “The “CBC-SRC is an important part of the broadcasting system in Canada. It must be a true public service broadcaster, relevant to Canadians. We will focus the CBC-SRC services on its mandates as public broadcasting services.” That is our party policy. That is our official position as a party.

There are times when the CBC strays very far from those objectives. We are very fortunate, however, that the CBC is capable of being there. We need only look at this past weekend to see the CBC playing that role properly with the good coverage we saw around the 100th anniversary commemorations of the Canadian victory at Vimy Ridge. It was very positive, and the proper role, I think, of a public broadcaster. I think of the drama we are seeing this year, *Anne*, which is another re-creation introducing what is a Canadian classic, and indeed one that has stood the test of time very well, to a whole new generation of young Canadians, and older Canadians, too, I have to confess. Again, I think it is fine, excellent work, and something we can all be proud of, which is the sort of thing we would like to see from a public broadcaster. I am particularly encouraged to see *Canada: The Story of Us*, which is a focus on history.

Those are the kinds of things a public broadcaster should be doing, telling Canadians their stories about Canadian history, our literature, and the important historical events that have made us what we are today. Sadly, it is all too rare.

One hears criticism, for example, in the newspapers these days of this project, *Canada: The Story of Us*, from a bunch of different

perspectives. However, if I can put it in a nutshell, what all of those critics are saying is one thing, “I don't hear my story there” or “I don't see my story there”. Does that mean there is something wrong with the programming being shown? I do not think so. I think it is very high quality, and I commend the CBC for doing it. Do I agree with every view expressed? Of course not. History would not be history if we all agreed on it. Of course, we all have different views and perspectives. That is as it should be, and it is great that this debate be stimulated.

However, when people are saying that they do not see their story there, they are acknowledging what has been a failure of the CBC as a public broadcaster, which is to play exactly that role. The fact is that series like *Canada: The Story of Us* are too few and far between, and when one occasionally comes along, people necessarily are going to be left out. Stories are going to be left out from what is a magnificent array of Canadian history. What that shows us is that it has not been doing its job properly. That is an important consideration: Is the CBC doing the right things that a public broadcaster should do? That is what our party position is. That is what I would like to see happening. That is certainly what we are seeing some good examples of right now, but we have seen too few in the past.

Does it make sense for a broadcaster in a public role to be trying cheap reality TV shows, imitations of American programming? I do not think so. That is not its proper function. At the same time, we have to ask ourselves if the CBC produces value for the tremendous volume of tax dollars that Canadians give it, which is well in excess of \$1 billion a year. Are Canadians consuming that? The fact is, the numbers show that the eyeballs are dropping. The relevance is declining. The CBC is not playing that role properly. I put it to members that if that money was focused, if it spent it more sensibly on what would be the true public broadcaster role, I think we would find it would be far more heartening, and it would do a much better job of that.

I look at those stories in *Canada: The Story of Us*, and I have to confess that even I, a bit of a Canadian history buff, am learning things I did not know before. We can all debate the perspectives, but that is what the CBC should be doing. I know there were journalists who contacted me in the effort of getting that kind of cheap shot they wanted, because the Prime Minister did an introduction at the outset of the series. I declined to do that. They wanted me to say it was not appropriate. I know my seven-year-old thought it was not appropriate. However, I said I was heartened to see it.

Private Members' Business

•(1130)

I commended the CBC for taking the initiative to focus on Canada's history. I was heartened to see the Prime Minister actually encouraging it, because in his other policies, he has been doing exactly the opposite. He has been turning his back on Canadian history, adding to the vacuum in the understanding of who we are. We see that most notably with the decisions on the themes for the 150th anniversary of Confederation, which were changed by the government to include four themes, all of them merit-worthy but excluding history and the story of Confederation itself as permissible themes. That was absurd. Fortunately, the public broadcaster, in its wisdom, was wiser than the Prime Minister and is talking about exactly such things, in a dramatic fashion. For this, it is to be commended.

However, there are other things we have to trouble ourselves with that we have legitimate concerns about in terms of the role of the public broadcaster. I do not want to be a TV critic, but is another stale comedy that has been on the air for decades, that folks are kind of tired of, the right way to go? I do not know.

Certainly, the most difficult fit for any public broadcaster is that of public affairs and news broadcasting. When a state broadcaster is engaged in the news, we look at it, in most countries around the world, with a lot of skepticism. A state broadcaster in Russia or in a place like Syria, which I suppose has a state broadcaster, I do not know, we immediately conclude is propaganda. If we look at RT, which is the state broadcaster projecting abroad for Russia, it is clearly propaganda.

There is always a discomfort when taxpayers' money is used to cover the news. This controversy goes back some time. The CBC was actually created as the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission by the Conservative government of R.B. Bennett. However, it was not too long before its news and public affairs role began to land it in trouble. Once Mackenzie King was in government, lo and behold, it changed the name to the CBC and took decisions, for example, not to cover the Conservative leadership convention. This, of course, attracted a lot of attention. Why is that? It was because it looked to everyone like a deliberate effort by a state-run broadcaster to diminish attention on the opposition Conservative Party. That goes back in time. These kinds of apprehensions and perceptions of bias have been there for a long time.

It is not crazy. If we look at any academic study done of journalists over the past 50 or 60 years, we will see that not too many of them vote Conservative. I do not know why. It seems to be something about who gets drawn into what professions, but that is the case. I will bet that is the case today. In those circumstances, we can understand why people are quick to perceive bias and concern.

Then, of course, there is the fundamental question, with the CBC, of value for money. A tremendous amount of money is being spent, and there are real questions based on how Canadians are voting, and voting with their feet.

At the heritage committee, we have been hearing criticism about how the public broadcaster is using those massive subsidies of billions of dollars. As the world is changing and we are seeing more and more people going online, the criticism we are hearing from the

print journals, the newspapers that are in trouble, and other radio and television outlets is that the CBC is using its dominant position and taxpayer subsidies to squeeze everyone else out in the online news universe. It is attracting the advertising there, using the public subsidy to have an advantage in that news gathering. In the process, it is harming and putting those newspapers out of business. When the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission was established, when the CBC was established, no one contemplated a role in an online world. Is that an appropriate one for the CBC? That is an important question.

There are some real questions we as Conservatives have, but let me make it clear and understood by everyone that the party policy position is that we support a public broadcaster. We would just like the CBC to play the role of a genuine public broadcaster, bringing forward the literature, theatre, and music of Canada.

I point to what was seen in the past year as one of the rare successes of the CBC, and that was the final broadcast of the Tragically Hip concert from Kingston, which ignited the imaginations of a lot of people. These are the kinds of things that get Canadians excited and supportive of a public broadcaster, because it is being a public broadcaster.

•(1135)

If the CBC is to avoid facing an ongoing tide of the kind of initiative we are debating here to privatize the CBC, to abolish the CBC, it should look seriously at how it can better play the role of being a genuine public broadcaster and put on the air fine programming like *Canada: The Story of Us*, like the *Anne* miniseries, and like the coverage we saw of Vimy this weekend. It was CBC at its best. It is capable of doing it. Sadly, it is all too rare.

•(1140)

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for the opportunity to speak to this legislation this morning.

Like my colleague, when I was asked to speak to the bill, I decided I needed to go to our policy and see whether this is something I can support, and I actually came to the opposite conclusion of that of my colleague.

I will read again the part he read, that we believe that the “CBC-SRC is an important part of the broadcasting system in Canada.” That is true. It plays a major role in Canada across the country. It says that “[i]t must be a true public service broadcaster”. When I read that, I wondered what this is specifically talking about. The bill says “public service broadcaster”. It does not say publicly owned broadcaster. We heard some comment earlier about what this would imply. Does it mean the CBC should be covering emergency services? Should it be covering cultural events, as my colleague just spoke about? Is it about public information? I do not know that it says that the CBC has to be a publicly owned, taxpayer-funded regular broadcaster. That is not how I read that.

Private Members' Business

It says that the CBC needs to be “relevant to Canadians”. As we have heard in the debate in the House, both from the Liberal side and our side, there is some concern about whether the CBC is relevant to Canadians and how relevant it really is.

What could show public support for a broadcaster more than having private shares issued and having the public decide if it wants to support it? Those Canadians who want to step forward could then put their money where they want it to be. It would be a test of whether the CBC has the support of the public if the bill successfully passes.

I am here to speak to Bill C-308, a bill brought forward by my colleague from Saskatoon—University. I was going to discuss the CBC and its potential future, but I want to talk a bit about the history of the CBC as well, which has been covered a bit here.

During the 1920s in Canada, a number of private media outlets were being set up, particularly radio stations across Canada. It is my understanding that the Canadian National Railways was one of those companies that was establishing media outlets across Canada. It had stations in Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, Moncton, and Vancouver and covered things like concerts and comic opera, school broadcasts, and historical drama, the kinds of things my colleague just talked about. At that time, no full national program had been developed, but it was coming along.

A Royal Commission on Radio Broadcasting, under the chairmanship of John Aird, was appointed by Mackenzie King in 1928. The concern was that some of the private Canadian stations were falling into U.S. hands. The BBC was also being held up as an example. There were those who felt that private broadcasting in Canada could not provide an adequate Canadian alternative to the United States. It is interesting to note that almost 100 years later, we are still hearing some of those same arguments.

The private CNR radio stations and other private broadcasting stations were seen to be not enough to stop the idea that public ownership of the media was important. There was a feeling among some that the taxpayer needed to contribute to this media as well.

The moving force within the Aird commission was Charles Bowman, who was the editor of *The Ottawa Citizen* at the time. He argued that public ownership of broadcasting was necessary to protect Canadians against American penetration. It would be interesting to understand a bit more about the politics that would have been revolving around those decisions at that time as well.

In 1929, just before the stock market crash, the Aird commission presented its report. It recommended the creation of a national broadcasting company. The commission saw it being set up as a public utility but funded by the taxpayer. It would have a responsibility for “fostering a national spirit and interpreting national citizenship.”

Specifically, the report called for the elimination of private media stations. The commission did not want any private stations at all. It thought they should be compensated but removed from the networks. Obviously, when the stock market crashed, that changed a number of things.

It took a while for CBC/Radio-Canada to be set up, but it was established as a crown corporation in 1936. While it may have had a mandate to foster national spirit right from the start, it has always been controversial. My colleague just talked about some of the early controversy even about that.

The question Canadians asked then and are asking now is whether Canadians need a taxpayer-funded broadcaster. For many years it was argued that the CBC was necessary because Canadians did not have direct media service. I come from probably one of the least populated areas of the country, but I think that argument only holds true as new technology is introduced and as it takes time to spread across the country.

● (1145)

I would like to use a couple of examples. There was radio service across Canada in the twenties, thirties, and forties. As TV developed, obviously it took a while longer for TV to get into the rural areas. Would it not have been a better argument at the time to actually spend taxpayers' money to provide the hard infrastructure, the things like the towers, so that people in rural communities actually had the infrastructure to carry those signals, rather than having control of the content, which is what the argument was about the CBC?

Our first TV station was the CBC, in the early 1960s. CTV followed a few years later, and, it was interesting, so did stations from Montana. We were served by five national broadcasters in the southwest corner of Saskatchewan in what many would have considered the back of beyond.

I remember CBC in those days. *Hockey Night in Canada* was one of the first programs I remember watching on a black and white TV. We had to get fairly close to it. We could not see the puck. We could just see these grainy figures moving around. In those days, I was actually a Montreal Canadiens fan. Over the years there was a whole pile of other teams and it kind of got diluted, but obviously, the Montreal Canadiens, the Toronto Maple Leafs, and Bobby Orr and the Boston Bruins were what we watched on *Hockey Night in Canada*.

There were other things like *Bonanza* and *Red Skelton* that came up from the States, and we thought they were great entertainment. *Front Page Challenge* was another one people watched. I think it was Sunday night when people sat in front of the TV and watched *Front Page Challenge*.

However, times changed, and other networks were developing with private money. The CBC lost its uniqueness long before *Front Page Challenge* went off the air, I would argue, as other commercial alternatives developed. Even in our remote part of the world, as I mentioned, we had three U.S. networks, CBC, and CTV, and certainly there was nothing we saw that was unique about CBC. It was mostly the same types of shows, the same types of news, just maybe at different times. *Hockey Night in Canada* stood out as one thing that was unique, as I mentioned, but even a new CTV without the subsidy was able to develop and go head to head with CBC with its taxpayer assistance.

Private Members' Business

From my Conservative viewpoint, I think what a shame it was that a company, trying to develop, would have to compete directly with taxpayers' money, and on the flip side of it, that taxpayers were stuck paying for the development of a structure that was being duplicated commercially. It was just, from my perspective, a lot of wasted money. The opportunity for change came and went without adaptation, guaranteeing that CBC would become more and more irrelevant.

CBC and its supporters have always tried to convince Canadians that it is some sort of national institution, but practically, it never has been. The only thing that has made it national is that taxpayers across this country have been stuck paying the bill. The notion that it provides some sort of unbiased Canadian content has not been proven, even as recently as last week, when two provinces were already taking great exception to the latest history project that is going on.

A second example of this failure, I would think, was evident yesterday. I went on the online website, and among dozens of headlines on there, I could not find one, not one, that was critical in any way of the present government. That seems to be quite a change from a couple of years ago. There was not a single critical headline on its website, in spite of the fact that we have a government that is mired in corruption, following a budget that has been universally panned, and in the midst of an attempt to unilaterally change the rules of the national legislature. I do not know where all of their investigative reporters went to. Perhaps they have left, but I doubt it. I think it is just that they actually cannot find anything to criticize.

A constituent called me a couple of weeks ago disgusted by some of the content he saw on TV early in the evening. It was 8 o'clock at night, and his seven-year-old son was with him, and he said it was completely inappropriate content for young people. He contacted the CBC. They told him that he did not actually watch it and that it was not shown at that time of night, so what he thought he saw, he did not see. That was their way of dealing with his complaint about content. I do not think the CBC is actually listening to Canadians at all.

The establishment of the CBC meant that right from the beginning, the taxpayers were paying the bill. Right from the beginning, I would argue, the cost was just too high to be justified. It still is in this day of media expansion.

Let us talk about the taxpayers. We sit here with 100 or 200 TV channels on most of our televisions. We have 1,000 or 2,000 internet channels. We have instant news from all over the world. We have movies and videos from dozens of sources. We have cable TV that has the capacity to charge for what people use but that is burdened with having to carry unpopular subsidized channels, and we have private companies delivering professional production and news services that are paying their own way.

In the middle of all this, there is a \$1-billion-plus annual bill to the taxpayer for a provider that no longer provides anything that is unique, and a provider that many Canadians believe fails to provide a balanced and comprehensive view of the issues.

● (1150)

If we look at the mandate, it is not successfully addressing that. It is unnecessary that the CBC be supported by governmental intervention in order for it to continue to exist. It should have been done decades ago. Taxpayers have borne the burden for many years longer than they should have. It is time to make this a commercial entity and let it compete directly with its competitors.

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all my gracious colleagues, both the ones who will vote in favour of the bill and those who will not be, for providing their insights, their viewpoints, and for being of assistance in this debate.

Let me very quickly go through a few of the major points I have made and then close with an appeal, particularly for my fellow Conservative MPs.

The bill does not propose to do away with the CBC. We need to understand that the CBC will exist. It will just not exist as a government subsidized corporation. The CBC can exist. Other broadcasters exist as do other radio networks. This would privatize it and would relieve the taxpayers of the burden of subsidizing it.

The bill does not seek to deprive Canadians of necessary services. In fact, as my hon. colleague has pointed out, most of these necessary services can be provided in other ways. As one of my colleagues pointed out earlier, the development of Canadian content can be done in a myriad of different ways. The bill would not eliminate the development of Canadian content. Many of the things, the most beloved program in CBC history, *Hockey Night in Canada*, are done through other ways.

What the bill would do, however, is change the CBC from an entity that is supported by the taxpayers and not responsible to the taxpayers to one of many diverse Canadian voices. I have taken measures in the legislation to provide protection to ensure this would still be a Canadian corporation. Future governments, future parliamentarians may wish to change that, but I have done that to try to calm and assuage some of the concerns.

In summary, I would point out a few reasons why I have done this.

I am very much aware that the legislation is unlikely to pass through the House for a variety of reasons. When the original debate kicked off on the Wheat Board, it was not passed through with one government. Conservative MPs, philosophically free enterprise members of Parliament, became involved and began to talk about it. The Mulroney administration philosophically should have done it, just as the previous Harper administration philosophically should have been prepared to privatize the CBC. However, someone needed to take the first steps to get things going. Someone needed to take the first steps to open the debate, to break the taboo around discussing this subject. That is one of reasons I am trying to do this.

Government Orders

People talk about how CBC brings up together, how it does various things across the country. That may be, but I do not share this view. However, for those who argue this, that was back in the two or three channel universe with one national radio program. That has completely changed. It has moved on and it is gone. We need as members of the House of Commons is discuss what the essential and useful function of government is. If we are to argue as Conservative MPs for tax cuts and for limited government, we cannot spend \$1 billion on things like this.

I understand there may be issues, particular things, small things that people may want for the CBC, but that should not prevent members from actually voting for this at second reading. If members believe the radio portion of CBC should continue, move amendments at committee to sever the two. That can be done. Today I am asking members to endorse the bill, to have a vote so we can discuss the principle of restructuring the CBC and make it private. My preference is private across the board, but if we do not move and support it on this in principle, we will not be able to go forth.

Again, I do not see the CBC as representative of all Canadians. I do not see it as good for the taxpayers. That is why I call on members of Parliament to support my the bill to open the debate, to move forward, and to move into the modern era. I thank all members for their support and I appreciate their votes and input in the future.

• (1155)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to an order made on Monday, April 3, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, May 3, immediately before private members' business.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Deputy Speaker: In that we are not quite at the top of the hour, the House stands suspended until 12 noon.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:56 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12:00 noon)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1200)

[*English*]

YUKON ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT ACT

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.) moved that Bill C-17, An Act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise in the House today, acknowledging we are gathered on traditional Algonquin territory, as we begin the second reading debate on Bill C-17, an act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act, or YESAA.

I would like to begin by highlighting the tireless efforts of my colleague, the hon. member for Yukon. Without all of his hard work with and on behalf of his constituents, we would not be where we are today on this critical legislation for Yukon.

The government believes that a sustainably developed resource sector is essential to the success of the Canadian economy and, if we get this right, will serve as an important foundation for future economic and job growth. However, unlocking this economic potential must be contingent on environmental sustainability and on impacted indigenous communities being engaged as equal partners. This is not only an indigenous issue, but one about which all Yukoners are extremely concerned.

[*Translation*]

Our government is absolutely committed to renewing the relationship between the crown and indigenous peoples in Canada on a foundation of recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.

[*English*]

This not just a moral obligation, but a legal one, particularly in regions like Yukon, which are subject to comprehensive land claim agreements and self-government agreements.

Yukon is an inspiration to the rest of Canada, with so many self-governing nations and with our needing more and more first nations to get out from under the Indian Act and become self-governing. It is very important that the work we do together in partnership is well-communicated to all Canadians as an example of how things can be when we get it right.

Government Orders

The YESAA, as members may know, was passed in 2003 and stems from the umbrella final agreement between Canada, Yukon first nations, and the Government of Yukon. As required under the umbrella final agreement, a five-year review of the YESAA was launched under the previous government, resulting in 76 recommendations, 72 of which were agreed to by all parties. Unfortunately, despite spending years working with Yukon first nations on a comprehensive review of YESAA, the previous government added four further controversial changes at the end and pushed them through, absent meaningful consultation.

[*Translation*]

That ill-advised approach led to pointless litigation between a number of self-governing first nations and the federal government with respect to the previous bill and compromised the potential development of resources by undermining legal certainty.

• (1205)

[*English*]

By contrast, after months of discussions, Canada, Yukon governments, and Yukon first nations signed an MOU last April that outlined mutually agreed upon steps toward addressing the first nations' concerns with respect to the changes to YESAA made in previous Bill S-6.

Bill C-17 is an example of what can be achieved when government works in partnership with indigenous communities at the very beginning of proposed changes. Yukon first nations were consulted from the very beginning, including on the draft legislative proposal. As a direct result of this bill's collaborative origin, Yukon first nations pursuing related legal action have adjourned their hearing dates while this bill proceeds. This bill would re-establish trust with Yukon first nations and restore legal certainty for responsible resource development, paving the way for increased investment, development and jobs.

[*Translation*]

The bill introduced in the House of Commons on June 8, 2016, would repeal the four provisions of the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act that have caused the most concern: legislated time limits on the review process; exempting a project from reassessment when an authorization is renewed or amended unless there has been a significant change to the project; ability for the federal minister to provide binding policy direction to the board; and ability to delegate the federal minister's powers, duties, or functions under the act to the territorial government.

With respect to the legislated time limits on the review process, the government believes that the more appropriate and consistent approach is to adhere to the timelines in the board's current rules that have historically matched or exceeded the limits under the Bill S-6 amendments.

The Government of Canada believes that resource industry project proponents, indigenous communities, and other governments should work hard to reach consensus.

[*English*]

Canada, Yukon, self-governing Yukon first nations, and industry have agreed to continue to work in collaboration through the regulatory process to establish practical timelines.

In terms of reassessments, the need to evaluate projects requesting renewals or amendments is best determined on a case-by-case basis as informed by the clear policy guidelines created by the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board. The board is best positioned to work in partnership with industry, first nations, and Yukoners to develop new policies, where required, to address project changes.

Yukon first nations are also strongly opposed to the idea that the minister could give binding policy direction to the board, as they feel this is inconsistent with the umbrella final agreement and jeopardizes the independence of the board. We agree.

Moreover, the current wording of the provision allowing me, as minister, to delegate any or all of my powers, duties, or functions under YESAA to the territorial minister may also be inconsistent with the umbrella final agreement. We do not support the pursuit of a unilateral or bilateral delegating authority, as it is not in accordance with our commitment to building respectful nation-to-nation relationships with first nations based on partnership, collaboration, and trust.

When I was in the Yukon last month and had the opportunity to listen to Yukon first nations and the representatives of the territorial government, I came to understand that this bill truly represents a consensus. I also recently received a joint letter from the Council of Yukon First Nations, Government of Yukon, and the Yukon Chamber of Mines confirming their support for Bill C-17 in its current form.

In that March 13, 2017 joint letter, they state clearly:

The Government of Yukon, self-governing...First Nations, Council of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon Chamber of Mines look forward to seeing Bill C-17 passed, without change, as soon as possible.

It goes on to say:

Your support for the passage of Bill C-17 assures us that the Government of Canada is genuinely committed to reset the relationship between Canada, Yukon and Yukon First Nations.

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

Once ancestral rights and titles are recognized, once lands and waters are protected, and once genuine partnerships exist between local and indigenous communities, responsible resource development projects will proceed, and they will do so faster and with greater legal certainty.

[*English*]

I urge all members to support this bill.

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order, and I am asking for your patience here.

Government Orders

This is regarding what transpired on Friday. I stayed here this weekend, and what transpired on Friday really caught my attention. I am a relatively new member of Parliament. I have been here for almost three years, but still one learns something every day. I had the opportunity to see some things on Friday that concerned me as a relative newcomer. I spent the weekend going through some of the things that I thought we needed to address.

I am asking for the patience of the House and my hon. members' patience. I would like to go over some things that I think are worthwhile, additional submissions to the question of privilege that were brought up by the hon. member for Perth—Wellington.

I want to go back—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I thank the hon. member for his comments on the matter. It is apparent to me, in looking at the circumstances that unfolded on Friday, that the hon. assistant deputy speaker made a decision at that time that was very clear, in the sense that sufficient commentary had been provided.

There were many constructive comments on the topic that was before the House and that had been raised by hon. members. However, at the conclusion of debate that day, the assistant deputy speaker made a decision that sufficient information had been heard, which would allow the Speaker to render his decision on the question. At this point, we are not going to take further commentary on the matter. The Speaker is seized with the question and will be deliberating it in the short time ahead. He will get back to the House in due course.

We will continue with questions and comments.

The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake.

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once the Yukon government, the federal government, and the first nations have concluded their agreement on a new process for reassessment and timelines, how will it integrate into the new YESAA? Does it require amendments to the act? What is the process for such, and how long will it take?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, we believe that the bill would reverse the irritants that were present in the previous bill, and that it will be able to be implemented right away, as Yukoners have asked.

[*Translation*]

M. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NPD): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her speech.

It is always better to work in partnership with first nations, and this bill is a perfect example. My question for the minister is simple.

[*English*]

Would the minister consider working with other parties in this chamber to get this legislation passed sooner rather than later?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. That is exactly what Yukoners want. They want this done as quickly as possible. I think there is unbelievable consensus. This is what can happen when we start at the beginning, co-developing legislation, and then having the buy-in, as we have now, even with the chamber of mines. There is no reason to hold this back. I would entertain any

collaboration that we could have, from all parties, to move this through as quickly as possible with the consensus of the House.

●(1215)

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was honoured to be part of the government that put through Bill S-6. It is disappointing to see this new government repealing a lot of those decision that we felt were beneficial to the economical development of Yukon. One of the biggest issues we were able to address was the timelines in terms of approvals, which was stymying economic development, and getting these infrastructure projects moving forward.

It is my understanding that sections of the act relating to timelines and reassessment have been used about 90 times since coming into force in 2015. Would the minister please provide me with a list of decisions and who those proponents were?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, I would tend to disagree. Although the previous Yukon government and the previous federal government thought these amendments were a good thing, they were totally against what had been suggested and agreed upon by first nations in Yukon. That really hindered the approach that was working well with YESAA and with the regulations that are now being worked on regarding timelines. I would be more than happy to get the details that the member has asked for.

However, I think that it is exactly why the previous government was on a wrong path. We cannot do this top-down approach, with a government deciding what it thinks is best for the economy or for first nations, when we have people on the ground, including the chamber of mines, the territorial government, and the federal government, respecting a process that allows those decisions to be made by the board with everyone there, rather than being interfered with by a federal minister.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to comment on the two questions from the Conservatives.

The first question was very good, regarding when the three governments come to an agreement on what it should be and how it should be implemented. There are just four items that need to be changed, of the 72 agreed to, and this act would change those four items. Therefore, as soon it is given royal assent, those changes that the three governments agreed to would be established.

On the other question related to timelines, there are two points. First, all of the proposed timelines are already being met. YESAB has a very good record on timelines. Second, through the changes that were agreed to, there are now timelines in the YESAB rules. They have been gazetted. Therefore, through regulations, there are a set of timelines already.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his encyclopedic understanding of the importance of getting this bill through as quickly as possible.

Government Orders

Previously, Yukon had a very good record in terms of certainty for projects. This is what businesses need. They need to know what the rules are and to see that the track record of this arm's-length process will not be interfered with politically. That gives certainty, and allows companies to know that the environment will be diligently assessed. Then, companies can feel confident that they want to invest in a region.

Mr. Romeo Saganash: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that Bill C-17 would do is to repeal some disturbing provisions that were in a previous bill, one of them being the time limits that were imposed. I would like the minister to comment. One needs to not only consider the fact that the previous bill would have unilaterally changed the umbrella agreement, which in itself is unconstitutional, in my view, but imposing time limits on constitutional rights is problematic as well. I would like the minister to comment.

• (1220)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada believes that resource industry proponents, indigenous communities, and governments should all strive toward consensus. It is important to note that the consensus among the Yukon government, Yukon first nations, and the Yukon Chamber of Mines is that this bill should be passed without change as soon as possible. This is exactly as the member suggested, so that self-governing Yukon first nations and industry will continue to work in collaboration through the regulatory process to establish practical guidelines.

It should also be noted that the project approvals, through the board, before these legislated time limits were imposed through legislation, were already proceeding within these timelines. It is always better to do these things with consensus.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the four sections of the act are repealed, what happens to applications that have been based on reassessment or timelines that are presently before the board? Will there be a transition period, or is it going to be tossed out and the application will have to begin with a new environmental assessment application?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, I can reassure the member that the projects will go back to the original process, before Bill S-6 was imposed.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, this is not so much a question as a thanks. It was very distressing to see Bill S-6 pushed through the House. I am glad that the original process is back in place, respecting the long-standing treaty negotiations with indigenous peoples in the territories.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her thanks, her ongoing work, and understanding the balance that is required to go forward, in terms of not only the environment and the economy, but the rights of indigenous people in this country.

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the previous Conservative government made the north a priority by launching a comprehensive northern strategy focused on sovereignty, the environment, the economy, and governance. Our introduction of Bill S-6 was just one of the major pieces of legislation we put forward in order to empower the territories in all four areas.

Despite devolution of resource management to Yukon in 2003, the federal government remained responsible for environmental regulations in the region under the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act. Under the act, 11 of the 14 Yukon first nations have negotiated individual land claims and self-governing arrangements.

After the legislated five-year review, it was clear that we could improve the legislation for the benefit of Yukon. The legislation introduced legislated time limits for assessment that were consistent with other federal environmental assessment legislation in order to not stall economic growth with unnecessary red tape and regulations. It also provided the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development with the authority to provide binding policy direction to the Yukon environmental and socio-economic assessment board, and it equipped the Government of Canada to communicate expectations on matters such as board conduct, the use of new technology, and fulfillment of roles and responsibilities related to aboriginal consultation.

To ensure both quorum and continuity, it allowed for a board member's term to be extended for the purpose of completing a screening or review. It enabled the Government of Canada to develop cost recovery regulations so that the costs incurred for public reviews would be borne by the proponents of development projects and not the taxpayer. It reduced the regulatory burdens by clarifying that a project need not undergo another assessment when a project authorization is to be renewed or amended, unless, in the opinion of the decision body or bodies, there is a significant change to the project.

When the previous premier of Yukon, Darrell Pasloski, spoke in front of the committee about the bill, he mentioned that this was about evening the playing field. Yukon had a different, less competitive regulatory regime, and that was costing Yukoners desperately needed jobs. The lack of development was also stopping Yukon from developing its untapped potential and offering jobs to those who need an opportunity.

The largest provider of jobs in Yukon right now is the territorial government. The second is the resource industry, which provides good-paying jobs to Yukoners from across the territory. Thousands of these employees are indigenous people. The Liberals talk a big game when it comes to supporting Canada's indigenous people, but how does the government expect to provide economic opportunity for these communities to grow when it continually puts up barriers instead of opening up opportunities as it promised it would do?

For example, mining in particular is the key to wealth for many first nation groups, whether it is gold, copper, or some other mineral. Mining does not happen unless a company can negotiate an agreement with first nations that have treaty rights to the land.

Bill C-17 is just another example of the difference between the previous Conservative government, which empowered northerners, and the current Liberal government, which is obsessed with taking power away from the territories and bringing in countless regulations to stifle economic opportunity and growth.

Government Orders

Bill C-17 is a step back in the progress that has been made for resource development in Yukon. It seeks to expand governmental regulations and stifle growth. These unnecessary regulations would impede private sector investment and pose further threats to jobs and economic development in the region.

The initial goal of the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act was to establish a single development assessment process for projects on all federal, territorial, and first nations land in Yukon. We did that, and improved upon it. The Liberal government seems intent on undoing all the good work we did. Bill C-17 flies in the face of economic development and diversification by generating more government red tape and extra regulations that deter private investment.

In a time of global economic uncertainty, the Liberal government continues to increase deficits and give money to everyone who has their hand out, rather than eliminating barriers to investment to improve the economy. Bill C-17 puts the people of Yukon at a competitive disadvantage with the rest of Canada for private investment, as industry is dissuaded from resource exploration in the region by an uncertain review process and a seemingly endless amount of bureaucratic reassessment.

● (1225)

This unlimited environmental review process and perpetual reassessment calls into question the Liberals' plan for a larger pan-Canadian environmental process review. Do the Liberals want to remove timelines in the rest of Canada too? Did they even consider regulatory consistency across the country when writing this bill? At a time when the government should be focusing on stabilizing the economy, the Liberals continue to dole out money in their sunny ways delirium, and feverishly build barriers to private investment in Canada, particularly in our northern regions.

Let us look at some of those barriers.

One is the carbon tax. A carbon tax is a tax on everything. The Trudeau government does not seem to understand that the northern economy relies on—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. This is a brief reminder to the hon. member. I did not stop him in the first instance, but he will recall that we do not use the names of other hon. members in the House. We can refer to them by title or by riding name, but we cannot use the names of individuals or members in the House in that manner.

The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake.

Mr. David Yurdiga: Mr. Speaker, the territories have already become leaders in climate change adaptation because of the front-line impact they have already had to experience. It is irresponsible to now ask them to do more when our northern communities are facing many economic and environmental challenges.

According to the Mining Association of Canada, a typical Canadian mine spends about 30% of its annual budget on energy, and thus the impact of the federal carbon price will hit northern mines the hardest. The sole source of power for these northern mines is fossil fuels, and let us not forget as well the thousands of tonnes of resources that must be flown in just to start operations on these mines.

The election of Donald Trump south of the border means that mining operations in places like Alaska and Montana will not be paying an uncompetitive carbon tax but will instead be thriving on a lower tax agenda. How can we expect to help the economy if we bring in an uncompetitive carbon tax that simply encourages mining companies to take investments and jobs outside of Canada?

I should note that we have some of the strictest environmental regulations in the world. Let us talk about the oil and gas moratorium. Just a number of weeks ago, the Premier of the Northwest Territories, Bob McLeod, told the Arctic Oil & Gas Symposium that the five-year ban on Arctic drilling in the Beaufort Sea has created a no-win situation for his territory's plan to develop a strong resource economy. The same has happened all across the Canadian north.

For years, our northern territories have negotiated in good faith to have the power to make their own decisions when it comes to their natural resources, and the Prime Minister has failed on his promise to be a partner of our northern communities. Instead, he has forced an agreement upon them that will leave hundreds of billions of dollars of oil and gas in the ground, and thousands of potential good-paying jobs off the table.

The mining industry is at the heart of the economic opportunity for many residents in the north. The majority of project requests will be tied up, slowed down, and ultimately ruined by this legislation, which will impact investments in this industry. The suggestion that such a policy will benefit the Yukon reveals just how out of touch the Liberals are with our northern communities.

Bill C-17 is taking away northern independence. The Liberal promise to simply repeal the controversial sections in Bill S-6is another example of how they made promises without any consideration for the consequences. There could have been an opportunity to find a solution that addressed everyone's concerns while supporting economic development in Yukon, but instead Liberals are using the blunt instrument of repeal.

The people of the Yukon have the right to determine their own policies on natural resource development, rather than having a federal government restrict their opportunities for economic development. The Liberal government is shutting out the potential for many jobs in the natural resource sector that could be created from diverse private investment in the Yukon and all of Canada's northern regions.

Bill C-17 introduces uncertainty into the resource development review process, which will undermine economic opportunities for all Yukoners as well as create uncertainties for the rest of Canada about whether this will form the basis of the Liberal approach in the future.

Government Orders

Bill C-17 is detrimental to the independence of our northern communities, as it takes the devolution of regulatory power away from the territorial government, as was introduced by Bill S-6, and returns it to the hands of the federal minister. The Liberal minister from Toronto cannot know the reality on the ground in the same way as the people who live it every day. The power of Yukoners to decide what is best for their economy is being taken away and dictated by Ottawa.

Canada is a country rich in natural resources, and these resources contribute greatly to the country's economy and the economy of the Yukon, increasing opportunities for all Canadians. Such avenues for development should especially be pursued in the current economy climate, but the Liberals would rather create additional levels of bureaucracy and an uncertain future, to the detriment of all Canadians.

Now we have uncertainty in the review process. By introducing a limitless environmental review process and mandating continued project reassessment, the Liberals are sending a clear message that they will not support resource development in Canada's north.

● (1230)

The removal of time limits and the option for exempting renewal, on the other hand, fits well with the ongoing narrative that the Liberals are introducing unnecessary delays and uncertainty into our regulatory process.

Additionally, we can make the point that this change puts Yukon at a competitive disadvantage with the rest of Canada for attracting private investment. Private companies will take their investments elsewhere and the people of Yukon will not be able to experience the benefits of an expanding economy, while the Liberals continue their spending spree and ignore the ballooning deficit. This problem will only be increased as the Liberals create increasing uncertainty throughout the country with regard to a review process, sending a clear message to industry that Canada is not interested in pursuing natural resource development.

This will have an impact on the economy. The economy in the north is suffering enough as it is. We do not need the Liberals chasing away investments. Jobs are getting harder to come by in the north. Instead of encouraging investment in resource development and creating more jobs, the Liberals are developing a larger bureaucracy and eliminating opportunity. The government is so caught up in its own concerns for expanding the environmental bureaucracy that it has forgotten the people of Yukon who are struggling just to make ends meet because of a bad economy. The Liberals are stacking the deck against hard-working Canadians who are trying to provide for their families.

According to Statistics Canada annual estimate of mineral production, the Yukon territory has seen a decline of the dollar amount from mining activities for all but one of the past six years. Since 2012, the amount of money brought into the territories from mining production has decreased by a staggering 25%. By increasing the barriers of entry, by putting not a firm end date on environmental assessments, and through increasing operation costs with their carbon tax grab scheme, it is clear that the Liberals do not care about the economic future of Yukon.

If the decline in the actual value of minerals does not raise alarms about the negative impacts of these policies, a more staggering fact is the extreme decline in new investments. Since the Liberals took power just two years ago, Stats Canada reported that the actual investment in mining in Yukon had decreased by over 42%, or an equivalent of \$80 million.

Bill C-17 is also an example of the Liberals thinking they know best for the territories. The people of Yukon should be the ones to decide whether extra environmental regulations are necessary as it is their economy that is being affected.

In Yukon one of the biggest problems is the fact that so many residents rely on the government to provide employment instead of a strong private sector. The fact that the Liberals are putting up so many barriers for private sector job creation with a bill like Bill C-17 seems like a personal attack on those trying to find jobs in Yukon. The bill, along with the carbon tax scheme the Liberals are forcing on to the provinces and territories, looks as if the government has a vendetta against any economic growth in the north.

I went to Yukon to meet with stakeholders about the bill. They were not impressed. One of the reasons they were not impressed is because the Yukon mining industry was struggling to survive. Although mining has always represented a huge share of the Yukon's economy, in recent years there has been a steep decline in the amount of open mines. This has taken millions out of the economy and thousands of jobs.

As of today, there is only one mine open and producing in Yukon, the Minto copper mine. I visited this mine with my colleague, the MP for Lakeland, to get a tour of the operation and was told that the operation was heavily dependent on the price of copper. With such low prices, the future is always uncertain. Adding more red tape to a struggling operation will not help anyone.

The Conservative Party's position has been to streamline and harmonize regulatory regimes across Canada in order to promote investor confidence, provide consistency and transparency, and increase efficiency in regulatory regimes. The economy of Yukon and all the north needs more development and investment and it needs to be put back in the hands of the people who understand it best. To think otherwise would be ignorant. Canada cannot continue on this uncertain path of unnecessary bureaucratic red tape that only serves to turn away private investment and cut jobs.

The north, being so rich in its natural and human resources, has the potential to be a powerhouse of industry in the country, but the Liberals want to keep resources in the ground and deny economic opportunity to millions of Canadians.

● (1235)

Bill C-17 is a knife in the heart of the northern economy and just one example of how the Liberals are taking away any provincial self-determination, creating uncertainty in regulations, and continually desecrating Canada's economic well-being.

I move:

Government Orders

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following: "Bill C-17, An Act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act, be not now read a second time but that the order be discharged, the bill withdrawn and the subject matter thereof referred to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs."

• (1240)

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment is admissible.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Yukon.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a number of the things the member said are incorrect and do not support his amendment.

A number of times the member, importantly, said that the people of Yukon should decide. This bill is exactly about that. When the previous government imposed four major conditions without consulting the people of Yukon and without allowing them to negotiate, the economic development people in Yukon and the first nations held two huge gatherings of the public in contravention so they could make their own decisions.

I am glad the member talked about northern strategy because the government is in the process of developing one from the bottom up, an Arctic policy framework, working with leaders in the north.

The member mentioned a few things that were agreed to in the bill, and there were 72 things. Some the things he mentioned as being problems are not problems because they already are agreed to and we are not touching them.

The member made a comment about reassessments. There have been changes to the regulations that now allow that in certain conditions and under appropriate conditions reassessments will not have to be done.

He talked about mining being at the heart of northern economic development and that there were barriers. That is another very important point. This bill would remove the uncertainty. It would take away the barriers.

He talked about Investment being down. That is exactly why we want to change it so investment goes up. Although, he also made a good point that it was partly because of world metal prices.

Finally, the member talked about mining. I do not have time to talk about them all, I have two letters from mining companies and a letter from the Yukon Chamber of Mines, which says:

The Government of Yukon, self-governing Yukon First Nations, Council of Yukon First Nations, and the Yukon Chamber of Mines look forward to see Bill C-17 passed, without change, as soon as possible.

Therefore, regarding the member's references to mining and wanting it to go ahead, Bill C-17 being passed is exactly what the mining industry wants.

Mr. David Yurdiga: Mr. Speaker, there is a really big challenge out there when it comes to investment in our resource industry. As we add more regulations, more red tape, there is a challenge.

When industry wants to invest, it is looking at a lot of things. It looks at the tax load, whether it is federal or territorial. That is a huge factor. Adding on a carbon tax, and we have the uncertainty of the

reassessment and taking out time limits, is pushing it to the edge where investment is not worth it.

How long will the environmental review take? Will it be one year or five years? We do not know. That is why timelines are important. It instills confidence within the industry, confidence that it will take a certain time to do and that a certain amount of dollars will be invested for an assessment.

After that, if there is approval and the operation is started, there is the challenge of what the reassessment will look like. For example, a \$100 million investment has been made in this operation and now a reassessment comes up. What if it does not meet the targets put out before them. That will be a lost investment, because the reassessment said that it was because of climate change or whatever the reason may be. Now there is that huge factor that maybe it will not be operational in five years because of the reassessment. It is really sad.

If there are no changes to the operation, I do not believe it is helpful to do a reassessment again on an operation that is exactly the same. Now, with Bill C-17, the possibility of reassessment after reassessment will have a negative impact for people who want to invest in the resource industry in the north.

• (1245)

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am kind of intrigued by the presentation.

I come from a region where there is an environmental assessment and review process that is pretty complex under the James Bay and northern Quebec agreement. A lot of people have argued in the past that this process is an impediment to development in the territory.

After 40 years with that process in place, if there is one place in our country where development is going well, it is in the James Bay northern Quebec area. That is the objective of an environmental assessment process. When developers arrive in a territory and they know the rules of the game, they know the rules under legislation in environmental assessment, that is what helps development in any given territory. That is what forges partnerships with indigenous peoples.

I wonder if my friend could comment on this.

Mr. David Yurdiga: Mr. Speaker, as a former businessman, I always look for certainty. If I am to invest somewhere, I always ask where the best place to invest is. I ask about the risks. Rules are very important. For example, the Liberals like to have time allocations to limit debate. However, when it comes to the YESA board, they want to remove all limits. The Liberals are not really following their own advice. If they want to take away time limits, we should be able to speak as long as we want. The Liberals should lead by example. Rules are very important. I agree that we all need to know what the rules are.

What I am fearful of is that this will not create investment in the north, because of not knowing how long the assessment process will take, or when reassessments will happen. These things are factors. If we can eliminate that, we will have more investment in the north, and we need that investment there.

Government Orders

I know when I was visiting Yukon with my colleague, we saw a lot of unemployment. The best social program is a job. We need to get jobs in Yukon and the north. Job creation is the number one priority in my mind.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, certainly my hon. friend from Fort McMurray—Cold Lake understands the types of concerns we have when we have an investment climate that is unsure and regulations that are certainly putting lots of jobs and investments in jeopardy.

I had the opportunity a number of years ago to be on the aboriginal affairs and northern development committee and to be in the territories. We talked about certain barriers to investment. Again, the key is certainty. That was a critical part.

I asked the minister a short time ago about the four sections of the act, once they are repealed, what is going to happen to the reassessment and timelines if these things are in front of the board for consideration. If I understood her correctly, it would go back to square one. That is where it would be.

I wonder is the member could talk a bit about how many more hits he feels that western Canada and the north can take from the Liberal government.

Mr. David Yurdiga: Mr. Speaker, when we look at the impacts to the economy, for example in my riding of Fort McMurray, with the provincial government putting all of these new regulations in place, creating bureaucracy, and over-managing the resource industry, we have seen investment leave Alberta in droves. We see it going to Saskatchewan and other jurisdictions in Canada and outside of Canada, because regulations and uncertainty in the market cause industry to move.

As I said earlier, we are at a point now where the resource industry is going to look at it twice, because the risks are too high. What is next? Regulation after regulation, delay after delay will hurt our economy. Alberta is suffering immensely because of the new provincial regulations and the carbon tax. These all add up, and we will see less investment in these regions.

• (1250)

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by repeating the opening of the minister's speech but by adding another dimension to it. Yes, it is fine to acknowledge that we are on unceded Algonquin territory, but it is quite another thing to recognize as well that Ottawa has not been paying the rent on this place. It is unceded Algonquin territory but we also must recognize the second part of that.

I want to acknowledge the importance of this legislation. There is a lot of talk today about nation-to-nation reconciliation and so on and so forth. This is one example of how to get it right. This is one example of how to proceed.

The previous bill with respect to environmental assessment in Yukon, Bill S-6 was unilaterally imposed on indigenous peoples in Yukon and the Yukon government. That is not the way to go about it. We do not change agreements that we sign with indigenous peoples unilaterally. It is supposed to be done collaboratively and that did not happen with the previous bill. The present bill would have the effect

of repealing some of the controversial aspects of the previous bill. Let me repeat some of them.

The previous bill would have authorized the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs to delegate any of the minister's powers or functions and duties under the Indian Act to the territorial government. One of the first things we learn in law school is that cannot happen. We cannot delegate powers to another. It is one of the first Latin phrases that I learned when I went to law school, *delegatus non potest delegare*. We are not supposed to do that.

The other controversial aspect, and I pointed to this aspect a while ago in my question for the minister, is that the previous bill established time limits on environmental assessment. That is problematic, because my constitutional rights have no time limits. Time limits cannot be imposed on the constitutional rights of indigenous peoples. That was one of the other controversial parts of the previous bill.

I want to talk a bit about the notion of clarity, the notion of having clear rules under environmental assessment. I am from the James Bay northern Quebec region. The entire area is covered by the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. A special constitutional and legal regime is in place and the rules are clear in the agreement as to how development is going to happen in James Bay territory.

Section 22, which is a highly complex chapter of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, provides for that environmental and social protection regime where Cree are a part of the environmental assessment and review board. The Cree nation and the Inuit can appoint members to the board. That is true participation in the environmental assessment process. Section 22 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement is the environmental and social protection regime that is provided for under that treaty.

A lot of people have said, especially at the beginning of the regime, that this process is too heavy, too complex, and will impede development in the territory. Quite the contrary happened after 40 years of experience with this regime, after 40 years of experience with these processes. The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement has not impeded any development in the territory.

• (1255)

In fact, it has even allowed many partnerships to happen between the Cree and Inuit in the territory and mining companies, forestry companies, and hydroelectric development companies, because the rules were clear. They might be heavy or complex, but when the rules are clear, everybody knows what the rules are, and that is what helps development take place in a given territory.

The other aspect I want to talk about briefly is the fact that this bill was co-developed, as well as co-drafted, I would presume, and that does not happen often enough in this place. I also have experience with the very first federal legislation that was co-drafted with the indigenous people concerned. That is the Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act in 1984. That act was negotiated with the Cree and the Naskapi, and co-drafted, with every clause or provision accepted even before the legislation was tabled in this place. That is what nation-to-nation agreements looks like. That is how we should proceed with any given legislation that relates to indigenous peoples, indigenous rights, and indigenous status.

Government Orders

One of the most important aspects of all of this discussion is the notion of free, prior, and informed consent of indigenous peoples in any given project. In fact, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples contains several provisions articulating the concept of free, prior, and informed consent. The most general is article 19, which obliges states to consult and co-operate in good faith with indigenous peoples in order to obtain free, prior, and informed consent before adopting and implementing measures or legislation that may affect them.

Other provisions of the declaration set out more specific obligations requiring degrees of free, prior, and informed consent in specific contexts. Article 32, for instance, obliges states to consult and co-operate in good faith with indigenous peoples in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands, territories, and other resources. That is an important concept that we need to keep in mind every time we discuss legislation in this place, especially with respect to the environment.

Article 28 of the UN declaration establishes a right to redress for indigenous peoples for lands, territories, and resources that they have traditionally owned, occupied, or used, which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used, or damaged without their free, prior, and informed consent. It is an important provision in the UN declaration.

Article 29 requires states to take effective measures to avoid storage or disposal of hazardous materials in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples without their free, prior, and informed consent. It is an important concept.

Article 10 protects indigenous peoples from being forcibly removed from their lands and territories. No relocation shall take place without the free, prior, and informed consent of the indigenous peoples concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, the option of return.

The declaration provides context to these articles, clarifying that indigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories, and resources. The intention of the rights in the declaration will enhance harmonious and co-operative relationships between states and indigenous peoples. That was exactly my point a while ago.

Article 1 states that indigenous peoples have the right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Articles 3 and 4, as partner provisions, state that indigenous peoples have a right to self-determination, including to fully determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development, and to determine self-government regarding internal or local affairs.

● (1300)

The United Nations special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples is an expert in the field of indigenous rights, appointed by the UN Human Rights Council to examine obstacles to protecting rights of indigenous peoples, to review alleged violations of indigenous rights, and to make recommendations on appropriate measures to prevent and remedy violations. The special rapporteur has consistently emphasized the importance of good faith dialogue and meaningful consultation in the aim of achieving consent as the

primary objective of the principles of free, prior, and informed consent. The purpose is to reverse historical patterns of imposed decisions and conditions of life that have threatened the survival of indigenous peoples, in the way that principles of consultation and consent have the objective of avoiding the imposition of the will of one party.

Those are important principles that we need to apply every time we consider legislation in this place

The Minister of Justice already has the obligation to vet any legislation against the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We do not have the equivalent, as we speak right now, for aboriginal treaty rights under section 35.

I have a bill, by the way, that will be debated this coming September, Bill C-262, that would fix that. I am hoping that I will get the full support of the members of this House.

Under international law, indigenous peoples have the right to exercise self-determination. Indigenous peoples have pre-existing sovereignty, jurisdiction, and rights, and the right to self-determination in regard to their territories. That must be respected, without discrimination or threats of use of force, imposed time limitations, or delegation of authority.

In October 2015, when the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the Little Salmon/ Carmacks First Nation, and the Teslin Tlingit Council took Bill S-6 legislative changes to the Supreme Court of Yukon, their case stated that the changes were inconsistent with the final land claim agreements. Since then, concerned indigenous peoples have been compelled to negotiate under these false premises. As a result, indigenous parties to the negotiations have little or no leverage.

In this context, the special rapporteur has stated that most consultation processes require key elements in order to be considered free, informed, and in good faith.

First, in designing a consultation process, attention must be paid to the implications of power imbalances that may exist between indigenous groups and the governments engaging in consultation, and, if necessary, deliberate steps should be taken to address those.

Second, the indigenous groups affected must have full access to information regarding the project, including technical studies, financial plans, environmental assessments, and other relevant documents that the context demands. Indigenous groups may also be involved in the conduct of those studies, in a language that they may understand. For many years, in the James Bay territory, Hydro Québec provided information only in French to the Cree people, who have English as a second language or Cree as their mother tongue. That was a fundamental problem.

Government Orders

Third, consultations should take place before the government authorizes or a company undertakes or commits to undertake any activity related to the project within indigenous territory or other lands subject to indigenous rights. In practice, consultation may take place at multiple stages of a project, from its initial proposal, through exploration, development, and operation, to its closure. Indigenous groups should be consulted from the earliest stages to build trust and co-operation. Starting the consultation process at later stages often engenders mistrust, making agreement or consent more difficult to achieve.

• (1305)

Fourth, indigenous people should be consulted, through their own representative institutions, leadership, and decision-making structures. This gives recognition to the indigenous peoples' own choices and forms of self-government, thereby affording the consultation process greater legitimacy.

Bill C-17 has significant meaning for Yukon first nations and regional politics in the far north, but sometimes it does not go far enough. That is the party's decision, to go with it.

In November 2015, the Land Claims Agreements Coalition, which includes first nations in the Yukon, wrote to the Minister of Indigenous Affairs requesting the immediate suspension of the previous government's fiscal approach, as it was incompatible with their treaties. They requested that the new government develop a proper fiscal approach based on a nation-to-nation relationship.

I am pleased to see the minister responding with the bill, as a first step to rectifying the imposed changes from the Harper government. However, in addition to the provisions in this bill, the Liberal government must reverse the Harper government's unilateral imposition of a new fiscal agreement on all of the first nations in Yukon. Any laws that are attempting to change the implementation of land claims agreements can only be made with the full and active consultation and participation of first nations governments.

I want to close by saying that one of the important roles we have, as legislators, is to keep in mind our responsibility as parliamentarians. One of the highest responsibilities that we have as parliamentarians is to uphold the rule of law, and upholding the rule of law means respecting the Constitution. Respecting the Constitution includes section 35 rights, aboriginal and treaty rights. That is what upholding the rule of law means.

For too many years—in fact, for 150 years—the federal governments, successive Liberal and Conservative governments, have been adversaries to indigenous peoples and their rights and their status. It is the only group in this country that has received that kind of discriminatory approach. For 150 years, Canada has fought against aboriginal rights and aboriginal peoples in this country. We do not know exactly how many hundreds of millions of dollars that the federal governments spends fighting aboriginal rights every year. Some say it is about \$300 million, and some say it is up to \$1 billion a year, that is spent fighting aboriginals, the first peoples of this country.

Many times, those fights are unnecessary. Even after a first victory, a second victory, a third victory, we are still dragged to the Supreme Court every time, every single time in the last 150 years.

As we start to celebrate the 150 years of this country, maybe we should keep that in mind, and that over the next 150 years, we do not need to do that. If we are truly in an era of reconciliation, if we truly believe what we say when we talk about reconciliation, nation to nation, respect for aboriginal rights, then those kinds of things need to stop. A case in point is the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, where the federal government is still against aboriginal children in this country.

I think it is important to remind ourselves that our foremost duty as parliamentarians, as members of Parliament, is to uphold the rule of law. That means respecting the Constitution and respecting the fundamental human rights of the first peoples in this country.

• (1310)

[*Translation*]

L'hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak.

[*English*]

I do not want to impinge on the hon. member's unbridled enthusiasm for Bill C-17, so I will let him comment as he wants. However, I did want to comment on the comments of the last two Conservative speakers. I know they are not allowed to repeat themselves, but they both talked about uncertainty and how much jobs and investment depend on this uncertainty.

In doing that, the members are supporting this bill. If their next speaker says that, the Conservatives are in fact supporting this bill, because this bill is about the uncertainty that has shut down a lot of investment in mining because of the items in Bill S-6 that upset one of the parties to the treaty. Who do people think is on the board that makes these environmental assessments? It is the three governments. If one of them has not been treated fairly, obviously there is going to be a lot of uncertainty. That is why certain mining companies have written and been in favour of this.

I want to reiterate the point on timelines, as I guess I was not clear enough for the Conservatives. Since Bill S-6 went through, other sections of it have allowed that there are now timelines. The timelines are in the policy, the rules of the YESAB. These rules are established. They had to be gazetted. There are already timelines, so they should not keep saying that we are taking away timelines.

Government Orders

Finally, on reassessments, that is another change that came about through another part of Bill S-6 that was approved. As I said, most of it is approved, and it is just these things thrown in at the 11th hour. Before, the assessment was only up to the time of the trigger, say the five years that the member mentioned. Now, with the new rules, the assessment can be longer; it could be for what they think the life of the project is. Therefore, there are times when this reassessment will not occur. That does not lead to the uncertainty that was being suggested, and I will therefore let the member continue on with his good points.

Mr. Romeo Saganash: Mr. Speaker, those comments allow me to repeat some of the important points that need to be understood here. As I said, I live in the agreement area of James Bay up in northern Quebec. The environmental assessment and review process that was in place there allowed, for many years, many companies in forestry, mining, and even hydroelectric development, to partner with indigenous peoples. Although the environmental assessment process that is provided for under chapter 22 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement may seem complex or complicated for many, that is what helped the region. Many times over the last 40 years, when the economy was going bad in other parts of the province, it was still very good in northern Quebec. That is because of these rules that are in place.

An environmental assessment and review is good for the environment, of course, but it is also good for the economy of any given region. These rules are necessary. It is how sustainable development should happen, and northern Quebec is a good demonstration of that.

• (1315)

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague, the Indigenous and Northern Affairs critic for the NDP, for his excellent speech, and for connecting the dots between Bill C-17 in Yukon and what is being achieved, and what 40 years of experience with the Cree–Naskapi and the northern Quebec agreement has achieved in terms of certainty there. I was intrigued by the connection that was made and the lessons that have been learned, which the hon. member emphasized.

What I would like to ask the member specifically is in relation to his Bill C-262, which, of course, would address the need to enshrine a review under section 35 of the Constitution for indigenous rights, just as we routinely do for our charter rights. I would like to ask about the notion of free, prior, and informed consent. Would this bill, which includes the three governments, federal, provincial, and Yukon first nations, on the board of the YESAA statute, achieve the free, prior, and informed consent that is required, since they co-drafted the bill and are on the actual board, for example, in respect of a specific project? In other words, does that pass muster? Would the kind of bill that we have before us today be consistent with the principles of the hon. member's bill on free, prior, and informed consent that will soon be before Parliament?

Mr. Romeo Saganash: Mr. Speaker, let me start with Bill C-262.

Members may recall that last year the Truth and Reconciliation Commission issued its report, and 94 calls to action. There are two fundamental calls to action that are important in that report, which are calls to action 43 and 44. Both relate to the United Nations

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as do some 14 other calls to action.

Call to action 43 calls upon the Government of Canada, the provinces, the territories, and the municipalities to fully adopt and implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation in this country. That is why I say that those are the two fundamental and key calls to action. We cannot implement the rest of the 94, if we do not implement call to action 43, because that is the fundamental one.

I overheard the Liberals during the last campaign promising to adopt and implement the UN declaration. Bill C-262 does exactly that. It will implement the promise of the Liberals. I am just trying to help here.

With respect to free, prior and informed consent, I think it is an important concept that is already in our constitutional law. It is already in Canadian law. For many years, many rulings from the Supreme Court of Canada have spoken of the need to obtain consent from indigenous peoples before development takes place. The latest one was the ruling on the Tsilhqot'in case, in which the Supreme Court referred to the concept of consent of indigenous peoples in some 11 paragraphs and referred to the concept of control of lands, territories, and resources in some nine paragraphs. Therefore, the concept of consent is already in Canadian law. My bill, Bill C-262, will just confirm that is already law in this country.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have said time and again that we want a genuine renewal and rebuilding of our relationship between Canada and indigenous people. I was in Yukon when the hearing went on with respect to Bill S-6. People did not want that legislation passed in the House of Commons and fought against it. The government of the day fought back. Today we are doing as the people of the Yukon are asking, and I ask my colleague opposite this question: is this not a great sign of renewal of a relationship between the Government of Canada and indigenous people?

Mr. Romeo Saganash: Mr. Speaker, one of the problems I see is that this attitude that the government got it right this time needs to be spread across the board, not just on single, isolated issues. It needs to happen across the board. Do I need to remind the parliamentary secretary that her government is still before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal fighting indigenous kids in this country, the first peoples in this country? That is not in keeping with reconciliation. That is not in keeping with a nation-to-nation relationship. I think that attitude needs to spread across the board and needs to happen everywhere in this country, not just in isolated cases like this one.

Yes, this is a good bill. This is a bill that Yukoners want. I think the approach that was used in this case by the government should also be used with all first nations in this country.

• (1320)

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am excited to rise today to talk about Bill C-17, an act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act—

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think there has been some confusion. When you read out the name, you said the member for Yukon, but I believe there was a speech started by the member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

Therefore, I move:

That the member for Mégantic—L'Érable be now heard.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1400)

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

(Division No. 252)

YEAS

Members

Aboultiaf	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Anderson	Arnold
Barlow	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Block	Boucher
Boudrias	Caron
Carrie	Clarke
Cooper	Deltell
Diotte	Doherty
Donnelly	Dreeshen
Dusseault	Egliniski
Falk	Fast
Finley	Fortin
Gallant	Généreux
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Harcastle
Jeneroux	Jolibois
Kelly	Kent
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengary)	Lavardière
Lebel	Lobb
MacGregor	Maguire

Marcil	Masse (Windsor West)
Motz	Nater
Nuttall	Paul-Hus
Patuzé	Plamondon
Poilievre	Ramsey
Reid	Ritz
Saganash	Sansoucy
Saroya	Shields
Shipley	Sorenson
Stubbs	Sweet
Thériault	Tilson
Trudel	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Wagantall
Warawa	Watts
Waugh	Webber
Weir	Wong
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 82

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Aubin	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baylis	Beech
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Boissonnault	Bossio
Bratina	Breton
Brison	Brousseau
Brown	Caesar-Chavannes
Cannings	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chan
Chen	Christopherson
Clement	Cormier
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Drouin	Dubé
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dzerowicz
Easter	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fuhr
Garneau	Genius
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Grewal
Hajdu	Harder
Hardie	Harvey
Holland	Hussen
Hutchings	Johns
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Kang
Khalid	Khera
Kitchen	Kmicc
Kwan	Lake
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lemieux	Liepert
Lightbound	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	Lukiwski
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Mendicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	

Statements by Members

Morneau	Morrissey
Mulcair	Nantel
Nassif	Nault
O'Connell	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Picard	Poissant
Quach	Qualtrough
Rankin	Ratansi
Richards	Rioux
Rodriguez	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Sahota	Saini
Samson	Sangha
Sarai	Schieffe
Schulte	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simms
Sohi	Sopuck
Sorbara	Spengemann
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Tootoo
Trost	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Vecchio
Viersen	Virani
Warkentin	Whalen
Wilson-Raybould	Wrzesnewskyj
Young	Zahid — 184

PAIRED

Members

Foote

Moore — 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS***[Translation]***KPMG**

M. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Public Works and Government Services Canada awarded a service contract to KPMG on January 9, 2017, another one on March 1, and yet another on March 2. Industry Canada did the same on February 16.

KPMG was the architect of the Isle of Man scheme, allowing its wealthy clients to evade taxes, and yet it is a partner of the Government of Canada. That is not all; it gets even worse.

Professional service contracts are awarded following a public tender process. In other words, the federal government invites firms to bid on them. However, when it comes to accounting and management services, KPMG always seems to win the contracts.

On March 2, the same day CBC/Radio-Canada released the findings of its investigation into KPMG, Ottawa awarded contracts to its friends. The Canada Revenue Agency hires KPMG employees, and KPMG hires CRA employees. KPMG helps its clients evade taxes, and KPMG—

Le Président: Order.

The hon. member for Niagara Centre.

*[English]***CLUB RICHELIEU IN WELLAND**

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise in the House to congratulate Welland's own Club Richelieu, celebrating its 60th anniversary.

Part of Richelieu International, Club Richelieu in the city of Welland was founded in 1957, serving as a social club for Welland's proud francophone community.

The club's founding members set out to develop an organization that was not only committed to preserving the French language and culture in the region of Niagara but also dedicated to helping those less fortunate and working with youth and senior groups in the community.

Over the years, Club Richelieu's members have donated more than a million dollars to community groups and non-profit organizations. They operate a long-term care facility and a seniors' apartment, both of which cater to the francophone community, and they host countless community events.

Francophone culture is alive and well in the Niagara region, thanks to the efforts of many dedicated volunteers at Club Richelieu. We thank them.

[Translation]

I want to thank all the volunteers for their work. Congratulations.

* * *

*[English]***LAMBTON—KENT—MIDDLESEX ACHIEVEMENTS**

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, April has been an important month to all of us from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

Scott Moir from Ilderton and Tessa Virtue from London won gold in the free dance, their third world figure skating championship title. Congratulations to Scott and Tessa.

If we go back 100 years, the Battle for Vimy Ridge on April 9 was a defining moment for Canada, and the strategic military advice of Sir Arthur Currie from Strathroy greatly contributed to the victory of our Canadian troops.

I had the honour of visiting Vimy, to walk on those same fields where Canadians shed their blood to fight for the freedoms of those around them and back home. It is an experience one never forgets, as I know all of us will never forget the sacrifices made by all of our Canadian troops through these 150 years of Canada's history.

* * *

● (1405)

*[Translation]***VIMY**

Mme Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to talk about the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, celebrated on April 9, and an important person in my riding, the late Fernand Trépanier.

Statements by Members

The significance of the Battle of Vimy Ridge not only showcased the unity and perseverance of Canadians, it was also a defining moment for Canada on the world stage.

Mr. Trépanier, a World War II veteran, fought for decades to have the federal government pay tribute to Canadian veterans by naming a federal riding after Vimy.

Mr. Trépanier saw his dream come true before he passed away. In 2015, the riding that I have the honour of representing was created. Today, on behalf of the people of Vimy, I want to thank Mr. Trépanier and all veterans, to whom we owe a great debt. Lest we forget.

* * *

[English]

2017 PETER CORREN AWARD

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise today to honour the recipients of the 2017 Peter Corren Award at the 20th Breaking the Silence Conference at the University of Saskatchewan.

Anthony Bidulka and Herb McFaull were the powerhouses behind bringing Camp fYrefly to Saskatchewan. Now in its ninth year, Camp fYrefly's mission is to help sexual and gender minority youth move from being "at risk" to a place of resilience and strength. For the last five years, because of their generosity, the camp has been free for all high-school students.

Fran Forsberg was also honoured for her unrelenting advocacy for young people. Fran has fostered over 150 children. She is a passionate and effective activist and mom on issues of gender freedom and young people.

Kay Williams, who presented Fran with her award, said we would need to stay up all night to list Fran's accomplishments. Kay said of Fran, "This award speaks to her amazing ability to provide a listening ear to people's pain and needs, but Fran goes further: she acts to alleviate the pain."

Congratulations to Tony, Herb, and Fran. They have made the world a better place for all young people.

* * *

RELIGIOUS CELEBRATIONS

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a week of triple celebration for the people of Canada and those around the world. Today we mark the beginning of Passover, while this Friday is both the harvest festival Vaisakhi and Easter Good Friday.

Cherished by the Jewish, Sikh, and Christian communities, these commemorations remind us of the spiritual and cultural diversity of this country and allow us to celebrate alongside Canadians of different faiths, backgrounds, and experiences. They remind us that Canada is both one nation and a collection of many identities that weave together to form the rich, cultural tapestry for which this country is known throughout the world.

Finally, they remind us that regardless of what we believe in, each of us wants the same for our country: peace and prosperity, and the

knowledge that our children can grow up in a place where everyone can simply be themselves.

Chag Pesach Sameach, Happy Easter, and Vaisakhi diyan Vadhaiyan.

* * *

2017 CURLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, between April 22 and 29, Lethbridge is ready to "wick and roll" as we host over 40 countries for the 2017 World Mixed Doubles and World Senior Curling Championships.

We are looking forward to bringing the tournament into the "house" at the new Crossings Ice Complex, a little more than a "stone's throw" away from the city centre.

I want to congratulate the Lethbridge Curling Club and the host committee for taking the "lead" on behalf of Lethbridge. I know they have been "hurrying harder" than usual to organize this event. Certainly no one could "skip" out on this. With Olympic berths and world titles on the line, we know it will be a "sweeping" success.

* * *

EGYPT

Mr. Omar Alhabra (Mississauga Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last December I stood in this House condemning a terrorist attack against a Coptic church in Cairo just before Christmas. It is with a heavy heart that I stand, once again, a week before Easter, to express my outrage at yet another attack. This time, two churches were targeted, in Tanta and in Alexandria. More than 40 people were killed and dozens were injured.

Yesterday, I, along with the Minister of Immigration, spoke with leaders in the Coptic community, offering our support. The Prime Minister issued a statement condemning this horrific attack saying, "Canada strongly condemns these cowardly acts of terrorism."

We offer our condolences to all Egyptians and express our solidarity with Coptic Christians in Egypt, Canada, and around the world. Far too often, religious groups around the world suffer persecution at the hands of violent extremists. We stand united in our efforts to stop those responsible and to fight against hate.

* * *

● (1410)

[Translation]

FRANCIS VERMETTE

M. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are fortunate to have extraordinary people in our communities who help others succeed.

Statements by Members

Today, I want to pay tribute to Francis Vermette who, for 10 years, has been the executive director of Maison des jeunes de Laval-Ouest. Mr. Vermette and his experienced youth workers help troubled youth become responsible citizens. They draw on the youths' strengths and abilities to help them stay in school and provide them with the tools and guidance they need to flourish.

Mr. Vermette himself succeeded with the help of mentors and now he is giving back. He is known for his humanity and perseverance. The House should recognize and thank him for his invaluable contribution to our society.

* * *

[English]

EDMONTON OILERS

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 11 years. It has been over a decade since the Edmonton Oilers have played a playoff hockey game. In fact, the last time we did, it was game seven of the Stanley Cup finals.

To set the stage, in Edmonton we like to be humble and modest, with the one exception being the Stanley Cup playoffs. I could stand here and list 99 or 97 reasons why we are the best team, the best Canadian team, and are anticipating a long spring of playoff hockey in Edmonton. However, I am sure I will have plenty of opportunity over the coming weeks to continue to highlight the success of our team in our brand new Rogers Place arena.

There is a real excitement across the city of champions, and fans are being encouraged to wear orange. Now, that is typically a colour more appropriate for my colleagues further down the aisle on this side of the House. However, in the spirit of seeing our Oilers go far in the Stanley Cup playoffs, many of us fans in the Conservative caucus may have to invest in orange for what is certain to be an exciting few weeks.

Bring on San Jose, and go Oilers.

* * *

ROB STEWART

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an extraordinary Canadian, Rob Stewart, who died tragically earlier this year.

A renowned filmmaker and passionate environmentalist, celebrated for his award-winning movie *Sharkwater*, Rob used his skill with a camera not only to bring us closer to misunderstood sharks but to draw our attention to the precarious state of our oceans and all marine life.

Hundreds gathered in Toronto to remember Rob and to celebrate his life. I offer my condolences to all of them, but especially to Brian and Sandy, his parents, who live in my riding, and his sister, Alexandra. I want to publicly thank consular affairs officials and the Canadian and American Coast Guards for responding to my request for assistance and for doing all they could to help.

Leonardo DiCaprio said of Rob: "The world has lost a man who dedicated his life to protecting oceans and sharks. He'll be missed."

The world and all its creatures are poorer for the loss.

PASSOVER

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tonight, Jewish people around the world will be celebrating the first night of Passover by sharing a seder dinner with family and friends.

[Translation]

I would like to wish everyone a happy Passover.

[English]

Last week I, along with the members from York Centre and Eglinton—Lawrence, helped to deliver Passover boxes that had been put together by the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada in Toronto.

[Translation]

These boxes contained kosher foods for families who could not afford them.

[English]

On Wednesday, members of the Danforth Jewish Circle, Holy Blossom Temple, Ve'ahavta, and Congregation Habonim, along with guests from Out of the Cold, will be joining for a community seder, where they will celebrate our collective freedom. Passover is a celebration of freedom from slavery.

● (1415)

[Translation]

It is an opportunity to recognize the contributions of our dynamic Jewish Canadian community.

[Member spoke in Hebrew]

* * *

[English]

EGYPT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday saw another horrific attack on Egypt's Christian community, which killed more than 40 worshippers and wounded many others. Yesterday was also the beginning of Holy Week, when Christians mark the death and the resurrection of Jesus.

Peaceful sacrificial martyrdom is at the centre of the Christian story. God himself gave his life for the redemption of his tormentors. Today's indigenous Middle Eastern Christian communities live out this peaceful martyrdom on a regular basis, knowing the risks while living their lives of love and commitment as a witness to the Christian Gospel, a witness which, despite the hostilities throughout the region and widespread indifference in the western world, has a powerful effect on all who pause to take notice.

While grieving the dead, we must also honour their heroic courage and reflect again this Easter on the mystery of the Christian cross; that is, on how the suffering of the innocent begets the redemption of the guilty.

To the Christians of Egypt, we mourn with them. We must do more to help them, and we must follow their example.

VAISAKHI

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, *Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh*.

Every year, in the heart of my riding of Surrey—Newton, the Vaisakhi and Khalsa Day parade organized by Dasmesh Darbar Gurdwara attracts more than a quarter of a million people, all participating in celebrating the birth of Khalsa.

I invite all members of Parliament and all Canadians to join us on April 22. It is the largest celebration in the world outside of India and is an amazing display of the diverse multicultural character of our country.

I am proud to be the host MP for such a joyous occasion, and I want to send my best wishes to all Canadians celebrating Vaisakhi and Khalsa Day.

[Member spoke in Punjabi language]

[English]

Happy Vaisakhi and happy Khalsa Day.

* * *

NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am appalled to see the continued neglect of northerners by the federal government and by the Province of Saskatchewan. Last month, both levels of government presented budgets that failed to address the daily challenges northerners face and that threaten their services.

The Sask Party's mass cuts of the Saskatchewan Transportation Company will further isolate northern communities. This will hurt the economy and the most vulnerable in our communities. Medical patients, businesses, and students depend on this vital service. Libraries will see their funding cut by 58%, putting at risk programs such as toddler story hour, summer reading camps, and creative writing clubs. Like the teenagers who stood proudly to support the Meadow Lake Library at the Drop Everything and Read Event, I invite all residents of Saskatchewan to take action, such as signing available petitions.

Let me be clear: sacrificing our essential services due to poor fiscal management by the Saskatchewan government is unacceptable.

* * *

[Translation]

JIM FLAHERTY

M. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, PCC): Mr. Speaker, three years ago today, we lost a great Canadian, the Hon. Jim Flaherty.

Born in Quebec and a lawyer by training, Mr. Flaherty worked for 20 years as a member of Parliament and minister both at Queen's Park and here in the House of Commons. When he was the finance minister, he made his mark by lowering taxes and creating the well-known TFSA.

Oral Questions

He also had to deal with the worst global financial crisis since the 1920s, but, under his watch, Canada recovered more quickly and emerged stronger than any other country in the world.

On top of all that, he was a devoted husband and father, and he was committed to helping sick children.

[English]

His sudden death was like a hit on Canada. In his eulogy, Prime Minister Harper said:

Jim was driven by conviction, of loyalty to the cause and of duty to the country.

He believed he had taken on a responsibility for all of our families, not just his own and he was prepared to make sacrifices ultimately, although he did not know it, to sacrifice himself.

That was the essence of the man: a strong Canadian, a strong family man, with strong values. We miss Jim.

* * *

● (1420)

EGYPT

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my heartfelt personal condolences to the Coptic Christian community in Canada on yesterday's horrific attacks on St. George's church and St. Mark's Cathedral in Egypt. These cowardly and senseless bombings struck those attending Palm Sunday services, marking the beginning of Holy Week.

The days leading up to Easter are the most important time for Christians around the world, when we contemplate rebirth and renewal and reflect on the values of peace and tolerance. Regrettably, Coptic Christians, as well as other indigenous religious minorities, continue to suffer persecution at the hands of violent extremists.

During Holy Week and throughout the year, we speak with one voice in our condemnation of violence and oppression and stand in solidarity with our Christian brothers and sisters in embracing the shared values of inclusion, diversity, and peace.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

JUSTICE

L'hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, PCC): Mr. Speaker, a man accused of murder was released last week because of the Jordan ruling. The Liberal government's much-touted new process is not working. I was part of a cabinet that made decisions based on the recommendations of a bench committee. Lawyers passed exams and qualified based on their skills, and judges were appointed. The government's system is not working. People are being released because there are not enough judges.

When will the government get it?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has taken significant steps, in an open and transparent process, to appoint superior court justices. We have appointed three justices in Quebec. Just to be clear, there are six vacancies in the province of Quebec, and we are working very hard to appoint judges in the very near future. The process we have instituted is a merit-based process to ensure diversity in the courts. I look forward to making those appointments in the near future.

* * *

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Those are just words, Mr. Speaker. It was exactly like that before. The Liberals are just trying to bring the population somewhere else.

[Translation]

We recently learned from the government's chief negotiator for softwood lumber that negotiations have waned since January.

Former Prime Minister Harper took care of business in two months with the Bush administration. Eighteen months on, negotiations have stalled. The negotiator herself said so. There has been no progress on this file because the government is utterly lacking in political leadership.

When will the government show political leadership?

L'hon. François-Philippe Champagne (ministre du Commerce international, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows full well that our government is standing up for our industry. The minister recently discussed this file with her provincial and territorial counterparts. My colleague is well aware that we are working with workers, industry players, and provincial partners.

We will continue to raise this matter with the United States, just as the Prime Minister of Canada has done with the U.S. president and as the minister has done with secretaries Tillerson and Ross. We want a good agreement for Canada, not just any agreement.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

L'hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, PCC): Mr. Speaker, the provinces will be forced to appoint provincial representatives. This shows how little they trust the federal government.

On another issue, last week the Minister of Foreign Affairs stated publicly that the chemical attacks in Syria raised serious concerns about the possibility of working with the Assad regime. That suggests that she was considering working with Assad. Today the Prime Minister is talking about a regime change. The Liberals are finally waking up. The Assad regime has been raising fears and posing a danger to its own people for quite some time now.

Whom are we to believe on this matter, the minister who wants to work with the Assad government or the Prime Minister who wants a regime change?

Their regime is not working, and no one knows who is running the show.

L'hon. François-Philippe Champagne (ministre du Commerce international, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague knows, the chemical weapons attack of last week is a war crime. As the Prime Minister said, Assad and his regime need to be held to account. Canada is a significant player in the region on the military, diplomatic, and humanitarian fronts. We are working very closely with our allies to protect the most vulnerable and hold the perpetrators to account.

We have committed \$1.6 billion to the region, and Canada has welcomed over 40,000 Syrian refugees. The people of Syria deserve a life free of violence.

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the position of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs on Syria and the Syrian regime has changed a number of times over the past few days. Today, the Prime Minister is openly talking about a regime change in Syria, which is different from what he said last week.

Canadians need to know that their government has a consistent and coherent position on this. Given the Prime Minister's statements today regarding a Syria that does not involve Bashar al-Assad, what action is he considering to depose the Assad regime?

• (1425)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague knows, last week's chemical weapons attack is a war crime. As the Prime Minister said, Assad and his regime need to be held to account. Canada is a significant player in the region on the military, diplomatic, and humanitarian fronts. We are working very closely with our allies to protect the most vulnerable and to hold the perpetrators to account. We have committed \$1.6 billion to the region, and Canada has welcomed over 40,000 Syrian refugees. The people of Syria deserve a life free of violence, and I am sure every member of this House would agree with that.

* * *

STANDING ORDERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, given the Prime Minister's statements today, we expect, as do all Canadians, a clearer answer in the days ahead.

I have a question for the Liberal House leader. This past weekend she said that she does not want the Conservatives to have a veto over the House rules. We agree. We think no one party should have a veto and be able to bully its way into changing the rules. I want to ask whether the House leader agrees that the same principle should apply to the Liberals, that no one party gets a veto but rather that we work by consensus. Please, no word salad; an actual answer would be very refreshing.

Oral Questions

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like nothing more than to see all members in this place working better together, having a conversation, a dialogue, and actually sharing their constructive feedback as to how to modernize this place. It is an important conversation to have. I will continue encouraging all members on all sides to have this important conversation.

* * *

JUSTICE

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is the responsibility of the justice minister to appoint judges in a timely manner. The Liberal government has failed in this responsibility. Almost every day we see another case of a serious crime thrown out because of delays. A 21-year-old woman was stabbed to death, but the case against her accused murderer was just thrown out, and he is now free. How many cases have been thrown out because of these unacceptable delays?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy again to stand up to speak about the open and transparent process that we have instituted for the appointment of superior court justices. In the time I have been minister, I have appointed 47 superior court justices, including 22 deputy justices. There are six vacancies in the province of Quebec, which accounts for about 3.6% of the judicial complement. I am working extremely hard to ensure that substantive candidates are appointed to the superior courts on an ongoing basis.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I encourage the member for Abbotsford and others not to interrupt when someone is speaking. They do not have the floor.

The hon. member for Outremont.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the question was this. How many cases have been thrown out in the time she has been Minister of Justice? She knows the answer, but she refuses to give it to Canadians.

[*Translation*]

The government continues to prosecute kids who smoke pot, but the guy charged with killing his wife is as free as a bird because the government did not appoint a judge to hear that case. That is negligence. That is incompetence, but most of all it is a danger to the public.

Why do we have these delays?

[*English*]

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to stand up. I assume that the question is speaking to the delays in court. I am very mindful of the Jordan decision that came out of the Supreme Court of Canada, and I am working toward having a meeting with my counterparts in the provinces and territories to discuss the delays in our courts. There is no one reason why there are delays in our courts, but the provinces, the territories, and I are working in a coordinated manner to ensure that we come up with solutions that have not been

come up with for decades. This is a commitment that I have made, and a commitment that my counterparts have made, and I look forward to reporting on the solutions that we are going to be bringing forward.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the justice minister does not get to blame the Supreme Court. She is responsible for the nominations, and she is responsible for the delay.

[*Translation*]

Not only is the minister not dealing with the problems in the criminal justice system, but our military justice system is totally obsolete. An important new book uncovers just how much the current system denies our soldiers basic rights such as the right to a jury trial.

Why are there so many delays in ensuring that those who defend our rights can have their rights respected?

• (1430)

[*English*]

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that this is a very important issue, and we recognize this. We want to make sure that our men and women get the justice they deserve and the appropriate process that is provided to them. That is why we will work with them to make sure that this process is followed properly.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): The industry minister, Mr. Speaker, really?

As Canada marks the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, we are all reminded of the sacred duty of those who often sacrifice their lives and health in the service of our country. Here at home, the Liberal government has taken no action to live up to its campaign commitment to restore a fair system of lifetime pensions for injured veterans. Does the government think that it is honourable to fight veterans in court here in Canada while the Prime Minister lauds their heroism in France?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is indeed committed to a pension-for-life option, and we committed in budget 2017 to announcing further details of that option later this year. We have listened to the stakeholders, who have asked for a solution that improves outcomes for veterans and their families. They also asked that we take the time to get it right, and we are doing exactly that.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

FINANCE

M. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, PCC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is falling down on the job by refusing to provide us with a clear game plan for returning to a balanced budget. Families do not run their households by constantly maxing their credit cards and paying only the interest on those credit cards. We do not see entrepreneurs run their companies on their lines of credit with no regard for making a profit. It makes no sense.

The Liberal government is testing Canadians' common sense.

My question is simple. In what year will Canada's budget be balanced?

L'hon. Bill Morneau (ministre des Finances, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a plan for improving our economy. Fortunately, it is starting to work. The unemployment rate was lower in the past year and a half.

Over the past year, 276 new jobs were created, 81% of which are full time. This is a very different situation for Canadian families. Our plan is working and it will improve the lives of families across the country.

* * *

INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

M. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, PCC): Mr. Speaker, those are interesting figures, but we cannot verify when they were released.

Last Friday, the Liberal government very proudly announced that we now have an interprovincial free trade agreement. They called it an historic agreement. I acknowledge that it is historic. It is an historic failure because it does not address what is important to Canadians. On many issues, it complicates the situation. Even worse, instead of helping the wine and beer industries, it just taxes them more, thanks to the Minister of Finance.

Why is the government refusing to free up the trade of beer and wine in Canada?

[English]

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was our government that had to play the leadership role in making sure that the liberalization of alcohol was part of the Canadian free trade agreement. This is a historic agreement that covers the entire economy from coast to coast to coast. All provinces and territories have signed on. This shows how we can work together and negotiate an agreement. Whether Liberal, Conservative, or NDP, we can all come together to grow the economy, reduce red tape to make sure we are more competitive, create good-quality jobs, and strengthen the middle class.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals like to think of themselves as free spirits, but when it came to Canada's free trade agreement, they did not free the beer. They did not free the grapes. They did not free the spirits. In fact, they did not really free anything at all.

The Canadian free trade agreement has more goods and services excluded than included. In fact, not only did the Liberals exclude beer, wine, and spirits, but in the budget they slapped a tax increase on them. It is an escalating tax that will increase their costs year after year, putting our craft brewers, distillers, and vineyards at risk.

Why did the Liberals fail on free trade? Why did they fail to free the beer?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we actually have an agreement with the provinces and territories. The Canadian free trade agreement is the most ambitious free trade agreement signed with the provinces and territories. It is an agreement that will open up the economy for small businesses so they can grow and scale up. It will reduce red tape for small businesses, which means it is good news for consumers. They will have more choice, availability, and better price points.

This is really about making sure that the market access far outweighs the exemptions. That is why this was supported by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Business Council of Canada, and small businesses across the country. This is good for the economy.

● (1435)

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this free trade agreement is not a success; it is a failure. It is not a free trade agreement at all. It did not eliminate interprovincial trade barriers and subsidies. In fact, the list of goods and services that are excluded is longer than the list of those that are included.

Canadians have a constitutional right to free trade. Section 121 clearly states that products produced in one province shall be traded freely into another. We need the Liberals to ask the Supreme Court for clarification on section 121.

Will the Liberals stop with the photo ops, stop with the participation trophy presentations, and do something to free the Canadian economy?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we got the job done. I know why the member opposite is frustrated. It is because the Conservatives could not sign a free trade agreement. We are working with the provinces and territories. Not only did we enhance the Canadian free trade agreement, but we also worked with them on health care and climate change.

We work with the provinces and territories to create more opportunities for the middle class, to grow the economy, and to help our small businesses grow and scale up so they can be more export-oriented and compete globally. This is about creating jobs. That is why, since we formed government, 321,000 jobs have been created in the economy. It is because we have a plan and it is working.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I visited SunTech, a green technology farm in Ottawa, which produces tomatoes for customers in Ottawa.

Oral Questions

In January, the farm paid \$6,000 in Liberal carbon taxes. Its Mexican competitors do not pay these taxes or Liberal electricity bills, so they get their tomatoes to Canadian grocers for a third of the price. That means more greenhouse gases from shipping the produce across the continent.

Why is the government raising taxes on green technology farms and sending our jobs to Mexico?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government understands that we need to put a price on what we do not want, which is pollution, to foster what we do want, which is clean energy innovation. It would be really good if the member opposite maybe learned some lessons from the Ontario Conservative leader. The Ontario Conservative—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I had no trouble hearing the question, but it is important to hear the answer too. I know members want to hear the answer.

The hon. Minister of Environment.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite may like to take some lessons from the Ontario Conservative leader, Patrick Brown. He said, “Climate change is a fact. It is a threat. It is man-made. We have to do something about it, and that...includes putting a price on carbon.”

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is so concerned about climate change, why is she so pleased to have emissions of greenhouse gases resulting from transporting produce from Mexico to Ottawa rather than from Ottawa to Ottawa? That is exactly the effect of her new carbon tax. She says that she wants more innovation. SunTech Greenhouses is innovative. It makes tomatoes in Canada in January. That is innovation.

Why is the government so determined to tax our farmers and our innovators out of jobs?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate all our job creators in our country. We actually have seen strong support from the private sector to put a price on pollution. Let me be perfectly clear. Every dollar that comes from putting a price on carbon pollution to the federal government goes directly back to the provinces. Eighty per cent of Canadians live in a jurisdiction where there is a price on pollution.

We appreciate the actions the provinces are taking. We are moving forward on climate change. I wish the party opposite would join us.

* * *

[Translation]

MARIJUANA

Mme Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NPD): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals say they want to protect young people while we wait for marijuana to be legalized, but the government is investing less than \$2 million a year in prevention and there is no new money for scientific research.

The Liberals say they want to fight organized crime, but they are holding up the decriminalization of marijuana and clogging our courts. Thousands of youth will have a criminal record and have difficulty travelling or finding a job for the rest of their lives because of the Liberals' failure to take action.

Will the government stop spouting rhetoric and explain why it still does not have a transition plan?

• (1440)

[English]

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have stated, our government is committed to the legalization of cannabis, strict regulation, and restricting access in order to keep it out of the hands of kids and the proceeds out of the hands of criminals. Simply decriminalizing right now would not achieve those objectives. Until cannabis is legal in the country, the law remains the law and should be obeyed.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this weekend, an Alberta woman was arrested for having a single marijuana plant. She now faces charges of possession and production, despite task force recommendations that Canadians be allowed up to four plants.

Police resources are strained, yet the RCMP's mandate is still to raid homes for a single marijuana plant, and Canadians, especially young Canadians, continue to face charges for something that will soon be legal.

Does the minister honestly think that handing out possession charges is the best use of our precious police resources?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have stated, our government is committed to the legalization of cannabis, with strict regulation and restricting access. This is a complex area and we are looking forward to introducing legislation in the near future in order to keep it out of the hands of children and the proceeds out of the hands of criminals.

As the member opposite has alluded to, simply decriminalizing will not solve or answer these challenges. Until cannabis is legalized —

Mr. David Christopherson: The first step. You know it's just the first step.

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, the law is the law and should be obeyed.

The Speaker: Order, please. I would ask the member for Hamilton Centre to restrain himself.

The hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston.

*Oral Questions***STANDING ORDERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS**

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on March 9, the Minister of Democratic Institutions asked the PROC committee to report to her by June with proposed Canada Elections Act changes. However, a day later, the Liberals ordered the committee to report back by the same deadline with omnibus changes to the Standing Orders. Lest we think we are allowed on the committee to discuss anything else, last week the Liberals explicitly stated that even matters of privilege may not be dealt with until the opposition did what it was told.

Given this change to the government's priorities, will the minister commit to not changing the Elections Act until the committee has produced the report she herself requested?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank all members of PROC for the work they have done so far on the CEO recommendations to the electoral act. I look forward to continuing the good work that I have with them so far so we can all work together to ensure we make our elections in Canada as fair, as equitable, and as accessible as possible.

[Translation]

M. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, PCC): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons has finally started talking, but only to the media. During an interview, she said that she did not want to give the Conservatives a veto over the Liberal Party's campaign commitments.

The government does not need the opposition's help to break its promises. It can do that all on its own. The Liberals promised to run a small deficit of \$10 billion. That is a broken promise. They also promised to reform the voting system. That is another broken promise.

When will the leader of the government admit that the unanimous consent of all members is needed to change the rules?

L'hon. Bardish Chagger (leader du gouvernement à la Chambre des communes et ministre de la Petite Entreprise et du Tourisme, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said a number of times, I want all members to share their ideas and for us to have a discussion. I know that we can modernize the way we work in the House. I encourage all members to participate in the conversation.

[English]

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government House leader needs to check her definition of conversation and discussion. She states that this is just a conversation, but the last time I checked, this conversation involved the Liberals trying to ram through substantive changes in an arbitrary time frame that would simply remove Liberal accountability to Canadians by limiting debate and giving the Liberals unprecedented control over the House of Commons and its committees.

Will the Liberals stop spinning this as a conversation and call it what it really is: an affront to Canadian democracy?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, let us talk about some of the ideas that are in the discussion paper. There was a substantial debate in this place in which all members of Parliament were able to

participate. This work was sent to PROC. The discussion paper asks members to broaden the scope of that committee.

Let us look at some of these ideas. Some of the ideas that we shared with Canadians during the campaign were a direct result of the Harper government's approach. We know that approach did not work. We know we need to modernize this place. Let us have a substantial conversation. Let us have some constructive feedback.

● (1445)

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the government House leader said that she wanted all members of Parliament to be able to come together and provide some constructive feedback. Well, on this side of the House, all the opposition parties already have come together to stand firmly against this Liberal power grab. These are substantial changes to the House of Commons in the way it functions, which will see the Liberals be less accountable to the very people they are supposed to be accountable to, Canadians.

If this is just a discussion as the minister tries to spin it as, why are the Liberals trying to ram this through without the consent of all political parties?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, under the Harper government, there was an abuse of omnibus legislation. The previous government decided to prorogue Parliament rather than face a confidence vote.

Let us have a conversation to ensure every member of Parliament is able to serve Canadians, be the voice he or she was elected to be. We committed to Canadians that their voices would be heard in this place, something we did not see under 10 years of Stephen Harper and his government.

Let us represent the voices of Canadians. Let us have the tough conversation we need to have.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for decades, some Canadians have found themselves to be stateless due to a number of arcane laws. People could lose their citizenships just because they turned 28. Veterans who fought at Vimy Ridge are deemed not to be Canadians after all. A brother and sister in Syria, with a Canadian father, applied for Canadian citizenship under the same act and received opposite decisions. Why? Simply because the brother was born before 1977. That is absurd and illogical.

When will the minister bring in legislation to fix the lost Canadians problems once and for all?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we value all of the ways in which newcomers enrich our society.

Oral Questions

We are committed to making sure, with Bill C-6, that we further remove obstacles that were put in place by the previous government for permanent residents to obtain their citizenship. We are moving forward to make sure that we enhance the ability of permanent residents to access citizenship.

We are also aware, under Bill C-6, of measures to further strengthen the integrity of the citizenship program. We want to maintain the value of Canadian citizenship and prevent fraud and misrepresentation.

* * *

[Translation]

PRIVACY

M. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a number of active cellphone data tracker devices were recently discovered in downtown Ottawa, and in the wake of these revelations, the minister admitted that the RCMP and CSIS use this type of equipment.

He suggested that the future national security committee consider the issue, but that is not enough.

Will the minister acknowledge how urgent it is to take action, modernize our laws, and implement the appropriate and necessary legislative measures to govern the use of this type of equipment?

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the law is there with respect to the use of these devices. The agencies that purport to use them need to fall within the four corners of the law, including the appropriate judicial oversight and authorization.

At the same time, what I was saying in the quote referred to by the hon. gentleman was that parliamentarians would soon have a new opportunity to provide oversight and review with the imminent passage of Bill C-22.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

M. Michel Picard (Montarville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, numerous studies have shown that internal trade represents about a fifth of Canada's GDP and close to 40% of the provinces' and territories' exports.

The agreement on internal trade, which was recently scrapped, was a useless barrier to free trade between members of our federation.

On Friday, we learned that our government and the provinces and territories had struck a new deal to facilitate trade.

Can the minister tell us more about this new agreement?

L'hon. Navdeep Bains (ministre de l'Innovation, des Sciences et du Développement économique, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Montarville for his question.

[English]

The Canadian free trade agreement is the most comprehensive and ambitious agreement that we have signed with the provinces and territories, because it covers the entire economy. It includes all the provinces and territories as well. This agreement will come into force on July 1, as we celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary.

Again, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my provincial and territorial counterparts from the Liberal, Conservative, and NDP side who put the economy first.

[Translation]

This is good news for our economy. It is good news for the middle class.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals initially made no mention of Russian complicity in Syria's war crimes, not even of Russia breaking its guarantee to remove chemical weapons from Syria.

Today, the Prime Minister said that he was open to possible new sanctions against Russia. Last week, the foreign affairs committee unanimously recommended expansion of Canada's sanctions regimes to apply to gross violators of human rights.

How long will the Liberals delay in finally imposing meaningful new sanctions on Russia?

● (1450)

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague will know that the report was tabled at the end of last week. We will take our time to review the report, including the extra sanctions and measures that were included in it.

The Prime Minister has also stated clearly that Russia and Iran must be held morally responsible for what happened last week, the chemical weapons attacks in Syria, which were war crimes.

Our position against Russia remains firm and clear. We were the party that increased sanctions against Russia, including supporting the sanctions of the previous government.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have been dragging their feet on the Magnitsky sanctions for a year and a half.

The Prime Minister's ever-shifting position on the Syrian conflict goes back for years. In 2015, he said that the Conservative government's desire to expand Canada's presence into Syria was a worrying trend. That was when Canada's CF-18s were flying targeted missions against Daesh in Syria.

Now the Prime Minister seems to be calling for a full-scale regime change in Syria. What exactly is he proposing? What will he think tomorrow?

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, I reiterate that the chemical weapons attack last week was a war crime.

Oral Questions

Canada has been, and remains, a significant player in the region, both militarily, diplomatically, and on the humanitarian front. We have committed \$1.6 billion to the region, to be there to help the most vulnerable who are in that part of the world. We continue to work closely with international partners.

Last week the minister participated in the Brussels conference on the future of Syria. Today she has gathered in Italy with other G7 foreign ministers. We have welcomed over 40,000 Syrian refugees and continue to stand up for their brothers and sisters in that war-torn part of the world.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

M. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, PCC): Mr. Speaker, since Phoenix was introduced in February 2016, public servants from across the country and their families have been going through some very difficult times.

Last week the Minister of Public Services and Procurement shockingly stated that she cannot reverse the decisions made by her deputy minister, specifically the decision regarding the \$5 million in bonuses granted to department officials.

Considering statements like that, we might as well not have ministers.

When will this government finally start governing, show some leadership, and reverse the decision to grant bonuses to officials involved with Phoenix?

M. Steven MacKinnon (secrétaire parlementaire de la ministre des Services publics et de l'Approvisionnement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member is well aware, resolving these problems, which we inherited from the previous government, is our top priority.

He also knows that no bonuses were paid to the senior executives directly involved in the Phoenix pay system. We continue to put the necessary resources towards resolving the problem. We have been given assurances that the deputy minister has checked each performance evaluation, and people are getting the bonuses they deserve.

[English]

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary is new to this file, so I will fill him in on something. Your government was responsible for starting Phoenix. Your government is—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Edmonton West knows he has to address his comments through the Chair. I would ask him to do so.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: It was their government, Mr. Speaker. Then the minister paid out \$5 million in bonuses to the officials who implemented the disastrous Phoenix pay program.

Add that to hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Prime Minister's trip to a billionaire's island and tens of millions paid to the

executives of Bombardier. It is clear the Liberals are out of touch with the real middle class in Canada.

With so many outstanding pay issues, bungled T4s, and endless phone queues, why did the minister pay \$5 million in performance bonuses to her accomplices in the Liberal Phoenix pay fiasco?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be the first to applaud our non-partisan, competent, highly motivated public service in this country.

Let me also say that resolving the pay problems with Phoenix is an ongoing priority. No bonuses were paid to the senior executives involved in the Phoenix pay system.

The Auditor General is now investigating the very origin, something which the member across may wish to be concerned about, of the Phoenix pay system. We have been assured that each public servant has been evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

* * *

• (1455)

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week I attended the Council of Forest Industries' convention in Vancouver and I heard concerns about the softwood lumber negotiations. Canada's chief negotiator said that this issue does not appear to be front of mind for the new U.S. administration. We also heard that Canada needs to engage American businesses that would be hurt by higher lumber prices to press their government for fair treatment of the Canadian forest industry.

What is the minister doing to ensure that the Canadian forest industry is more front of mind for the Americans?

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. colleague across the way knows that this government is vigorously defending the interests of our industry, and that just last month the minister had a call with her provincial and territorial counterparts on that file. The government remains very much engaged in that matter.

We continue to raise this important issue with our U.S. counterparts, as the Prime Minister did in Washington and with the President over the phone, and as the Minister of Foreign Affairs has done with both Secretary Tillerson and Secretary Ross.

We are looking for a good deal, not just any deal.

* * *

HOUSING

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a new report by the B.C. office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives studying poverty and inequity among British Columbia's seniors offers us a daunting portrait of the situation on the ground. The report shows that 42% of B.C. seniors are currently experiencing core housing needs.

Oral Questions

With no housing funding until after the next election, and report after report demonstrating a crying need for support now, how can the Minister of Finance tell Canadian seniors that housing is just not available?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful for this opportunity to talk about the importance of looking after the welfare and well-being of our seniors.

Last year we brought back the age of eligibility for old age security to 65 years, which will prevent 100,000 vulnerable seniors from falling into severe poverty.

Last year we also reached a historic agreement with all provinces and territories which will take 300,000 vulnerable seniors out of income insecurity over the next year.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, charges against a Quebec man accused of murdering his wife were thrown out of court due to delay.

For months the Minister of Justice has been aware of the urgent need to fill judicial vacancies to prevent more cases from being thrown out of court, and for months the minister has abdicated her responsibility to fill judicial vacancies in a timely manner.

How many more accused killers will walk free before the minister starts doing her job?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has taken significant steps to move forward with the new judicial appointments process that is open, that is transparent, that assures diversity on the bench.

Since I have been Minister of Justice, I have appointed 47 superior court justices and 22 deputy judges, 17 of whom are from the hon. member's province of Alberta. We are continuing to move forward with appointments. I will be making announcements in the near future.

With respect to the province of Quebec, there are six judicial vacancies. I will be moving forward with filling those, as well.

[*Translation*]

M. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, PCC): Mr. Speaker, a Quebec network of women's shelters condemned the fact that a Montreal man accused of killing his wife was released because of unacceptable court delays.

Premier Couillard and Minister Vallée are appealing to the federal Liberals to take urgent action to address their failure to appoint judges to fix this problem.

How many other individuals who have committed crimes against women will walk free before the self-styled feminist Prime Minister decides to take action and overhaul his worthless selection and appointment process?

[*English*]

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, delays in the justice system are not new. They existed under the previous government, which for 10 years failed to do anything about it. I am incredibly proud of the—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Members of all parties usually can sit through question period.

[*Translation*]

I urge the hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix to listen.

[*English*]

Hon. members in all parties are usually able to sit through question period without reacting to what they hear. I ask others to do the same.

The hon. Minister of Justice has 20 seconds.

• (1500)

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, I am incredibly proud of the new judicial appointments process that we have instituted. I will continue, on a regular basis, to appoint superior court justices.

Again, with respect to this question of delay, there is no one simple solution. That is why I am continuing to work with my counterparts in the provinces and territories, including Quebec. I am very much looking forward to having a meeting among the attorneys general in the country at the end of this month.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, instead of patting herself on the back, the minister should be ashamed of herself.

There are nearly 60 judicial vacancies across Canada. Since coming to office, the minister has appointed only three judges in the province of Quebec, leaving multiple vacancies. Meanwhile, more than 800 criminal cases in the province of Quebec are at risk of being thrown out of court.

If the minister will not do her job, then will she get out of the way so that someone else can?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the job our government is doing in instituting a new judicial appointments process.

I have appointed 47 justices to the superior courts in this country, as well as 22 deputy judges.

In the province of Quebec, I am working very closely with the chief justices, as well as the Attorney General, to ensure that we collectively address delays which are not simply by way of vacancies on the benches.

I will continue to make announcements. I look forward to filling the six vacancies, which is a 3.6% vacancy rate, in the province of Quebec.

*Oral Questions***EMPLOYMENT**

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many communities across Canada are home to some of the most highly skilled newcomers, like many of the residents in Brampton South. However, in Canada, many highly skilled newcomers face barriers that limit their employment opportunities and integration into the Canadian economy.

Would the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship please give this House an update on how budget 2017 supports newcomers as they go through their foreign credential process?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Brampton South for being a strong voice for newcomers.

As part of budget 2017, our government is investing \$27.5 million over the next five years, and \$5.5 million ongoing after that, to make sure that we have a targeted employment strategy for newcomers. This includes pilot programs to further assist newcomers as they access the Canadian labour market. It includes loans to cover the high cost of accessing licensing and credential recognition through that—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, desperate for new revenues, the Liberals have tripled the amount of taxes that seasonal campgrounds have to pay. Due to this tax hike, the Meadowlark Community Recreational Co-op, in Brandon, which is owned by the adjoining trailer park residents, may be forced out of business. The campground profits will be eaten up by the Liberal government's taxes, and the homes of the residents are now threatened.

Will the Liberals reverse this tax hike so the Meadowlark campground owners will not have to sell their property and lose their homes?

[*Translation*]

L'hon. Diane Lebouthillier (ministre du Revenu national, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that Canadians pay their fair share of taxes.

With respect to the small business tax deduction, I want to tell my colleague that we have not changed the tax rules. I would also like to remind my colleague opposite that when his party was in power consultations were held with parties from that sector and the rules were not changed.

* * *

CANADIAN HERITAGE

M. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NPD): Mr. Speaker, seldom has the history of our country been talked about so much than since the debut of the history series *Canada: The Story of Us*. From the very first episode, everyone has been angry.

English-speaking actors are portraying French settlers with no acknowledgement of the expulsion of Acadians; there is no mention

of Port Royal; and above all, life for the first nations at that time has been overlooked. It is a bad start to the Canada 150 celebrations.

Does the Prime Minister's introduction to the series mean that he condones the omissions of this history series?

M. Sean Casey (secrétaire parlementaire de la ministre du Patrimoine canadien, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the important contribution of Acadians, francophones, and indigenous peoples to our history.

We also recognize that CBC/Radio-Canada is an independent crown corporation and that it would not be appropriate to comment on the content of the series given that we have to ensure its independence. We invite people to address those important concerns to CBC/Radio-Canada.

* * *

● (1505)

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. T.J. Harvey (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on March 12, the Royal Canadian Navy vessel, HMCS *Saskatoon*, was involved in an international anti-drug-trafficking mission. HMCS *Saskatoon* helped the United States Coast Guard seize over 600 kilograms of cocaine in international waters off the coast of Central America. We know that illicit trafficking, organized crime, and corruption are all connected. Transnational criminal organizations cause enormous harm all around the world.

Could the Minister of National Defence inform the House of the CAF's positive contribution to multinational efforts to disrupt illicit trafficking operations at sea?

[*Translation*]

M. Jean Rioux (secrétaire parlementaire du ministre de la Défense nationale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

We are very proud of the work of the members of the Canadian Armed Forces under this joint operation. The Canadian Armed Forces have been contributing to Operation Caribbe for 11 years now by helping to stop international drug trafficking in the Caribbean Sea and off the coast of Central America.

By preventing the flow of illegal drugs and prohibiting illegal access to the sea, our men and women in uniform are contributing to blocking a significant source of income for organized crime and ensuring everyone's safety on the continent.

* * *

[*English*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals claim that all of our diplomatic missions are speaking about human rights.

Oral Questions

Our ambassador in Burma has made a number of recent visits to Rakhine, but public comments actually support the Burmese government's campaign of misinformation. A Facebook post from the embassy says that our ambassador "visited communities displaced by inter-communal violence". People are not being displaced by inter-communal violence; it is a state-run campaign of ethnic cleansing. Why are the Liberals saying one thing about human rights in this House, but nothing at all abroad?

Mr. Matt DeCourcey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my friend across the way will know that we are seized of the situation in Myanmar as it relates to the Rohingyas, and that human rights is a top priority in all our relations internationally. Recently, the minister spoke with the UN special rapporteur on the situation of the Rohingyas, and recently our Parliamentary Secretary for Consular Affairs, my colleague, met with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Our political will on this matter is clear. We strongly support the international fact-finding mission led by the UN Human Rights Council. The promotion and protection of religious minorities is a priority for us.

* * *

[Translation]

JUSTICE

M. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in light of the Jordan decision, the Parti Québécois, the official opposition at the National Assembly, called on the Government of Quebec to use the notwithstanding clause.

They are considering using the notwithstanding clause because Ottawa has been completely negligent. We are on a slippery slope. Trust in the justice system is vital.

Does the Minister of Justice realize that by failing to appoint a full roster of superior court justices, criminals could get away with their crimes?

[English]

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand to talk again about the judicial appointments process that we have instituted. I am very happy to have appointed 47 justices to the superior courts, and 22 deputy justices.

My friend across the way speaks about vacancies in the province of Quebec. There are six vacancies in the province of Quebec. I am working very closely with the chief justices and certainly my counterpart to ensure that these vacancies are filled. I am also very pleased that budget 2017 identified 28 new positions for judicial appointments.

[Translation]

M. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Fédération des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes is concerned that the Jordan decision will allow murderers to go free. There is even talk of stays of proceedings in rape cases.

Public safety is at risk and, perhaps worse still, the bond of trust between the justice system and Canadians has been broken. This

government and its gross and dangerous negligence are to blame. We know that there is a meeting at the end of the month. The Liberals do not need to tell us again.

What is the minister waiting for? When will she appoint judges to the 14 vacant positions in Quebec? It is urgent.

[English]

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to confirm, there are six vacancies in the province of Quebec, and I am working very hard to ensure that those vacancies are filled in the near future.

In terms of court delays, there is no one simple solution with respect to court delays. That is why I am working with my counterparts in the provinces and territories. We will be meeting at the end of the month to talk about what we can do collectively and in coordination to address delays. We are all committed to ensuring that we address this issue in the near future.

* * *

● (1510)

[Translation]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

M. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Committee on Public Finance of the National Assembly of Quebec made 38 recommendations in order to put an end to the use of tax havens. Here in Ottawa, the Minister of National Revenue would have us believe that her government is working to combat tax evasion when in reality it is giving contracts to tax evading experts KPMG.

How can the Minister of National Revenue justify the fact that KPMG is still working for the government, despite the Isle of Man scandal?

For goodness' sake, are we to understand that the Liberals do not think tax fraud is a problem?

L'hon. Diane Lebouthillier (ministre du Revenu national, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is strongly committed to combatting tax evasion and avoidance. In budget 2016, our government allocated \$444 million to combatting tax evasion. In this year's budget, we allocated \$524 million. We recovered \$13 billion last year, including \$1 billion through the Canada Revenue Agency's voluntary disclosures program.

Let me be clear. Tax evaders can no longer hide. We take this issue very seriously, and those who choose to participate in this type of scheme will suffer the consequences.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to two petitions.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mme Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley-Est, 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 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association respecting its participation in the executive committee meeting held in London, United Kingdom, from April 27 to 30, 2016.

* * *

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table the committee's report, entitled the "The Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement: Benefits and Challenges for Canadians". Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

• (1515)

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the chair of the committee has tabled this report today. It is a good report. The general consensus—with a few exceptions, of course—is that this is a gold standard trade agreement. I would be remiss if I did not give a lot of the credit to my friend and colleague the member for Abbotsford, and of course Kirsten Hillmont was the chief negotiator and did a fantastic job.

What is going on now, with the U.S. withdrawing, is there is a bit of a limbo. There is a period when no one knows what is going to happen. However, there is a tremendous, growing need for this to be done. Japan is leading that, as well as Australia and New Zealand, and they are looking for some leadership from Canada, the leadership they got used to when we were negotiating this deal.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Robert Nault (Kenora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, entitled "The Day After: Planning for the Protection of Religious and Ethnic Minorities in a Post-Daesh Iraq".

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

CANADIAN SEARCH AND RESCUE VOLUNTARY SERVICE MEDAL ACT

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-347, An Act providing for the award of a Canadian Search and Rescue Voluntary Service Medal.

He said: Mr. Speaker, my bill seeks to establish an honorary award medal to be given out to search and rescue volunteers in Canada. There are 300 teams and over 12,000 volunteers across Canada. These brave men and women put in endless hours of training and spend even more time on search and rescue missions, often under the harshest of conditions. With all this sacrifice and dedication, there should be recognition of these courageous men and women.

I thank the member for Cariboo—Prince George for seconding and supporting the bill. I give my complete and unreserved support for the establishment of a volunteer search and rescue service medal and urge my fellow members of Parliament here in Ottawa to support this important and meaningful initiative to recognize our search and rescue volunteers.

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

* * *

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ACT

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-348, An Act to amend the Department of Employment and Social Development Act (persons with disabilities).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be presenting my first private member's bill today, which is an important one for persons living with disabilities. I intend for the bill to streamline the process by which persons living with disabilities access the federal programs they are entitled to.

The bill came about through the many conversations I have had with my constituents and stakeholders across the country, who have shared with me how burdensome it is and how punitive it can seem to access federal funding in an individual way and have to prove each time that they do have a disability. The bill would make it less onerous and less burdensome for people living with disabilities.

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

* * *

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

M. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-349, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other acts (criminal organization).

He said: Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, a bill that seeks to amend the Criminal Code to authorize the Minister of Public Safety to establish a list of criminal organizations.

Routine Proceedings

In 2001, the government implemented such a list for terrorist organizations. However, as we speak, criminals are still able to legally organize themselves and do business in public. That is why the bill that we are introducing also makes it an offence for anyone to wear the emblem of a listed entity in order to establish his or her membership in a criminal organization.

It is inconceivable to us that, in 2017, an individual can proudly wear the colours of a criminal organization as an intimidation tactic. I know that it will take courage for the members of the House to pass this bill, but we have here an opportunity to take an important step in the fight against organized crime. I am counting on all of us.

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

* * *

● (1520)

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-350, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (trafficking and transplanting human organs and other body parts).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reintroduce a bill proposed by the Hon. Irwin Cotler. I also want to recognize the member for Etobicoke Centre, who is seconding this bill. I know he has had previous legislation proposed at previous Parliaments along these same lines.

This bill seeks to combat the scourge of forced organ harvesting, when organs are taken from people against their will, often gruesomely and without anaesthetic and while a person is still living, and often when the individual's only so-called crime is engaging in a particular religious or spiritual practice.

As the government seeks to deepen Canada's relationship with China, this bill is needed now more than ever. This bill would make it a criminal offence for a person to acquire an organ that they know or ought to know was acquired without consent.

It introduces the appropriate reporting mechanisms to ensure that there is always consent given. It further addresses the inadmissibility to Canada of those involved in forced organ harvesting. This bill is well designed to ensure that Canadians can still go abroad to receive organs, provided they take the simple steps required to ensure consent and an absence of exploitation.

This bill addresses a clear case in which the law has not kept up with the realities on the ground. This issue has been repeatedly raised here, but never fully addressed. Let us be the Parliament that gets it done.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from some

British Columbia citizens who are concerned about the mountain caribou population in the Clearwater Valley of British Columbia.

The southern mountain population of caribou is listed as endangered under the federal Species at Risk Act, and provincial crown lands in the Clearwater Valley are designated as critical habitat. The B.C. government continues to allow logging in this critical habitat.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada for a protection order to halt logging in the federally designated critical habitat for mountain caribou in the Clearwater Valley adjacent to Wells Gray Provincial Park.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. John Oliver (Oakville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today signed by hundreds of Canadians requesting that the Government of Canada spell veteran with a capital “V” in official government communications.

Ms. Kristin Courtney, whose father fought in the Normandy invasion and was on Juno Beach on D-Day, is the driving force behind this petition.

To honour and recognize those who went through military service and who have made and continue to make sacrifices for our country, the petition asks the government to always capitalize the word “Veteran” in official government communications. I fully support this petition.

PUBLIC SERVICE PENSIONS

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by hundreds of members of my community.

The petitioners are concerned with the Public Service Superannuation Act, and in particular how the Government of Canada is applying the act. It is deducting the Canadian pension plan disability benefit dollar for dollar from these pensions that people have earned through their work for the federal government.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to cease deducting CPP disability benefits from the PSSA income immediately and retroactively. The petitioners direct the PSSA to refund the monies that have been deducted.

● (1525)

TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to present three petitions. The first petition is from residents primarily of the Niagara Falls area.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners are calling on the House to take action to ban all flavours from being added to cigarette products. We have discussed this for many years in this place. Clearly, the use of additives that are designed to encourage young people to use cigarettes are against everything that we stand for in public health policy.

I hope that the House will accept this petition.

SHARK FINNING

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): The second petition is from residents of my constituency, including Pender Island, Mayne Island, Salt Spring Island, throughout the Gulf Islands.

The petitioners are calling on the government to ban the transport of shark fin products. Shark finning is banned within Canadian waters, but the importation of these products continues to contribute to the extinction of sharks globally.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the last petition I wish to present is signed by many residents throughout the Victoria area and Saanich—Gulf Islands, as well as a number of residents from Quebec.

The petitioners are calling on the government to label products if they contain genetically modified organisms. The petitioners allege that consumers have a right to know what they are buying. They are calling on the government to, at long last, take action.

[Translation]

The petition calls for the labelling of genetically modified organisms, especially those from Canada.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 887, 891 to 893, and 895.

[Text]

Question No. 887—**Mr. Brad Trost:**

With regard to the government's answer to Order Paper Question 7 in the House of Commons on Friday, May 12, 2006: (a) how many individuals are there in Canada who may be potentially considered too dangerous to own firearms; (b) of the individuals in (a), how many are (i) wanted for a violent criminal offence, (ii) persons of interest to police (iii) violent persons, (iv) known sex offenders, (v) known prolific repeat, dangerous, or high risk offenders, (vi) known persons who have been observed to have behaviours that may be dangerous to public safety; (c) how many individuals have been charged with a violent criminal offence; (d) how many individuals are awaiting court action and disposition or will be released on conditions for a violent criminal offence, including (i) on probation or parole, (ii) released on street enforceable conditions, (iii) subject to a restraining order or peace bond; (e) how many individuals have been prohibited or refused firearms; (f) how many individuals have been prohibited from hunting; (g) how many individuals have been previously deported; (h) how many individuals have been subject to a protective order in any province in Canada; (i) how many individuals have been refused a firearms license or have had one revoked; and (j) how many individuals have been flagged in the Firearms Interest Police database?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a) and

(b), the RCMP does not keep a list of individuals who are “potentially considered” to be too dangerous to own firearms.

With regard to (c), (d), (g), (h), and (j), the collection of this information for statistical or reporting purposes does not fall under the mandate of the RCMP.

The Canadian Police Information Centre is an integrated, automated central repository of operational law enforcement information that allows for immediate storage and retrieval of current information about particular offences and individuals. It does not function as a tool for statistical analysis.

From January 1, 2001, when the Firearms Act required individuals to hold a licence to possess and acquire firearms, until January 31, 2017, 12,609 applications for a firearms licence were refused and 35,300 firearms licences were revoked.

Question No. 891—**Mr. Pat Kelly:**

With regard to travel and relocation for public service employees and parliamentary staff, and the independent review recently ordered by the President of the Treasury Board: (a) has any policy been created since September 23, 2016, concerning reimbursement for relocation expenses; (b) what criteria are used to calculate reasonable expenses; (c) what criteria are used to define reasonable expenses; (d) what new requirements must an employee meet in order to receive reimbursement for reasonable expenses; (e) what is the cap, if any, on reimbursable reasonable expenses; (f) which departments, if any, other than the Treasury Board, were involved in creating this new policy; (g) has the policy in (f) been finalized; and (h) if the answer in (g) is negative, when will it be finalized?

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), (g), and (h), travel and relocation benefits for employees in the core public service are covered by the national joint council travel directive and the national joint council relocation directive respectively. The cyclical review process has begun for the negotiation of the national joint council relocation directive. Parties are to exchange proposals on June 1, 2017. The Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada is not responsible for policies governing parliamentary employees—e.g., employees of the House of Commons and the Senate.

With respect to the exempt staff who work in ministers' offices, their terms and conditions of employment are governed by the policies for ministers' offices. As part of a recent commitment by the Government of Canada, a review of relocation benefits provided to exempt staff is currently under way. This review is expected to be completed by summer 2017.

With regard to (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f), it would be premature to answer, as the review is ongoing.

Question No. 892—**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:**

With regard to Canada's Innovation Agenda as published by the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and “innovation leaders” titled “Innovation for a Better Canada: What We Heard”: (a) what was the total cost incurred by the government for the production of this document; (b) what are the details of the compensation for each of the ten innovation leaders; and (c) what are the costs of the consultation process with the innovation leaders broken down by (i) travel, (ii) hospitality, (iii) meals and incidentals, (iv) lodging, (v) per diems, (vi) rental space for stake holder consultations?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada believes that Canada needs a bold, coordinated strategy on innovation that delivers results for all Canadians. As such, an engagement process that reflects the commitment to mobilize all Canadians to action and to foster innovation as a Canadian value was launched.

The government invited all Canadians to share their ideas on cultivating a confident nation of innovators—one that is globally competitive in promoting research, accelerating business growth, and propelling entrepreneurs from the commercialization and start-up stages to international success.

The government also brought together 10 Innovation leaders from all walks of life. These are experienced and distinguished individuals who are acknowledged as innovators in their own right. They represented the private sector, universities and colleges, the not-for-profit sector, social entrepreneurs, and businesses owned and operated by indigenous people.

Over the summer, these Innovation leaders hosted 28 round tables across Canada with key stakeholders, as well as in Boston, United States, and Cambridge, United Kingdom, on the six action areas. These round tables brought stakeholders from a range of backgrounds, including academia, industry associations, not-for-profits, indigenous groups, youth organizations, and other levels of government.

With regard to Canada's innovation agenda as published by the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and innovation leaders, entitled "Innovation for a Better Canada: What We Heard", the response is as follows. With regard to (a), the document was developed internally by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. The total cost of \$1,990.21 incurred by the government was for its translation.

With regard to (b), the 10 innovation leaders were not compensated for this work; however, they were reimbursed for certain expenses.

With regard to (c)(i), the travel cost for the 10 innovation leaders for 26 round tables across Canada and one round table in the United States was \$10,613.99. There was one round table in the United Kingdom, but no cost was incurred.

With regard to (c)(ii), the hospitality cost for 28 round tables was \$10,391.64.

With regard to (c)(iii), the meals and transportation cost for the 10 innovation leaders for 28 round tables was \$306.22.

With regard to (c)(iv), the lodging cost for the 10 innovation leaders for 28 round tables was \$2,933.72.

With regard to (c)(v), no additional per diems were provided to the 10 innovation leaders.

With regard to (c)(vi), the total cost for rental spaces for 28 round tables was \$6,185.35.

Question No. 893—**Mr. Ben Lobb :**

With regard to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development's approval of the takeover of Retirement Concepts by Cedar Tree Investments Canada: has the government received any assurances that either Cedar Tree Investments Canada or its parent company, Anbang Insurance, are not controlled by factions with ties to the Chinese government and, if so, what are the details of any such assurances?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Investment Canada Act, ICA, contains strict confidentiality provisions in regard to information obtained through its administration. Section 36 of the ICA states that "...all information obtained in respect to a Canadian, a non-Canadian, a business or an entity referred to in paragraph 25.1 (c) by the Minister or an officer or employee of Her Majesty in the course of the administration or enforcement of this Act is privileged and no one shall knowingly communicate or allow to be communicated any such information or allow anyone to inspect or to have access to any such information."

As a result of section 36, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada is unable to disclose any information obtained under the ICA to respond to this question.

Question No. 895—**Mrs. Kelly Block :**

With regard to the government commissioning of Credit Suisse to study the sale of federally owned airports: (a) what are the cost of the study; (b) what is the study's completion date; and (c) what are the findings of the study?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Credit Suisse study had no official completion date; however, the Credit Suisse contract ended on January 31, 2017.

In processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and information pertaining to the cost and findings of the Credit Suisse study has been withheld on the following grounds: with regard to (a), economic interests; with regard to (b), financial and commercial interests of a third party; and with regard to (c), confidence of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if Question Nos. 888 to 890, and 894 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 888—**Mr. Phil McColeman:**

With regard to meetings between Ministers, including the Prime Minister, and Canada 2020, since November 4, 2015: (a) what are the details of all meetings between Ministers and the President of Canada 2020, including (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) meeting description, (iv) list of attendees; and (b) what are the details of all meetings between Ministers and one of the co-founders of Canada 2020, including (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) meeting description, (iv) list of attendees, (v) name of co-founder?

Government Orders

(Return tabled)

Question No. 889—**Mr. Larry Miller** :

With regard to “town hall” style meetings held by the Prime Minister during January 2017: (a) what was the location of each meeting; (b) excluding any expenditures which have yet to be finalized, what are the details of all expenditures related to each meeting, broken down by meeting; (c) what is the itemized breakdown of the expenditures in (b), broken down by (i) venue or location rental, (ii) audio-visual and media equipment, (iii) travel, (iv) food and beverages, (v) security, (vi) translation and interpretation, (vii) advertising, (viii) other expenditures, indicating the nature of each expenditure?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 890—**Mr. Larry Miller**:

With regard to exempt staff of the Office of the Prime Minister: what is the total amount paid out for per diems incurred by staff on travel status in the Office of the Prime Minister during the 2016 calendar year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 894—**Mr. Alupa Clarke**:

With regard to Canadian Coast Guard fleets and the condition of Heavy and Medium Icebreakers, as well as High and Medium Endurance multi-tasked vessels: (a) what is the most recent assessment report and inspection detailing the condition of all fleets and what were the findings of the assessment and inspection; (b) what are the details of all comprehensive evaluations from the past five years detailing the condition of CCGS Tracy including the date of evaluation and the findings; (c) what are the reasons for placing CCGS Tracy on the auction website; (d) what are the names and titles of all officials who approved the decision in (c); (e) what are the reasons for the decision in (c); (f) what are all the details of the purchase and the purchaser for the auction of CCGS Tracy; and (g) what are the details of all notes, communications, and meeting minutes from all business relating to the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy Secretariat (NSPSS) and Project Management Offices, including communications between Minister’s offices and the NSPSS with all stakeholders, outlining needs for capacity and services provided by the Canadian Coast Guard and fleets, including the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title and subject matter, (v) type of communication or document, (vi) file number, (vii) contents?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

YUKON ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-17, An Act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is great to rise today to talk about Bill C-17. I apologize if I am a little groggy. I have not been to sleep since Saturday night. It has taken me since

4:30 p.m. yesterday to get here, with my three plane flights. However, we will go ahead.

It is seldom that we have a bill before Parliament with respect to only one riding. Therefore, I appreciate having Bill C-17 on the agenda. I appreciate that many members in the House, maybe all of them except the minister and parliamentary secretary, may know very little about this bill because it relates to just one riding. That is totally understandable. Therefore, I will try to explain it to make it clear to members what they will be voting on.

The bill removes four issues that were put into place through Bill S-6 in a totally inappropriate process. The four issues are timelines, reassessment of ongoing projects, ministerial policy direction, and a delegation to the Yukon government of that authority. Although first nations negotiated all of the other changes, they were not offered the opportunity to negotiate these four matters. Therefore, for the other 336 members who do not live in Yukon, I will try to put this bill into context.

On February 14, 1973, the chiefs of Yukon went to Ottawa and presented Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau with a paper entitled “Together Today for our Children Tomorrow”, which started the land claim and self-government process in Yukon. Negotiations went on for 20 years, until the modern treaty, the Umbrella Final Agreement, was signed on May 29, 1993 by the three orders of government: federal, territorial, and first nations. The UFA is constitutionally protected, so not even we, as legislators, can change it. It is truly a collaborative, negotiated effort, which is now sometimes used across Canada and around the world. However, we must remember that it took 20 years.

Part of that treaty prescribed the development of YESAA, the Yukon Environmental Socio-economic Assessment Act, again a unique Yukon creation and model, our own assessment act. Unlike most of the rest of the country, we do not fall under CEAA. However, it deals with assessments on the lands of all the governments: the first nations governments, the Yukon government, and the federal government. Creating YESAA was a negotiation exercise by the three partner governments. It took 10 years. YESAA was passed in 2003, and so far so good.

YESAA had a built-in five-year review. That review took five years, from 2008 to 2012. A five-year review is not supposed to take five years. It not only happened after five years, but it also took five years. However, there was a lot of hard work that took place in those five years. There were 72 recommendations agreed to by the three levels of government after all of that work. These were implemented either in Bill S-6, or administratively. Once again, so far so good.

However, at the eleventh hour, near the end of the five years of negotiation, the federal government said it was adding four new major clauses to Bill S-6, and it was not negotiating them. After 20 years of the three partners working together on the UFA, and 10 years working together on the YESAA legislation, would members not be outraged if one of their partners said they were adding four new major clauses and that they could not negotiate them? It is probably not in the letter of the law, and certainly not in the spirit of the law. If we have an illegal law, or a law created in contravention of the treaty, then it does not matter what is in it, it has to go.

We are now in a whole new era of partnerships and collaboration with indigenous people and first nations governments. Often, industry has led the way in making partnerships with first nations people. Therefore, I want to go on to talk about some of the elements that people have raised in the debate so far.

One of the elements was that it is very important for mining. The Conservatives made a good point about how important mining is to the economy of Yukon. It has been the biggest producer of our GDP since the gold rush. That is a very important point. That is exactly what this bill is supposed to do, help that along and add the certainty needed to go ahead.

● (1530)

I am going to quote a couple of speeches and letters. Paul West-Sells, the president of Casino Mining Corporation, one of the biggest in the world and a world-class mine, said:

On behalf of Casino Mining Corporation (Casino), I am putting forward our company's concerns regarding the fragility of intergovernmental relations in the Yukon surrounding Bill S-6 and the negative impact this is having on the territory's mineral industry.

He went on to say:

Casino believes that if YESAA has the full support of all levels of government, it will provide greater certainty for the mineral industry.

This is exactly what the Conservatives were saying, so it is great that they are supporting this.

To this end, we encourage Canada, Yukon, and Yukon First Nation governments to engage, work collaboratively and find a solution to address the outstanding issues within Bill S-6.

That is exactly what Bill C-17 does.

Another speech was made at committee by Ms. Allison Rippin Armstrong, vice-president, lands and environment of Kaminak Gold Corporation, which has a good chance of being the next mine to open in Yukon. She said:

Kaminak is concerned that the process through which YESAA is being amended is creating increased distrust between governments and uncertainty in the assessment of regulatory process for current and future projects in Yukon.

As the Conservatives have so rightly said, it is exactly that uncertainty that this mining vice-president is talking about that we want to fix. She went on to say:

Our Coffee gold project is yet to enter the YESAA process. If Bill S-6 is passed and challenged in court, the Coffee gold project and our presence in the Yukon is uncertain. Kaminak urges the federal government to resume discussions with the first nations to work collectively toward reaching consensus on the proposed amendments to YESAA and avoid a court challenge.

Again, that is exactly what the bill does. It is what everyone is asking for.

I want to go on quote from a letter, once again in light of the Conservatives' emphasis on mining letter. All these documents I am quoting from are much longer and emphasize the situation, but we would not have time to go through them all.

This letter is signed by Sandy Silver, the Premier of Yukon. As the Conservatives and the NDP have said, it is important that decisions are made by Yukoners. This is signed by the Premier of Yukon; Peter Johnston, grand chief; and Mike Burke, president of Yukon Chamber of Mines. Once again, it is important for mining to get that certainty back. It says:

Government Orders

Repeal of these amendments and addressing industry concerns through collaborative framework is critical to re-establishing confidence in the development assessment process in Yukon and to honouring the intent of Final and Self-Government Agreements.

We were pleased to see Bill C-17, which removes these contentious clauses, introduced in the House of Commons on June 8, 2016.

[...] The Government of Yukon, self-governing Yukon First Nations, Council of Yukon First Nations and Yukon Chamber of Mines look forward to seeing Bill C-17 passed, without change, as soon as possible.

Before I go on to some of the other points that have been made in this debate, I want to mention that the honour of the crown is incumbent not only on the federal government, but also on the territorial governments.

As recently as March 22, and this is mostly to make sure that the lawyers in the various government departments and the House of Commons are aware of this, during the Supreme Court appeal hearing, Justice Rosalie Silberman Abella discussed the responsibilities of Yukon government in relation to first nation states, particularly the Yukon government, to whom the honour of the crown attaches.

It was 18 years earlier, in 1999, Justice Vertes' ruling in 1999, Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories, in the case of Donald Morin v. Anne Crawford, reflected on the constitutional status of the territories which had direct relevance to their function as the crown.

I do not expect anyone in the House to understand this complex legislation, because it only applies to Yukon, and it was a treaty between three governments there. That is why I am trying to explain some of the facets of this.

● (1535)

First of all, there was the comment that the people of Yukon should decide. That is exactly what this bill would do. What happened is that Bill S-6 came forward with the four clauses being thrown in at the end. As I said, it was great in the sense that 72 things got approved, either administratively or in Bill S-6, 72 things that the three governments negotiated and agreed on. However, the four things thrown in at the end really aggravated the people of Yukon. They did not like them being imposed, without being able to negotiate. Two large town hall meetings, with around 100 people each, spontaneously occurred. People were enraged about this imposition by the federal government, and rightly so.

Let us remember the 20 years of negotiation for the constitutionally protected treaty, the 10 years of negotiation for the YESAA legislation, and the five years of the five-year review. Obviously people were outraged when, all of a sudden, four items were added to their environmental legislation, by Ottawa, without allowing them to negotiate, as they had with everything else.

Another item that was raised, and it was a very good point, by the Conservatives is about northern strategy. As I responded to that, it is being developed right at the moment and, once again, by Yukoners from the bottom up. The chiefs, the premiers, and the people who live in Yukon will put their input into this northern Arctic policy framework. We really look forward to seeing this, in these days and times.

Government Orders

I can say that my view of the strategy for the north is that it first has to start with the people of the north. There will be great sovereignty and great success in the north if we focus on the people.

Another item I want to talk about that was raised is the reassessments. When a project needs to change, expand, or do something else, in the old days there was a reassessment that had to occur at the exact time that the next permit came due. Permits are what trigger assessments in this particular act, permits by various orders of government. Some people were concerned about that. It was mentioned in debate.

As I outlined, this system has been changed, through the recent amendments that have been made, and as I said, of the 72 some were policy and some were legislative. Now the assessments that YESAA can do are not limited to the next trigger, let us say the five years when the next water licence or mining permit is due. The assessment is not limited to that time frame. The assessment can be for as long as the assessment board and the proponent think is reasonable, a time that fits with the project. Therefore, reassessments would not be due in those particular time frames, as was talked about earlier.

The other aspect is this. Let us say that a project has gone on for 10 or 20 years, and the permits are expired; water permits, assessments, everything has expired. That does not mean things are going to be exactly the same. There is a number of things that have changed: the climate, patterns of wildlife, the amount of wildlife affected by the road, and the air and water affected by the tailings. Even though nothing is new in the particular production, there could easily be things that have to be changed.

The present system where that can be decided between the board and the deciding bodies makes a lot of sense, and that those assessments are only done when required.

We talked about barriers to mining, barriers to investments, disincentives to investment, and as I said earlier, that is a very important point raised by the Conservatives because that is exactly what this bill would do. It would remove those barriers, the ones that have been holding assessments in limbo. I will explain a little later about how that happens through this bill, and how this would clear it up. The minister talked about some of that in her speech.

● (1540)

I want to talk about the barriers that would leave it in limbo. Unique in the country is this partnership of the three governments that signed the treaty. The three governments all have particular roles to play in the assessment. If we were to change it and totally aggravate one of the parties, these changes are likely illegal but are certainly not in the spirit of the treaty. There would be huge uncertainty in the assessment process.

We first have to realize who will be on the board. The board is made up of the three parties. If one of the parties to the board makes these decisions, obviously there will be a problem. As the NDP also said, there are section 35 constitutional rights, which is, once again, why we have to have the first nations onside. They each have settlement land, over which they have total control and make decisions in light of what YESAA recommends. The way the UFA works, the entire Yukon is divided into all 14 first nations' traditional land. They have certain influence and say about their traditional land

as part of the treaty, which included the huge quantities of land they gave up.

With these three huge types of influence in the process, if we make them furious by circumventing them and not acting in the honour of the crown or in good faith in the negotiations, obviously there is going to be huge uncertainty in getting environmental assessments done. That is why we have the letters from mining and from the Chamber of Mines, because they want to negotiate things correctly in the future and have a partnership. As I said earlier, there are some great partnerships between first nations and mines in the Yukon, and they are leading the way.

The last item I want to talk about is the timelines. Once again, it would be hard for people who do not come from the riding to understand how this works. It looks as if we are getting rid of all timelines, and that is not true. The timelines are set out in the regulations as a matter of policy and, as we know, there is a process regulations have to go through. If it were the riding of other members, would they not want something sent by the economic experts, environmental experts, first nation experts, and Yukon government experts, as opposed to it being imposed by Ottawa? That is exactly how it works. It is the same as the executive board decisions being made by the rules of the YESAB. Therefore, the timelines are there.

Finally, as was said a couple of times, even without timelines, the YESAB has a great record and was making decisions in less than the timelines, almost all of the time, anyway. In a way, it was a solution to something that was not a problem.

Let us have a new beginning. Let us have negotiations, which may be tough, but will include the three legal signatories to the treaty, with the federal government, the first nations government, the Yukon government, and industry now all onside working collaboratively. Hopefully all of us, as parliamentarians, will join this partnership, put this quickly behind us, and get on with building a fair and prosperous country for us all.

● (1545)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I do not believe we have quorum in the House at the moment.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): We do now have quorum. I thank the member for pointing that out.

The hon. member for Victoria.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, despite the hon. member for Yukon's fatigue from travel, I thought he did an admirable job of explaining a complex bill.

Government Orders

I was pleased to be involved as a lawyer in the creation of the final agreements in those 20 years culminating in the YESAA and am very pleased to be standing in support of the bill today. He talked about the four new clauses that Bill S-6 brought in and how, obviously, they were contrary to the letter and spirit of treaties. Of that there can be no doubt.

I have two questions, if I could, for the hon. member. He referenced the case of the Peel watershed that last month was before the Supreme Court of Canada, talking about the honour of the crown and the like. I would like to know if he feels that case could have any impact on the YESAA bill before us and, second, whether he believes that the free, prior, and informed consent of the Yukon first nations is required as a consequence of the YESAA in its current form.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hate to belabour the point, but we have fallen below quorum again in this House. We are having a debate. It is interesting that—I will not comment on the presence or absence of members, Mr. Speaker, but you can do the count.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, in the last number of years, the member knows full well that when the point of order is called there is a quick canvass of the House. I am not sure if the member is just wanting to try to get a delay. We do have members who are here who are accessible. I do not think we are necessarily supposed to be reflecting on those who are present and those who are not present. I can assure the member there are more Liberal members of Parliament in the House, currently, than there are Conservatives who are in the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): This is turning into a debate, and I do not want it turned into a debate. I just want to remind the hon. parliamentary secretary that we are not to refer to the presence of members, either personally or as a group, in the House. I believe we have quorum in the House.

We will return to the hon. member for Yukon.

An hon. member: Can I respond to that point?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): No, I am afraid not. That would be debate. We already have one debate going on, thank you.

• (1550)

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker. I hope the member will be sensitive to the limited audience for this particular bill because it is mostly administrative for this riding.

However, the member made a good point related to the Peel case. I think the parallel is the obligation in the treaty, taking the honour of the crown and living up to the treaties. The treaty in the Peel case, which is just before the Supreme Court now, is that there is a process let out for land use planning, for the land use planning in the Peel area. The claim in the court, and I cannot really comment on the courts, is that the process of the land claim was not followed with the honour of the crown.

As I said, it is timely that I mention that the crown does apply for the territorial government, that it has that responsibility as well.

I think the member's colleague mentioned a good case when he talked about section 35 again; that is the Little Salmon Carmacks trapping case. I do not know if the member remembers that one. Once again, the crown had an obligation to protect the rights of the first nations, and this was not on their settlement land, but because it would affect their settlement land. That was very important.

The point I tried to make in my debate is that it does not really matter what those four clauses are because they are there illegally; they are there improperly, so however good they are, they just have to go for that reason, and for the same reason as the Peel controversy over the fair implementation of the Umbrella Final Agreement.

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs' speech, she said that Canada, Yukon, self-government of Yukon first nations, and industry have agreed to continue to work in collaboration through the regulatory process to establish practical timelines.

I ask if, once the Yukon government, the federal government, and the first nations have concluded their agreements on a new process for reassessment and timelines, how it will integrate into YESAB. Does it require amendments to the act, what is the process for such, and how long will it take?

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question. That process is in place through the rules of the board. There are three levels of timelines. There are timelines for the local offices, the district offices, for the smaller projects; then there are timelines for the ones that get bumped up to the executive board; and then the very highest level is a panel. We have never actually had a panel yet. I think there should be one coming shortly, but we have never had a panel yet. Therefore, for those three, the rules of the board determine that. That is already established through the regulations. They have to be gazetted. Therefore, the system the member is asking about is now in place so that the local people, the local governments, in consultation with the mining industry, the environmental industry, and every one of the three levels of government talked to, will have those timelines to work under.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Yukon has worked hard on bringing this bill forward to Parliament to ensure that we have an approach that ensures trust among the Government of Canada and the people of Yukon and Yukon first nations in deciding on projects that are important in their area. I have never seen a bill come to the House that has really outlined the difference between two governments more than this bill today.

I was in Yukon with my colleague when first nations and mining companies both were at the microphone saying, "We do not want to see these changes in Bill S-6", but the government of the day, the opposition now, was adamant that these changes would go through. The Conservatives were imposing their government's views on the people of Yukon.

Government Orders

I am happy to say that the people have spoken and their rights will be respected under this government. I would like to ask my colleague to comment on what that means to the people of Yukon today.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to dwell on the past; I want to go into the future. We have a lot of new members in the House, people who are being sensitized to this bill. I know the minister, who made a promise a couple of years ago, and the parliamentary secretary, who spoke so passionately about this in Whitehorse, understand. I think that other members in the House are now getting a sense of the importance of this bill for developing the relationship. Only when the three governments are on side can development go ahead.

I can say that the people who were outraged were so excited and asking constantly for this bill to go forward. Gone is the unilateral imposition of those four clauses by Ottawa at the eleventh hour which took away their confidence that it was their YESA legislation, their environmental assessment act. It gives the first nations the confidence that they are being treated as equal partners and have an equal say in the assessments. The changes to the regime that were guaranteed were developed through their umbrella final agreement, through their modern treaty that is recognized around the world and across Canada and is constitutionally protected so we cannot really change it. They are very proud of their agreement. It is a unique assessment procedure that only Yukon handles.

• (1555)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, with all due respect to my colleagues, there is clarity in the rules that there needs to be a quorum of 20 members in the House of Commons. I ask again for a count to be taken, because there are fewer than 20 members in the House of Commons during this debate.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I count as a member as well, so we have our 20 members.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, we have the House falling below the quorum repeatedly because members have left. Then we have members flooding into the chamber in the middle of your conducting a count and members know this is happening—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I am afraid this is turning into a debate. I am going to have to shut the member down. We did conduct a count and we are now at 20 members.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Mr. Speaker, I just wonder if the people I am meeting with outside can also be counted as quorum in here. It is an important meeting that a lot of us are having outside .

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I am afraid that sounds more like debate than anything else. I am going to let that drop. One of the things the rules state is that we cannot mention or allude to another member not being in the House, but if there is a lack of quorum, we have to take a count. I believe there are 20 members now. We can continue.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my friend from Yukon arrived in Ottawa on the same flight with me,

but I did not have to start in Yukon, getting in at 2:45 in the morning. Yes, we touched down.

I just want to say that I do not know why he feels that this is less important for all Canadians. I appreciate that it is only within the riding he represents, the riding of Yukon, but this was an egregious thing that happened, Bill S-6, for the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, for the Teslin Tlingit First Nation, and for the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation. They entered into good-faith negotiations with Canada. It is the honour of the crown that is at stake when one party to the negotiations unilaterally pushes through changes to something that was arrived at through good-faith negotiations with those particular first nations.

I welcome the fact that now, in the 42nd Parliament, with Bill C-17, we are redressing what was quite egregious under Bill S-6. At the time, I fought those changes as well, and they clearly went to court.

This should be a classic case of a lesson learned for a majority government in power, not to force through that which it wants when it knows the courts will overturn it. It wastes public resources. Frankly, Stephen Harper's administration did this all too often. I make no comment on most of my Conservative friends in the room at the moment, because they were not in the 41st Parliament. This is a classic case of wasting the public's time and insulting first nations, and now we are putting it right.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her constant support for this and for talking about the importance of it.

The minister is right here, and she made this very important point, that we would rather negotiate than litigate with first nations. I did not want to bring up the litigation, but the member did, and that's exactly what adds to the uncertainty that the Conservatives would like to get away from. Nothing would be going ahead. This would still be in the courts.

However, the Teslin Tlingit Council, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, and the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation have put their case and held it off because this is going forward to fix this grievous situation that both the parliamentary secretary and the minister have guaranteed we would fix.

• (1600)

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepeawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-17. The background leading to Bill C-17 is as follows. The federal government's role in the management of lands and resources in Yukon was devolved to the Government of Yukon in 2003. The Government of Canada maintains the responsibility for outlining the environmental regulations there. The Yukon Environmental Socio-economic Assessment Board was established under the final agreement.

Government Orders

Our Bill S-6 was intended to make, and did make, the northern regulatory regimes more consistent with those in the south to attract investment and develop economic opportunities. Bill S-6 was a very good bill. It put time limits on the review process. It exempted a project from reassessment when an authorization is renewed or amended, unless there was a significant change to the project. It gave the federal minister the ability to provide binding policy direction to the board, and very importantly, the ability to delegate the federal minister's powers, duties, or functions under the act to the territorial government.

I became a member of Parliament in 2010. For the first term of our government I was on both the fisheries committee and the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. For most of that time, I was the only member of Parliament of any political party who was on both of those committees. I was very privileged to get a view into our environmental policy-making and I participated fully in many of the changes that we made. Many of the changes that we made improved the environmental process, cleaned up a number of very bad pieces of environmental legislation, improved the potential for economic development, and had absolutely no negative effects on the environment. We amended the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act to remove duplication.

We changed the Navigable Waters Protection Act into the Navigation Protection Act. The Navigable Waters Protection Act was a particularly egregious act. It was a good act when it was written back in the 1800s when Canada depended on water navigation to a very great extent, and blocking navigable waters simply was not an option for our growing economy. However, over the course of decades and years, judicial interpretation of what was a navigable water kept growing smaller until intermittent streams were considered navigable waters. There are those who have a strong interest in stopping economic development. My colleague opposite inadvertently used the phrase "environmental industry". I think there is an industry that has been developed that is doing very well financially in stopping projects. The old Navigable Waters Protection Act was a particularly bad act because it forced municipalities to spend inordinate amounts of money to build bridges over tiny intermittent water bodies.

We also changed the Fisheries Act quite dramatically. As a fisheries biologist, I was very much involved with the changes to the Fisheries Act.

These examples that I am citing are germane to the topic of the Yukon situation because the regulatory regime of a country is critical to the economic development of that country. Modern projects must be environmentally sound, and indeed they are, and at the same time investment must be encouraged.

Revising the Fisheries Act, 2012, which was our Fisheries Act, was one of the current federal government's platform policies. The fisheries committee had extensive hearings. I am still on the fisheries committee as the vice-chair. We had weeks of hearings where people who were opposed to the changes we made to the act wanted the act to go back to the way it was, the old way, where basically the entire country was considered fish habitat, and the Fisheries Act was able to be used by the environmental industry and environmental lawyers to block, hold up, or otherwise stop economic development.

I have a strange view of the environment. I believe that when we talk about environmental policy, we should actually talk about ecology, nature, landscapes, and water, because presumably that is what it is all about. However, all I hear mostly from environmental advocates these days, especially those on the Liberal left, is process, process, process.

• (1605)

In our Fisheries Act hearings, over and over again we asked this of the ones who were so excited about the changes we made to the act. Since the act was changed in 2012, we asked them if they could point to any fish populations that had been decimated or affected by the changes we had made. Not a person could come up with any examples, but they sure were mad at the process. Their metric for success of an act was how many investigations there were, how many charges there were, and how many processes there were. The fish and the environment actually became an afterthought.

The changes we made in the Yukon Act included putting in time limits, no reassessment unless the project was significantly changed, the federal minister binding policy direction, and delegate the federal minister's powers to the territorial government.

When I was an environmental director at a paper mill, I remember being involved with a change in the direction of our mill. Multiple bodies were regulating the environmental assessment we were doing. We never knew which level of government would step in since it was optional. They would sit in the weeds, we would do the environmental assessment, and we would ask what they thought. They would say that they were not sure, that we should keep doing what we were doing. This kind of uncertainty has a very direct and negative effect on investment. It is great for lawyers, the billable times just keep going up and up. However, with respect to communities, people, livelihoods, it is the worst thing that could happen.

When I was a young biologist in the seventies, and right out of university, one of my very first jobs was being part of the environmental assessment of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline. It was dream job for a kid out of university. I was able to play around with fish, fly around in helicopters, and sample rivers and lakes in remote parts of the Mackenzie Valley. It was an absolutely marvellous experience. This was back in the days of the Berger commission. I remember the team of which I was a part. We sampled every waterway in the Mackenzie Valley, every tributary, all the lakes along the proposed pipeline route. We flew the pipeline route, wrote copious reports, and took a lot of water and fish samples, all the usual kinds of fun stuff that field biologists get to do.

Government Orders

The report was written and the Berger commission was held. At that point, oil and gas prices were not too bad. We had an oil embargo, so there was a certain urgency for Canada to develop our natural resources. The government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau of the day ultimately turned the project down after all that work.

Interestingly, the project was resurrected in the 1990s again. Gas prices were up. I think it was \$15 a thousand cubic feet. It was a high price and they wanted to see if we could get the Mackenzie Valley pipeline going again. The proponents for that project in the 1990s had to do exactly the same environmental assessment that we did in the 1970s. Nothing had changed. The rivers and lakes were exactly the same. There had been no development, no economic expansion, nothing, yet what we did in the 1970s was redone all over again for a number of years.

As time went on, the price of natural gas declined dramatically and the project became uneconomical. Delay and uncertainty kill projects. Now we have no Mackenzie Valley pipeline and we have 15 or 20 communities that are in dire economic straits. We know how to build pipelines safely. They are all built in an environmentally sound way. It is because they are so good that when a spill actually occurs, then it is a big event because it is an extremely rare event.

• (1610)

There is a fundamental misunderstanding of modern economic development, especially resource projects. All projects are built with state-of-the-art environmental technology. The implication when one goes into an environmental review process is we either do this review process or the environment will be destroyed, which is complete and utter nonsense.

Again, in my own experience managing a waste water treatment plant at a paper mill, doing environmental assessments in the oil sands, and many years of experience doing environmental assessments across the country, working with companies, working with engineers and designers, I can absolutely guarantee that state-of-the-art environmental technology is built into every project before any shovel goes in the ground. Scrubbers are put on smokestacks, waste water treatment plants are designed for, and the technology for environmental improvement is increasing all the time.

One can look at the miracle of Inco. Thirty or 40 years ago there was a moonscape around that town because of acid rain emissions from the mill. The mill has been cleaned up and the landscape around Sudbury has come back. I have been there and seen it. This is what advanced industrial capitalist free market societies do. We get richer and we do a better job environmentally, and the process is ongoing and continuing.

The other thing about environmental policy is that it is very important to measure environmental results.

There was a great philosopher, Pythagoras, who said that all was math. What I see in environmental policy-making is that nobody measures anything. We have this faith, and I use the term advisedly, that what we want to do is good for the world because, "I am a good person and I want to save the world, therefore what I do is good." We do not do the hard-nosed measurements to zero in on what the environmental problems may be, measuring the state of the earth,

measuring fish populations, water quality, and so on, and then focusing our efforts on where environmental programs will actually make a difference. For example, wetland loss is very serious in the country, yet we only have halfhearted measures to preserve wetlands.

Again, I go back to the process and I go back to what we, as the previous government, did to streamline the process and remove duplication. Hearings and meetings by themselves rarely result in environmental improvement. Spending \$25 million putting a waste water treatment plant at a paper mill will improve the environment. That is how I look at environmental policy, and that is how it should be looked at across the country.

When we were going through the process of the Fisheries Act, as I mentioned earlier, there were critics of what we did under the Fisheries Act. Their metric as to what the 2012 changes to the Fisheries Act did was how many authorizations, how many charges resulted from the 2012 act, whereas our main concern, obviously, was the health of the fish.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of order. I have been wrestling with myself on this point of order, but now that there are just five minutes remaining I wonder if the member plans to address the bill we are debating today, Bill C-17, the Yukon environmental and socio-economic assessment act. As nostalgic as we all are for the destruction of environmental laws under Bill C-38 back in 2012, I really wonder if the member has some views on the current bill.

• (1615)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I will let the hon. member finish. I just want to remind the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands that I have seen a lot of debates happen in the House where we are really questioning where it is going and then suddenly it gets wrapped around. I have to give the hon. member that freedom to make his point

The hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Mr. Speaker, I know the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands gets all harried when we talk about math and numbers and so on. This is what is really important.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): We have another point of order, and I think it is quite right. I am not sure that accusing someone of being harried is—

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I asked the hon. member, on a point of order that was reasonable, what was the relevance. His response, which is an attack on something that is most outrageous, was the assumption that I did not understand numbers and that I was harried. I am sorry, I want to hear speeches that are relevant to the subject we are debating today, and to attack me personally is completely unacceptable.

Government Orders

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): On the relevancy, again, I cannot rule on that one, but the hon. member does owe the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Island an apology for referring to the numbers issue.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Mr. Speaker, I apologize.

The relevance is that the investment climate in our country is critical and the environmental processes that govern the development and implementation of projects are very important. That is why we made changes to the act via Bill S-6. We put time limits on the review process. I know the environmental industry wants no time limits on the review process. I made the point. It is absolutely true that all projects these days are built with the finest environmental technology in place right now. Therefore, to spend an inordinate amount of time reviewing what we already knew was what our government changed in the act.

Regarding this act, we exempted a project from reassessment when an authorization was renewed or amended unless there had been a significant change to the project. Changes always are being made to resource projects. Plants are sometimes refurbished, boilers are changed, and these can be considered as routine maintenance or modifications. If these are subject to endless litigation or process, just when a company is modifying a plant in a manner that is not significant in terms of its environmental performance, that modification should be exempt from a review process. The federal minister still had a role to provide binding policy direction to the board, so the federal government was involved.

The last thing we did under Bill S-6, which was very important, was we gained the ability to delegate the federal minister's powers, duties, or functions under the act to the territorial government.

I spoke earlier, as a person who had actually worked in industry, how the investment climate could be negatively affected by different levels of government coming in and out of the process. We know there is a separation of powers in the environment. Migratory birds, for example, are clearly within the purview of the federal government. Wildlife is provincial, and so on. However, there is a very strong overlap between those, and often a proponent has to repeat exactly the same environmental assessment for two levels of government. That costs money, time, and that kind of regulatory uncertainty has the potential to thwart investment. Make no mistake, capital, in the modern world, is very mobile. Capital looks where it can best be spent, and investors look for regulatory certainty.

I am very pleased that in my home province of Manitoba we finally have a business-friendly, aggressive, Conservative government. The mining industry views Manitoba now as the place in North America to develop mines. Not only do we have high environmental standards, we have a business-friendly government. We have rich mineral resources. Unlike the Liberal government of Ontario and other governments across the country, Manitoba has some of the lowest hydro rates in North America. That is a recipe for success.

Going back to Bill C-17, what it would do is reverse the good work that was done under our government. I would like to move an amendment to the amendment. I move:

That the amendment be amended by adding the following: "and that the committee report back no later than June 19, 2017".

• (1620)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The amendment to the amendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Yukon.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again the member's arguments, as well as other Conservatives' arguments, have, to a large extent, supported the bill.

First, he talked about there sometimes being assessments for two levels of government, which creates regulatory uncertainty. Of course we do not want that, but that is exactly what the YESA Act does. It has three levels of government that are all brought into one so that there is only one assessment, which avoids the duplications that might occur in other parts of the country. Kudos to the member for this act.

There are treaty duties delegated to the territory. The treaty does not allow that, and the treaty is constitutionally protected. Obviously, as legislators, we do not have the ability to change that. As for binding policy, maybe the member could give us an example of which independent boards get binding direction from the federal minister. I am sure members would be the first to complain if the minister started imposing policy on an independent board.

Another point the member brought up was that wetlands are important and have no protection. The YESA board, right now, is considering some cases related to wetlands, so once again this act is working very well. Many projects have gone through successfully and smoothly and would be slowed down by these amendments.

Once again, the problem in the Mackenzie Valley was that the proponents did not get the first nations on side at the time, in the first case, and that is what YESAA has now. It has the first nation governments on side, and that is why so many projects go through.

I appreciate the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands courageously arguing for this bill, even though it is not in her riding. She made the good point that this would have national ramifications. We have abrogated treaties, on occasion, since before Confederation, and when there is a treaty, it is the honour of the crown to negotiate in good faith and live up to what the treaty says. On many occasions that has not happened. That is the national significance, as the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands said, of this particular case, because it has the ramification of not living up to treaties that Canada has signed.

• (1625)

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure there was a question.

Government Orders

Again, I am still firmly convinced that it would introduce uncertainty into the resource development review process. If I look at provinces like Manitoba, where the mining engine is starting to get revved up, I see that Manitoba has a very good regulatory process. We will see what happens in the Yukon, because the proof is in the pudding.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one thing I heard loud and clear in my riding of North Island—Powell River during the last election campaign was that consultation was at the very heart of building a relationship with indigenous communities, and that simply did not happen with the last government.

It was very clear with regard to Bill S-6 that the Conservatives felt very strongly that they had consulted appropriately. My question for the member is this: if that proper process happened, why did Council of Yukon First Nations Grand Chief Ruth Massie say that there was not adequate consultation, and why was legal action taken?

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Mr. Speaker, I take issue very strongly with the member's view that there was no consultation on the changes Conservatives made. Very conveniently, the NDP always forgets about farmers, municipalities, and rural communities. There were extensive consultations with farm communities and rural municipalities on the Fisheries Act. To a person and to an organization, all of those groups very strongly supported the changes Conservatives made to that particular act, and similarly with the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

In terms of whether an individual was not happy with the consultation process, I would like to see any consultation process in which 100% of the groups and people were happy with the process or the outcome.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by accepting the gracious apology from my friend from Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa and move to some of the topics that were a focus of his speech.

The member suggested that Bill C-38, the omnibus budget bill of spring 2012, merely amended the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. It actually repealed the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act as crafted and passed under the previous administration of former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and replaced it with an entirely new act, and that act did include timelines.

I am wondering if the member has read the recent expert assessment of the new act, which found that it completely failed to meet the objectives. The review committee was chaired by the former commissioner of the environment, Johanne Gélinas. The report was released last week, and tellingly, it said that Enbridge found that under the new act, the Harper-era environmental assessment act with timelines, the timelines worked against it and the process took longer.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Mr. Speaker, as I said in this speech and many other speeches, the critics of what we did as a government never talk about the environment. The environment improved under our Conservative government. The map shows that sulphur dioxide went down and nitrous oxide went down. Canada was considered as having the second-best water quality in the world in 2010 by the

United Nations. The sockeye salmon run in 2014 in the Fraser River was a record in history. Even I am not crass enough to take credit for that, but it happened.

During the review of the Fisheries Act, we asked witnesses who were dead set against what we did with the Fisheries Act what changes in the fish population they could see as a result of the changes we made and whether they could give us some specific examples. They could not.

Focusing on process often takes away from real environmental improvements, such as putting waste water treatment plants near paper mills. That is what real environmentalism is and that is what environmental debates should be about. They should be about creating a clean and healthy environment.

• (1630)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I always like it when a member speaks from the perspective of technical understanding. My colleague is a biologist and a returning member to the House who has quite a bit of experience both in the field and in this place.

Perhaps the member could elaborate a bit on the principles of conservative environmentalism. It is a principle that he has spoken of a lot in the House, and he has had speaking engagements on it. I think it goes to the very heart of the bill, which is that we can be good stewards of the environment as well as good stewards of the economy. The Minister of Environment is always making the case that the two go hand in hand, but the Liberals ignore the economy. It is the side of the coin that never gets looked at. It is the side of the coin the government continues to ignore. I would really appreciate it if the member could elaborate on the principles of conservative environmentalism.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: I agree that the economy and the environment go hand in hand, but it is actually an inverse relationship. Wealthier and richer countries have better environments, and a country gets richer and wealthier by adopting conservative economic principles. We believe in free trade. We believe in open markets. We believe in property rights. We have all of the factors in place to create wealth, and once wealth is created, we can then implement the technology to improve the environment.

I will give the House a specific example.

In 1989, the Brian Mulroney government implemented pulp and paper effluent regulations that mandated all pulp and paper plants in this country to install \$25-million waste water treatment plants. This was the average cost. I had the honour of running one of those plants after it was built. Does the member think a poor country, such as the socialistic Venezuela that so many left-wing Canadians praise, would ever put in a waste water treatment plant? Has anybody ever been to China to look at the environmental quality there?

The sulphur dioxide case is another one. An economist named Kuznets established a relationship between a country's income and its environmental quality. When the United States, for example, was getting richer in the early 1970s, an inflection point was reached. The country kept getting richer and sulphur dioxide emissions kept going down.

Government Orders

Let us all get rich and save the environment.

[*Translation*]

Le vice-président adjoint (M. Anthony Rota): 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 Mégantic—L'Érable, Rail Transportation; the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Foreign Affairs; the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Indigenous Affairs.

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was great to hear from my colleague, the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa. Hopefully I have pronounced that correctly. I always struggle with it. This House has some interesting riding names; many of them I avoid saying. Again, that speaks to the fact that in this House we have many members who have a great deal of technical knowledge who bring it to the House in order to explain their viewpoints on the value of a particular bill, either based on the clause-by-clause assessment they bring to it or because they have, perhaps, concerns of principle and differ on principle with the direction the government is taking.

I am pleased to rise on Bill C-17, an act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and to make a consequential amendment to another act. Obviously I do not entirely agree with all of the content, but I want to bring up a few points, perhaps, on clause-by-clause issues that I have with the bill, the intent of the bill, and the possible consequences of it.

With that in mind, I do have a Yiddish proverb. Many members know I care much for the Yiddish language, especially the proverbs, and this one is “A fool says what he knows and a wise man knows what he says.” What I hope to live up to in this speech is very much the latter instead of the former, so judge me based on when I am done at the end of it.

I think the bill again represents the positive and sunny attitude the government has taken on, the sunny agenda of just taking the entire accomplishments of the previous government and wrecking them, whether it is the economy, the low-tax environment, the success in the economy in more general terms and also specific sectors that did so well, and then the legislative initiatives that actually made it easier to create jobs, made it easier to develop an approach, and gave us the certainty that if we put a project forward, we were going to get an answer, a yes or a no, and some type of content so that we could decide as a shareholder, a company owner, or a worker whether it was worth pursuing or not. That simply does not exist anymore if we go ahead with this particular piece of legislation.

Revoking everything that our government has done is not a positive agenda. I want to make that point, because that is consistently what I see here. A bill that was passed by a private member in this House before, the member for Foothills, was torn apart by the government.

Again, this is another continuation of that positive sunny attitude, and I say that with a great deal of sarcasm in this House.

It is typical of a government, I feel, that has no clear or credible plan, whether it comes to the economy or whether it comes to

ensuring jobs are created by the private sector. It does not really have a plan. We saw that in the budget as well. It just went all over the place. It did not have a focus to it, and now we are spending a Monday debating a bill that would make it more difficult to grow the economy in the Yukon.

That is my personal belief, of course. The member for Yukon is here, and he sits on the opposite benches, which is most unfortunate, because I do appreciate his chairing the House procedures committee and I have been there many times now. I am so glad we are able to have a debate here, he and I, and that he can listen to me debate Bill C-17 during daytime hours as opposed to midnight hours.

Again, I really do believe that Bill C-17 would make it more difficult for companies, workers, and shareholders to move forward with some type of understanding that they will have the project assessed in a reasonable amount of time and have a decision rendered upon it.

One of the reasons I have for opposing the bill is that it is a step backwards for the self-determination of Yukoners. It takes away northern control over northern resources.

Members will disagree with me, but I still think it is that “Ottawa knows best” attitude. I feel that is the vein in this bill. As someone from Alberta, representing a constituency full of people from all across Canada who have made Alberta their home, who have chosen Alberta, we have this strong attitude that Ottawa has this kind of vibe that it knows best. They come to our city, to our province, pretending they can fix all of our problems. The best thing they could ever do is simply stay out of our province. We can handle things ourselves. I think many people in the territories and the other provinces would feel the same way.

Another reason to oppose the bill is that it introduces unnecessary delays and a potential for delays. I think it's the potential for delays, the uncertainty that the bill continues to create and aggravate, that is far more critical to this debate.

I will bring forward my experience. I actually worked for the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Development in Alberta, which took care of fish and wildlife, lands, water, biodiversity, forestry, so it was very much the ministry responsible for an entire landscape of Alberta and the industrial development happening on it, whether people like it or not. I know there are many members in different parts of this House who do not like industrial development. They do not like timber. They do not seem to like oil and gas. They do not seem to like the products and the fruits of the labour of individuals who create wealth, and then we get to put up buildings such as this. We get to renovate buildings. We get to grow the economy. The jobs created are created, again, by the private sector. They allow us to create that wealth and to trade and find opportunities to meet each other's needs.

Government Orders

•(1635)

I also think, as a last reason to oppose this, that it puts Yukon at a competitive disadvantage with the rest of Canada because, again, the system of approvals will differ from some of the provinces to some of the territories, and I think that is an error. I think, as much as possible—because companies in Canada operate throughout all jurisdictions; the really large ones are interested in large energy or mining infrastructure projects—we should ensure that they have the same rules apply to them wherever they go because it is much simpler for their technical staff, the workers who are there, to understand the rules and make sure they can comply with them.

Bill C-17 shows, yet again, a deep disdain for natural resources and energy workers. This is something that many constituents of mine have expressed, through email, in phone calls, and at open houses that I have had. There is this continued kind of dislike. Being in mining and energy development is just not trendy or, as was in the budget, innovative. The word “innovative” was used 212 times in the budget. I think “small business” was used six times. It is a supercluster of innovation. I do not know what these buzzwords in the budget really mean. They were just slammed together. I think it was called a “word salad” at one point.

The resource industry and the mining industry are some of the most innovative industries. The workers there spend years upon years getting a technical education that allows them to develop these resources responsibly, which is what they want to do, very much. They are hearing that the government is making it more difficult to develop mining and energy projects, that there is even just the potential for extra difficulty. There is the potential for projects not being approved within 18 months or 24 months, or for being denied with no explanation. It concerns them, because some of them have put two years of their life into trying to find a way to meet the approval requirements. Now they may be faced with potential changes again, and there might be more changes down the line that the government may want to make.

In the budget we saw changes to some of the ways mining tax credits and the exploration tax credits work. All of those things add up. It has a cumulative impact on industry. We always hear about cumulative impacts on the environment, but the decisions being made by the government are having a cumulative impact on industry. It will affect jobs, GDP growth, and child poverty rates. The government is paying itself through these metrics that it will have to meet some day. Again, it likely will not be able to.

Without clear and predictable timelines, it is impossible for companies and their workers, as I said, to plan anything. We have had the pipeline debate in Canada. I know there were some approvals that the government went through, but there was also cancellation of the northern gateway. That had a big impact on Calgary. It had a big impact on companies, and the certainty they had that a process that was followed to a T by companies would actually end with an approval and the jobs that come with it. Even though there was an approval, it did not mean the company would be able to go ahead and build, if they thought the government would change the rules and arm the opponents of the project with extra judicial or legal tools to try to delay the project. All of these things matter.

As we have seen over the past weeks, many international companies are leaving Calgary, leaving their head offices, selling off their assets, and basically abandoning Alberta, because they do not feel they can make a good enough return.

The energy industry in Alberta, western Canada, and in the northern territories and Yukon is still hurting. I am still hearing from my constituents who are still considering work outside of Canada or in one of the eastern provinces, because they just cannot find work in the sector that they have trained for their entire lives. Alberta spent a generation trying to find the requisite human resources, the workers who we desperately needed to fill the jobs. It was the same for Yukon. People from the Yukon travelled to Calgary. I used to work in human resources; we had people travelling.

Companies were actively recruiting workers in Calgary with amazing compensation packages, just trying to bring them to Yukon and trying to convince them that it was worth taking two, three, or four years making incredible pay, making an incredible contribution to the economy there. Now it is not happening anymore.

I believe Bill C-17 will only make things worse. What the Liberal government is doing through this specific piece of legislation is just spreading that joy and sunny ways all across western Canada and into the north now. We have seen what it has done to the economy in western Canada with two consecutive budgets. There is a pittance, in terms of job creation. There is no business confidence that good times will return. There is no certainty in the regulatory environment that a project put forward today will receive approval within 18 or 24 months.

•(1640)

That is what many of these companies want. It is not just for the companies, not just for the shareholders, but it is for the workers. If individuals are going to spend two years of their life trying to meet the regulatory requirements of the government, that is two years of what I would call red tape.

One person's red tape is another person's responsible accountability, but two years, three years, four years? What about the Mackenzie gas pipeline? What about the millions of hours of worker time spent on a project that never ever went ahead?

I am not a biologist. I am also, thankfully, not a lawyer, with all due respect to the lawyers in this House. I am just speaking a bit from my time working for the minister of sustainable resource development, because it informs how I view the bill specifically.

That department took care of public lands, grazing leases, forestry, mining, energy leases, fish and wildlife, wildlife management areas, wildlife protection, and provincial parks. It took care of forestry, the economics, the leases, the public lands associated with it, the regulations governing the industry. It was what I would call almost like a hodgepodge of different types of sectors of what the government is so-called responsible for, setting the rules of the game for different companies and different individuals who want to participate in it.

Government Orders

I will be the first to say that I am a city boy. I have lived all my life in big cities. I was born in a large city, Danzig, in Poland. My parents came to Montreal. That was the city I grew up in. I have lived in Calgary. I have lived in Edmonton. I have lived in Ottawa. I have lived in many great, large urban centres, but working for this department gave me a much greater appreciation for the breadth of activity across Alberta and the breadth of industrial activity and what industrial activity actually means to the people on the ground, to the jobs, the families, the incomes that it creates. How can government make it simpler for industrial activity to happen in a responsible way?

I do not think Bill C-17 accomplishes that. I think it takes a step backward. I think it makes it more complicated to meet the requirements that the government might support. Again, it is a lack of confidence. There is a general lack of confidence with people here that this government actually has it right, that it actually knows what it is doing.

We look at things like the economics of development, the certainty of decision-making, that when one puts forward one's project, it would be approved, or not approved, with very clear reasons why it would not go ahead.

Many workers I speak to, energy workers and mining workers, take an immense amount of pride in the work they do, and it goes from worker to management. It really does not matter. Even the families take pride in this too. More often than not, what they are looking for is ensuring that the industrial footprint of the projects they are connected to, they are working on, becomes kind of exemplary. We could almost think of that as a postcard. This is how we do development.

That is true for Alberta. That is true for Saskatchewan. That is true for every single western province. It is true for everywhere in Canada. Nobody goes out there with the intention of wrecking the environment. That is just the point. I think we have it inverted in Bill C-17. I think it comes with the presupposition that industrial development is automatically wrong and we should not move ahead with it.

That is fundamentally an issues of principles. That is not how it works. It should not be thought of in that way. I think, with the vast majority of energy workers, mining workers, what they are looking forward to is having the best possible stewardship rules that they can apply, and the certainty that their projects will go ahead or not, but with very clear reasons why they cannot go ahead, so they can try to meet them in the future. They do not need the government hanging over their shoulder telling them what to do every which way. They can do it themselves. They are the experts in the field. They are the ones who accumulate decades of traditional knowledge on the ground, working with aboriginal groups, working with different companies, because they may switch companies as well. They are also working in those communities, getting a better understanding of the lay of the land and the impacts that industrial development will have.

Albertans have fought ardently for that good stewardship concept. The minister I used to work for was known as a kind of right-wing environmentalist. At the time, Ted Morton was well respected in the environmental community, because he did quite a bit of work on

land-use management on the forestry industry side, but especially on fish and wildlife, ensuring that the resource was well looked after, but that the rules of the game were consistent and certain. Consistency and certainty were the main things that both the political staff and the civil servants were responsible for, and again, with Bill C-17, it worries me that we just may not see that.

On Bill C-17, just to refer back to a few points I made before and why I think it is an error and why I oppose a great deal of the bill, I think it does take away northern independence. I do think it is an attack on natural resources development, mining, energy, and forestry, potentially. I think it does add uncertainty into the review process. I think the removal of the timelines and the option for exempting renewals fits well with the ongoing narrative on that side.

● (1645)

Introducing unnecessary delays and uncertainty into our regulatory process is not the right way to go when we are trying to induce or convince companies that they should be creating jobs. We are creating quite the opposite. Multinational companies are very much leaving Canada or leaving the jurisdictions in Canada where they are working right now because they do not think they can earn a return on their investment.

Many domestic companies, good Alberta-based, B.C.-based, Yukon-based companies, which would like to take a chance and be entrepreneurial and take a risk, are uncertain what is going to happen. These rules change today and perhaps the rules will change again in a year or two years down the line. If innovation is the name of the game, then maybe we should call all these mining projects superclusters and just call it the supercluster diamond mine, the supercluster energy development, the supercluster pipeline. If the name of the game is the buzzword, then maybe they could meet it if they are just told which buzzwords to use.

Also, I fear the impact to the economy. Bill S-6, the original bill that made those amendments, was reasonable. I was not a member at the time, but I remember some of those debates and I have gone through *Hansard* to see what leading members of the business community in Yukon were saying about it at the time.

I have an article I want to refer to before I go into those comments from the debates at the time. It is called "Feds table legislation to repeal parts of Bill S-6" on June 10, 2016. We are debating the bill today in April, so obviously this was not a huge rush in terms of coming up for debate, but one of the comments I want to refer to here says, "he claimed his government would 'not be a barrier' if the new Liberal government did repeal the four provisions." This was Yukon Premier Darrell Pasloski, a good name of eastern or central European descent. The article went on to say:

...during a campaign visit to Whitehorse last fall, former prime minister Stephen Harper said it was the territorial government that requested the changes to the assessment act laid out in Bill S-6.

The Yukon government has also spoken out against [this particular piece of legislation] more recently, after oil-and-gas exploration company Northern Cross filed for a judicial review of the board's decision to refer its Eagle Plain drilling project to a higher level of assessment.

Government Orders

Now we can differ perhaps on these quotes being related accurately, but it shows there was industrial development and energy development going on and now uncertainty is starting to get into the whole process: judicial uncertainty, regulatory uncertainty, and now perhaps legislative uncertainty is being added onto it.

Bill S-6 was the final legislative step in the previous Conservative government's plan to approve northern regulatory regimes. I do not think we can talk about Bill C-17 without talking about Bill S-6, because from 2011 to 2013, Yukon was rated the single most desirable place in the world for mining companies to conduct business. Bill S-6 was improving upon that goal because Yukon had started to fall. Other jurisdictions were catching up. It was not so much that they were falling behind, but other jurisdictions were making the necessary amendments.

I will finish by mentioning those people who were for Bill S-6 at the time. Samson Hartland, executive director of the Yukon Chamber of Mines, described the introduction of time limits as “probably the most important aspect of this bill to our membership.”

At the time also David Morrison, president and CEO of Yukon Energy Corporation, agreed:

Having screening processes that don't have defined timelines, and strictly defined timelines, makes it very difficult for people who are investing millions and hundreds of millions of dollars.

Clynton Nauman, president and CEO of Alexco Resource Corporation, also told the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, Environment and Natural Resources on September 30, 2014:

The current uncertainty has had a negative impact on our ability to efficiently plan and operate our business, and by extension, it impairs the competitiveness of Yukon as a jurisdiction to assert certainty in the mine development and production process.

This is a very important matter in very many important matters, especially as the PROC committee filibuster continues. I look forward to seeing the chair, the member for Yukon, there at midnight hopefully next time. As long as he wishes to continue, I will be there participating in those debates.

I move:

Motion

That the debate be now adjourned.

• (1650)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Call in the members.

• (1730)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 253*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultarif
Albrecht
Anderson
Barlow
Beaulieu
Bergen
Bezan
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boucher
Brosseau
Calkins
Carrie
Clarke
Cooper
Deltell
Doherty
Dreeshen
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Egliniski
Fast
Gallant
Genius
Godin
Harder
Jeneroux
Jolibois
Kent
Kmiec
Lake
Liepert
MacKenzie
Marcil
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Motz
Nantel
Nuttall
Plamondon
Quach
Rankin
Rempel
Ritz
Saroya
Shields
Sopuck
Stanton
Stubbs
Thériault
Trost
Van Loan
Viersen
Warawa
Watts
Webber
Wong
Zimmer — 109

Albas
Allison
Arnold
Barsalou-Duval
Benson
Berthold
Blaikie
Block
Boudrias
Brown
Caron
Christopherson
Clement
Cullen
Diotte
Donnelly
Dubé
Dusseault
Falk
Fortin
Généreux
Gladu
Hardcastle
Hughes
Johns
Kelly
Kitchen
Kwan
Laverdière
MacGregor
Maguire
Masse (Windsor West)
McColeman
Mulcair
Nater
Paul-Hus
Poilievre
Ramsey
Reid
Richards
Sansoucy
Schmale
Shipley
Sorenson
Stewart
Sweet
Tilson
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Wagantall
Warkentin
Waugh
Weir
Yurdiga

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Amos
Arseneault
Badawey
Baylis

Alghabra
Anandasangaree
Arya
Bagnell
Beech

Government Orders

Bennett	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Caesar-Chavannes	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chan
Chen	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Di Iorio
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fuhr
Garneau	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Grewal	Hajdu
Hardie	Harvey
Holland	Hutchings
Iacono	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Kang	Khalid
Khera	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lemieux
Lightbound	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)
Maloney	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Mendicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)	
Monsef	
Morneau	Morrissey
Nassif	Nault
O'Connell	Olipphant
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Paupé
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Picard
Poissant	Qualtrough
Ratansi	Rioux
Rodriguez	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Saini
Sangha	Scarpaleggia
Schieffe	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sikand	Simms
Sohi	Sorbara
Spengemann	Ste-Marie
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Virani
Whalen	Wilson-Raybould
Wrzesnewskyj	Young
Zahid — 151	

PAIRED

Members

Foote

Moore — 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

[English]

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, there were several members who came in late. I noticed the member for Brampton North came in late and she also voted.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond on the point of order. I did come in late, so I will withdraw my vote. I was with members from my community because today we are celebrating Vaisakhi on the Hill.

The Speaker: This should prove a good reminder, I hope, to members. If they are going to come in late, they should not be voting, because it is important to hear the question on which the members are voting.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Yukon.

● (1735)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I quite enjoy the member. I enjoy debating with him on PROC, and it is great to debate with him in the House. His speech would have been a perfect speech to bring forward Bill S-6, because all the things he talked about were what Bill S-6 hurt in our economy. Therefore, it was a bit of an anachronistic speech.

Economic development, for instance, has been slowed down. Companies cannot move forward. As we know, the environmental assessment is tied up in the courts, which has slowed down the assessment.

He talked about northern control over northern resources, and that is exactly what the complaint was. That is why this is coming forward. I am not sure if the member was here when I mentioned earlier that there were two very large public gatherings of people pretty upset with the federal government because it had taken northern control and imposed these items on northern resources. That led to the great uncertainty we have right now with environmental assessments, which will be reduced once Bill C-17 is passed.

There was talk about different approvals, and exactly why the YESAA process led the country. In other parts of the country they would have to go to different levels of government. The brilliance in the YESAA legislation is that for the first nations, the Yukon government, and the federal government, it goes through the one process, and that applies to all the governments, as to whose land it can be on.

I am glad he mentioned that we reinstated the mineral exploration tax credit. We fought hard for that. I thank the finance minister for putting that back in. Some of the members he quoted, particularly David Morrison and Samson Hartland, wholeheartedly support Bill C-17 now.

The last point I want to make is on the timelines. Virtually all the speakers in Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition have suggested there is a lack of timelines, but timelines exist now. They exist for the designated office, which is the office that makes the decision coming out of the recommendations of the YESAA board. It has timelines, and they are already in regulations.

Government Orders

For the other two processes on the assessments for the designated office, which is for the small projects, and the executive board, which is for the larger projects, those decisions are policy decisions. They are set in rules on the board.

I just wanted to make those points. This will allay all the fears the member talked about in his speech.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, there were a lot of comments, so I will try to keep my rebuttal brief.

As for clause 1, the delegation to territorial ministers, I do not think the member talked about that one. When an authority is delegated to a territorial minister, the decision is brought much closer to the population it affects. The presumption in the bill is basically that somehow the territorial ministers and the territorial government cannot make decisions, and the people there cannot keep them accountable. That is a worrisome change. I also do not think that delegation is somehow an abdication or surrender of responsibility.

Another significant change is clause 2, which would amend the act to repeal section 49.1. That removes an important pro-job amendment introduced by Bill S-6, although the member did not appreciate my commentary about Bill S-6 and called my remarks anachronistic. This piece of legislation is trying to overshadow the kind of desperate policy dives that the Liberals are doing in every single direction, trying to find something that will work to create jobs, anything, even if it is public service jobs, doing more regulatory work, overseeing more paperwork with more red tape, catching more companies, more people, and more projects, in this regulatory environment that they are creating.

No piece of legislation is perfect, and this is much more imperfect than the usual ones. I could go through clauses 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 about the time limits that the Liberals have introduced. I disagree with the member's characterization that there will still be some time limits. They are all fuzzy and washed out, and there is no certainty for companies. Those would be my comments to the member's commentary on the bill.

• (1740)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Yukon for the presentation of Bill C-17. Coming from the second-prettiest riding in Canada, it is good that there is some inspired legislation coming forward.

I have a question for my friend about this notion of time limits. In my riding of Skeena, an idea was brought forward, not only by the Harper Conservatives, but also by the B.C. provincial Liberals, that if these time limits were brought in that forced regulatory decisions, it would make for greater certainty for companies and investors in particular. However, New Democrats noticed that the effect was in fact the opposite, particularly for the 48 or 49 first nations communities that I represent in my riding. When the time limit was brought in, oftentimes there were one or two full-time staffers working on seven or eight major mining proposals, three or four gas line proposals; there were warehouses full of scientific documentation.

The first nations would go to the federal government for support to try to get through the review and gain an understanding so that they could present it back to the first nations with some coherence,

and they would get a \$5,000 or \$8,000 grant from the federal government to review nine mines. Each mining application could be 8,000 pages, 9,000 pages each.

My question for my friend is this. Imposing time limits without the resources to be able to comprehend the specificity of the project and the impact it might have for decades and decades to come seems to be a square peg in a round hole. Is that not something that would have been better off fixed?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada does reimburse first nations for consultation, just like the Government of Alberta does. In the House of Commons debate, page 11997, on March 11, 2015, a Conservative member at the time said, "the Government of Canada has reimbursed those first nations up to \$98,695 for those consultations that took place". The issue he is speaking of is a staffing issue; it is not a legislative regulatory issue. That is always the problem with all forms of government, whether provincial, territorial, municipal, or federal. They make legislative and regulatory changes without providing the sufficient financial resources to ensure that the persons in the departments responsible for the regulations are able to deliver on the regulatory and legislative changes. That is important to remember as well. It is a staffing issue that he speaks of.

I remember, from my experience working for the Alberta government, the lands, fisheries, and forestry departments did a lot of aboriginal consultation. In that situation, the staffing issues were resources. The right rules and regulations were in place, just not always the right people in the correct numbers to do all of the work. There is nothing wrong with time limits, as long as they are resourced correctly. That would be my answer.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, during the member's speech, he talked about the uncertainty that Bill C-17 would add to the natural resource sector in Yukon. My colleague from Yukon mentioned the mining exploration tax credit, which the Conservative government also put in place. However, he talked about it being a great advancement. The Liberals took away the Canada exploration expense, which eliminated tax credits for new exploratory oil and gas wells, and that has had an impact on the energy sector in Alberta. We have seen Statoil, Shell, and ConocoPhillips pull investment out of Alberta.

I am wondering if the member can talk about the impact that this could have in Yukon as well, as it loses investment because of these new regulations and policies.

• (1745)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, absolutely. In my riding, I have heard from many smaller junior oil and gas companies, and even those technical services companies that provide assistance to the major companies say that this will have an immense impact. They are not going to be sending as many drills out into the field, and a good deal of this is the fault of the New Democratic provincial government.

However, this compounds the problem even further. I talked about it in my remarks. We always talk about the cumulative impacts on the environment, but we rarely, if ever, talk about the cumulative impacts on industry and on companies.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today on Bill C-17.

Listening to the debate thus far today, I am reminded of former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, who certainly had a love of the north. He also had a love of this place, a love of Parliament. I am reminded of one of his more famous quotations, in which he said, “Parliament is more than procedure—it is the custodian of the nation’s freedom.”

I am reminded of this now more than ever. Last Friday, I raised an important question of privilege about two members who were denied their right to vote, and then the Liberal government shutting down the vote on a question of privilege, never allowing that question of privilege to come to a vote in this House.

As well, I think of the Standing Orders standoff that the Liberals have orchestrated in the procedure and House affairs committee. It is, unfortunately with a heavy heart, that we have to stand in here and debate, not the important rights of our members, as we ought to.

Therefore, I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Call in the members.

● (1825)

[English]

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

(Division No. 254)

YEAS

Members

Abouttaif
Albrecht
Arnold
Benson
Bezan
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)

Albas
Allison
Barlow
Berthold
Blaikie
Block

Boucher
Brown
Cannings
Christopherson
Clement
Cullen
Diotte
Dreeschen
Dusseau
Falk
Gallant
Gladu
Hardcastle
Hughes
Johns
Kent
Kmiec
Lake
Liepert
MacKenzie
Malcolmson
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Motz
Nantel
Nuttall
Ramsey
Reid
Richards
Saroya
Shields
Sopuck
Stanton
Stubbs
Tilson
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Wagantall
Warkentin
Waugh
Weir
Yurdiga

Government Orders

Brosseau
Calkins
Caron
Clarke
Cooper
Deltell
Doherty
Dubé
Eglinski
Fast
Genius
Godin
Harder
Jeneroux
Kelly
Kitchen
Kwan
Laverdière
MacGregor
Maguire
Masse (Windsor West)
McColeman
Mulcair
Nater
Paul-Hus
Rankin
Rempel
Ritz
Schmale
Shipley
Sorenson
Stewart
Sweet
Trost
Van Loan
Viersen
Warawa
Watts
Webber
Wong
Zimmer — 94

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Amos
Arseneault
Badawey
Bains
Baylis
Beech
Bibeau
Blair
Bossio
Breton
Caesar-Chavannes
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Chen
Cuzner
Damoff
Dhaliwal
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fillmore
Fisher
Fragiskatos
Fry
Gameau
Gill
Goodale
Graham
Hajdu
Harvey
Hussen
Iacono
Jordan

Alghabra
Anandasangaree
Arya
Bagnell
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bennett
Bittle
Boissonnault
Bratina
Brisson
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chan
Cormier
Dabrusin
DeCoursey
Di Iorio
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Grewal
Hardie
Holland
Hutchings
Jones
Jowhari

Government Orders

Kang	Khalid
Khera	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lemieux
Lighthound	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
May (Saarich—Gulf Islands)	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mendicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Monsef	Morneau
Morrissey	Nassif
Nault	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petipas Taylor	Picard
Poissant	Qualtrough
Ratansi	Rioux
Rodriguez	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Saini	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Schulte	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sikand
Simms	Sohi
Sorbara	Spengemann
Ste-Marie	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Virani	Whalen
Wilson-Raybould	Wrzesnewskyj
Young	Zahid— 162

PAIRED

Members

Foote

Moore— 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

BILL C-17—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the second reading stage of Bill C-17, an act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and to make a consequential amendment to another act.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

* * *

CANADA BUSINESS CORPORATIONS ACT

BILL C-25—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and

Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to advise that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the report stage and third reading stage of C-25, an act to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act, the Canada Cooperatives Act, the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act, and the Competition Act.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at those stages.

* * *

YUKON ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-17, an act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment, and of the amendment to the amendment.

The Speaker: Order, please. There are 10 minutes remaining in the questions and comments from the speech of the hon. member for Perth—Wellington, although we are about three minutes from the end of government orders.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Yukon.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to comment on three things that the member mentioned.

First, the delegation of authority is in the treaty and the treaty is constitutionally protected, the UFA, the umbrella final agreement, and of course we, as legislators, cannot change something that is constitutionally protected.

Second, as I have outlined a number of times, the reassessments do not necessarily have to hurry. The policy has been changed so that the initial assessment can go longer in the life of the project so reassessments may not be necessary and only done when necessary.

Finally, once again, the timelines are just as certain. They are done by regulations and gazetted. Therefore, the question of uncertainty is not valid.

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, I know the member for Yukon is very proud of Yukon and proud of his riding and I thank him for his comments.

However, I want to comment on what we just saw from the government House leader. After only one day of debate on this bill, she has given notice of time allocation. She has given notice of time allocation at the same time on Bill C-25 after very little debate.

She said that an agreement could not be reached through the usual channels. Well, it is tough to reach agreement when the government is ramming changes to the Standing Orders down the throats of the opposition.

She said that she wants us to have a conversation on the Standing Orders, yet there is a motion before the procedure and House affairs committee to have the guillotine at the end. It is a forced change.

Adjournment Proceedings

Our party believes that to have a real discussion we need consensus from all parties in this House, as has been the tradition in this House. I think it is unfortunate that she has given notice of time allocation on two bills which have had one day of debate.

• (1830)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will have a little over seven and a half minutes for questions and comments the next time this matter is before the House.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[Translation]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to see so many of my colleagues on the Hill this evening for the late show. I will probably have the pleasure of debating tonight's topic with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, who knows the file very well.

I am pleased to be having this debate today, because the answer I got from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport during question period last week sparked quite a bit of concern.

Let me give a brief summary of the matter. I asked the Minister of Transport for a progress report on plans for a rail bypass in Lac-Mégantic. At the time, I pointed out that the federal government has a very important role to play in helping the people of Lac-Mégantic. More than three years after the tragedy, the wounds have yet to heal, and they are reopened every time a train passes through town.

The minister answered my question. I believe he is sincere when he says he really cares about this file. He has met with elected officials in Lac-Mégantic on several occasions and has discussed the matter with them. I very much appreciate that.

Last week, the mayor of Lac-Mégantic spoke with the Premier of Quebec, who reiterated his support for the rail bypass around downtown Lac-Mégantic. That in itself is excellent news. Indeed, what the people of Lac-Mégantic want is for all political parties to stand together to end the suffering of the local residents.

I will briefly go over the meeting as it was reported in *La Tribune*. The mayor of Lac-Mégantic, Jean-Guy Cloutier said:

We had a very good meeting. I am quite satisfied with Mr. Couillard's [the Premier of Quebec] openness and attentiveness. The people of Lac-Mégantic wanted us to be more transparent about our exchanges with the government. We have the premier's permission to make our conversations public. We were given very good news about Lac-Mégantic's requests for a bypass.

The premier also has great empathy for the people of Lac-Mégantic.

As I said, that is very good news. However, the article mentioned something that has me a bit concerned:

The Premier of Quebec, Philippe Couillard, reiterated his support for the project... promising to be a minority contributor to funding the project while at the same time asking the federal government to be the majority contributor to this project, which falls under its jurisdiction.

In the House last week, I asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport a question about the bypass. Naturally, she was empathetic, which I really appreciated. I know that the parliamentary secretary is very familiar with the file. I will quote her reply:

...The study is still under way and that is why the minister met with the Premier of Quebec a few weeks ago to discuss the bypass and the next steps in the process. We hope to participate as equal partners.

The two governments are talking. However, I sense that a fight is brewing with regard to jurisdiction and who will pay the most. What we want and what I am asking the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport is this: will the federal government do its part and not play the jurisdiction card, which would be extremely detrimental to the people of Lac-Mégantic?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Mégantic—L'Érable for raising this issue.

Let me begin by saying that we share the concerns regarding the well-being of the Lac-Mégantic community. Our thoughts are with the families and loved ones of the victims of the July 2013 disaster.

The Minister of Transport has had the honour of meeting with residents of Lac-Mégantic on several occasions to hear their concerns. Representatives of the Prime Minister's Office and the minister's office also met with a group of people from Lac-Mégantic when they were in Ottawa.

Let us be clear. Rail safety remains an absolute priority for the minister, and our government is fully committed to improving it.

We will continue to monitor railway safety in the region, and over the past few years, departmental officials have increased the number of inspections in the Lac-Mégantic region related to equipment and operations, tracks, and grade crossings. We will not hesitate to take action in any case of noncompliance with federal rules and regulations.

We have already taken many steps to make the rail system and the transportation of dangerous goods by rail safer. For example, the minister has accelerated the phase-out of the old DOT-111 tanker cars.

Furthermore, the minister was honoured to have Denis Lauzon, the Lac-Mégantic fire chief, join him for the announcement of Transportation 2030, a plan that includes speeding up the review of the Railway Safety Act to build on our actions to improve rail safety across Canada.

I would also like to mention that the minister is personally in contact with the Mayor of Lac-Mégantic with regard to the rail bypass. We are looking at options on how to accelerate the study.

Adjournment Proceedings

The study is still under way and that is why the Minister of Transport met with the Premier of Quebec a few weeks ago to discuss the bypass and the next steps in the process. We hope to participate as equal partners.

• (1835)

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, I would just like to congratulate my colleague on replying in French. It is very nice to get answers that the people of Lac-Mégantic can hear and understand right away.

However, there was no new information there. It was exactly the same as the answer we got last Friday. It was exactly the same as what the minister has been telling us for ages.

The parliamentary secretary repeated one thing that gives us cause for concern: the Premier of Quebec and the Minister of Transport may indeed have met, but a quarrel over the numbers seems to be brewing. Figuring out who is going to pay seems to be a real problem. The people of Lac-Mégantic went through Canada's worst rail disaster ever. Will we allow this jurisdictional debate to happen at their expense? Never.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Madam Speaker, our thoughts are with the families and loved ones of the victims of the July 2013 disaster and with everyone in Lac-Mégantic.

As I said, rail safety is an absolute priority for the Minister of Transport.

The study is still under way, and that is why the minister met with the Premier of Quebec a few weeks ago to discuss the bypass and next steps in the process. We hope to participate as equal partners.

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, back in December, I asked the government about its approach with respect to our armed forces, particularly with respect to so-called peace operations.

The government said upfront that it wanted to commit our Canadian troops to peacekeeping, peace operations somewhere, without articulating what the Canadian national interest was in this case and what impact we might have in that situation.

In the question that I asked previously, I particularly highlighted the fact that Canadian troops may find themselves, in some of the different conflicts contemplated, in a situation where they are confronting child soldiers. This is one of many questions either the government clearly has not thought through or has not developed a plan on, in the midst of desperately wanting to move forward in these so-called peace operations.

Many of the places where the government has contemplated sending our soldiers are not traditional peacekeeping operations as many people think of them. They are actually quite dangerous. There is real risk to our soldiers there, and there is no clear articulation of what our strategic interest would be.

Since I have asked that question, we have seen further just how much the government lacks a plan with respect to our military and how much it is willing to undermine the support that the government

provides to the military, at the same time as seemingly expecting it to be able to do more. Of course, all of us in this House recognize how capable and how accomplished our armed forces are, but we also have to support them. We have to put our money where our mouth is. We cannot keep talking about capabilities while withdrawing support. We have to recognize the capabilities of our soldiers while properly supporting them as well.

While we hear the government talking about many different possible commitments of Canadian troops, they are facing the substantial cuts that come with budget 2017. In this last budget, the Liberals cut \$8.48 billion, which had been earmarked for military equipment purchases. That, combined with last year's cuts from the first Liberal budget, means that our military faces a shortfall of \$12 billion.

This is at a time when there are increasing risks in the world. We only need to think about events of the last week in Syria. We see that there is an escalating threat level in terms of the kinds of conflicts that are happening, things that clearly challenge us in terms of fundamental human rights but that also deal with Canada's strategic interests.

We have challenges in Ukraine and eastern Europe, with the threats presented by Russia. We have the situation in Syria where Bashar Al-Assad, backed by Russia and Iran, is threatening the lives of his own civilians. His policies have implications for global security.

There are a number of these different cases around the world which illustrate the need for Canadian vigilance and proper support for our Canadian soldiers. Instead, unfortunately, the Liberals are doing two things. Number one, they are cutting back our support for our military. Number two, they are simply looking for military proposals that would help with Canada's bid at the UN Security Council. That is why they are looking for some kind of peace accord operation. It is not about Canada's interest; it is about winning friends at the United Nations.

The focus should be on advancing Canada's national interest and supporting our soldiers in the process. I challenge the parliamentary secretary and the government to consider a new approach that actually supports our military and considers Canada's national interest.

• (1840)

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this an important issue.

[*Translation*]

I would like to start by making a few corrections. The defence budget was increased this year, and \$8 billion were indeed deferred in the budget for procuring equipment when it becomes obsolete. Just check the budget. There is \$8 billion. There was \$3 billion last year and there is \$5 billion this year. Those numbers should not be added.

Adjournment Proceedings

The government is firmly committed globally and contributes in more ways than one to making the world a more stable and safer place. Last August, our government committed to deploying 600 members of Canadian Armed Forces and 150 police officers to join United Nations peacekeeping operations. These three-year deployments are part of a multi-department strategy and have a budgetary envelope of \$450 million. This approach will enable us to consider all aspects of peace operations, including mediation, conflict prevention, and peace building.

Canada also plans to host the next UN peacekeeping defence ministerial in 2017. My colleague across the aisle mentioned the possibility of Canada winning a seat on the UN Security Council. That would be a great way for Canada to actively promote Canadian values. It would allow us to achieve very noble objectives, especially in terms of governance, respect for diversity, and respect for human rights, especially those of women and refugees.

Future deployments of the Canadian Armed Forces have also been the subject of consultation with the United Nations and Canada's partner countries. We will ensure that any troops deployed have the appropriate equipment and the training needed to properly carry out their mission. Given that today's peace support operations are different than those of the past, we will also establish firm rules of engagement to maximize the chances of success. These rules of engagement will allow our troops to better defend themselves and those we are called upon to work with. In that regard, I want to reassure my colleague across the aisle that the safety of our troops is our top priority and is central to our military planning and our decision-making process.

Thus, even though our troops would be deployed under UN auspices, the chief of the defence staff would at all times be fully in command of our troops.

When the Government of Canada makes its decision about the deployment of the Canadian Armed Forces, the pre-deployment training will be adapted for each mission to the specific conditions. Training could be provided with respect to cultural awareness, gender-based analysis, peace support operations, civilian and military co-operation, and dangerous environments. There will also be training on the joint doctrine note on child soldiers, which was recently adopted by the Canadian Armed Forces. This doctrine will help guarantee that our troops are well trained and mentally prepared to act in situations involving child soldiers.

These new guidelines will help guide the actions of the Canadian Armed Forces and minimize the difficulties associated with deployments to areas where there are child soldiers. Several other documents will be used by the Canadian Armed Forces for this purpose. The government has full confidence in the Canadian Armed Forces and their ability to carry out their mission.

• (1845)

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, it is very clear in the budget that there is a cutback on long-term funds earmarked for military equipment purchases. The parliamentary secretary tried to skirt that fact, but he did not directly deny it.

Of course, there is an ongoing operational escalator, but that does not address the fact that the government is cutting back our investment over the long term in the military. That is not what we need right now. We need to be honouring our NATO commitments to move toward 2%, not making the kinds of cutbacks the government is talking about. Right from the very start, in its throne speech, it said it wanted Canada to have a leaner military. That just does not make sense, period, but particularly in the context of the world in which we find ourselves.

He talks about the benefits of getting onto the UN Security Council so that Canada can express its values. I would have more confidence in the government's willingness to express its values at that point if it was doing it at this point. We do not hear Liberals talking about international human rights. We do not hear them being willing to confront these issues.

We have vital strategic interests in eastern Europe and Syria. Canada needs to be engaged in a way that invests in our military and reflects our interests. This government is just not doing that.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Rioux: Madam Speaker, I think that the Canadian Armed Forces and the government are committed to investing for the future. We are talking about over \$80 billion.

The government is committed to taking concrete action and playing a more active role in the global arena. We are actively examining all of the options to see how the Canadian Armed Forces and the Government of Canada as a whole can best contribute to building peace and security. The House can rest assured that the personnel who are deployed will have the right equipment, the necessary training, and the appropriate rules of engagement, as they do on all missions. The Canadian Armed Forces has developed a joint doctrine note on child soldiers, which will help ensure that our troops are properly prepared, both mentally and physically.

In closing, I would like to once again thank my colleague for his question and for his concern for the well-being of the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces.

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to take the House back to the Prime Minister and his cabinet's approval of the Kinder Morgan expansion project in November of 2016. This was in complete contradiction to promises made by the government around its relationship with indigenous people and first nations governments.

The approval would violate the campaign vow of the Liberals to conduct relations on a nation-to-nation basis. In the Kinder Morgan approval process, or the backdrop to it, was one of the promises of the government, which was to recognize the relationship between indigenous peoples and the land and to respect legal traditions and perspectives on environmental stewardship. I agree and I wish that promise had been kept.

Adjournment Proceedings

In the Kinder Morgan approval process, the government cannot say that it is fulfilling that promise when in September of last year a coalition of indigenous leaders from across the entire continent, including Stewart Phillip of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, a very strong leader in my province, said that there was unprecedented unity against the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline expansion.

In my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, the Snuneymuxw First Nation feels betrayed. Former Chief Kwul'a'sul'tun, also known as Doug White III, said, “this project puts at risk our way of life.” He also said that the decision was “premised on a denial of aboriginal people’s rights and voice.”

Many indigenous governments in British Columbia are challenging this decision in court. Three first nations in January announced legal actions against the federal government, challenging the approval of the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline.

Tsleil-Waututh Chief Maureen Thomas said, “We do not consent to the Kinder Morgan pipeline project in our territory. We are asking the court to overturn the federal cabinet's decision to approve this project.”

We have also heard in the House that the government is blocking access, again breaking a promise, to indigenous women's organizations. The Native Women's Association wanted to be involved in the last first ministers meeting around climate change, asked repeatedly, but was denied.

Against all of this backdrop, part of the decision-making, as articulated by the federal cabinet, was that this project was so in the national interest that it was justified to break its promise on indigenous relationships and to cause cost to the B.C. coast.

Just last week, a new report came out from Simon Fraser University, authored by Tom Gunton. Given a recent forecast for oil demand and what he predicts as a massive overcapacity to move oil in Canada because, both federal on the U.S. and Canadian side, a new pipeline approval is coming, he says, “there are clearly viable options to Trans Mountain that have significantly lower environmental risks.”

My question for the government again is this. How can it say that this is in the national interest given the growing evidence that it is not? When will the government wake up and admit that the approval of the Kinder Morgan pipeline is a violation of its promise to indigenous peoples in Canada?

● (1850)

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister has said many times that no relationship is more important than the one with indigenous peoples. In fact, he wrote it into the mandate letter of every cabinet minister. He added, “It is time for a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.”

My colleagues and I have taken this responsibility very seriously. It informs our policies and guides our actions. That is why our government has invested in an unprecedented \$8.4 billion to improve the socio-economic conditions of indigenous peoples and

their communities, endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, acted on the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, established a public inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, appointed a working group of ministers responsible for the review of all laws, policies, and operational practices related to indigenous peoples, and meaningfully engaged with indigenous peoples on sustainable resource development.

It is that last point that I want to talk about this evening. Within months of taking office, our government implemented interim principles for reviewing major resource projects already in the queue. Its guiding principles ensure that indigenous peoples are meaningfully consulted and engaged in the process, their rights and interests are accommodated, and their traditional indigenous knowledge is fully considered in the decision-making process. That is what we have done. Our pipeline announcements last November confirm that. So does the reaction from so many indigenous leaders, who praised our government's decisions, including our decision to reject the northern gateway pipeline through the Great Bear Rainforest, and imposed a moratorium on tanker traffic along British Columbia's northern coast.

We are proud of our balanced approach. Yes, there are indigenous communities opposed to the Trans Mountain expansion pipeline project, but there are others that support it, including those indigenous communities that have signed benefit agreements worth more than \$300 million. Our government is providing more than \$64 million for an indigenous advisory and monitoring committee to oversee the pipeline's operations, the first time that indigenous peoples will have a direct and ongoing role in these projects. We are also establishing an economic partnership to create more training and job opportunities for indigenous groups.

Unanimity and consensus are two different things. It is simply not realistic to expect unanimity in these decisions. However, we can build consensus through consultation and review processes that carry the confidence of Canadians, and by ensuring that local communities and indigenous peoples are true beneficiaries of resource development. That is what we are doing.

● (1855)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Madam Speaker, the answer is so disappointing, at every level.

The ministerial panel specifically named six different questions that the government has to ask before it can go ahead and approve the pipeline. None of them have been answered. One example is how cabinet might square approval of the pipeline with its commitment to reconciliation with first nations and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, with its principles of free, prior, and informed consent. That was a campaign promise of the government. It was raised again by the minister's own panel. It is still not answered, there is still no clarity, yet still the government gave the thumbs-up to the Kinder Morgan pipeline.

Adjournment Proceedings

It is blowing this relationship with coastal first nations people. There is no way that the list of good deeds that the minister's representative has listed comes anything close to squaring the environmental and social costs of this pipeline approval. It is very sad for Canada.

Ms. Kim Rudd: Madam Speaker, we understand that indigenous communities have differing opinions on pipeline projects. The Prime Minister anticipated as much when he announced our decisions. He said, "There's no question that there will be people on both sides of any decision we make [on this issue]. I accept that." The fact is that people asked us to serve, "to make difficult decisions" in the interests of our country. That is exactly what we have done. We

listened to Canadians, we heard their voices, and we have taken a balanced approach.

Based on those meaningful consultations and rooted in solid science, we made decisions in the best interests of our country.

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 6:59 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Monday, April 10, 2017

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Privatization Act

Bill C-308. Second reading	10355
Mr. Viersen	10355
Mr. Lamoureux	10356
Mr. Cannings	10357
Mr. Van Loan	10358
Mr. Anderson	10359
Mr. Trost	10361
Division on motion deferred	10362

Suspension of Sitting

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:56 a.m.)	10362
--	-------

Sitting Resumed

(The House resumed at 12:00 noon)	10362
---	-------

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act

Ms. Bennett	10362
Bill C-17. Second reading	10362
Mr. Yurdiga	10364
Mr. Saganash	10364
Mr. Barlow	10364
Mr. Bagnell	10364
Mr. Dreeshen	10365
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	10365
Mr. Yurdiga	10365
Amendment	10368
Mr. Bagnell	10368
Mr. Saganash	10368
Mr. Dreeshen	10369
Mr. Saganash	10369
Mr. Bagnell	10371
Mr. Rankin	10372
Ms. Jones	10372
Mr. Berthold	10373
Mr. Nuttall	10373
Motion	10373
Motion negatived	10374

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

KPMG

Mr. Ste-Marie	10374
---------------------	-------

Club Richelieu in Welland

Mr. Badawey	10374
-------------------	-------

Lambton—Kent—Middlesex Achievements

Mr. Shipley	10374
-------------------	-------

Vimy

Mrs. Nassif	10374
-------------------	-------

2017 Peter Corren Award

Ms. Benson	10375
------------------	-------

Religious Celebrations

Mr. Aldag	10375
-----------------	-------

2017 Curling Championships

Ms. Harder	10375
------------------	-------

Egypt

Mr. Alghabra	10375
--------------------	-------

Francis Vermette

Mr. El-Khoury	10375
---------------------	-------

Edmonton Oilers

Mr. Jeneroux	10376
--------------------	-------

Rob Stewart

Mr. Oliphant	10376
--------------------	-------

Passover

Ms. Dabrusin	10376
--------------------	-------

Egypt

Mr. Genuis	10376
------------------	-------

Vaisakhi

Mr. Dhaliwal	10377
--------------------	-------

Northern Saskatchewan

Ms. Jolibois	10377
--------------------	-------

Jim Flaherty

Mr. Deltell	10377
-------------------	-------

Egypt

Mr. Sorbara	10377
-------------------	-------

ORAL QUESTIONS

Justice

Mr. Lebel	10377
-----------------	-------

Ms. Wilson-Raybould	10378
---------------------------	-------

Softwood Lumber

Mr. Lebel	10378
-----------------	-------

Mr. Champagne	10378
---------------------	-------

Foreign Affairs

Mr. Lebel	10378
-----------------	-------

Mr. Champagne	10378
---------------------	-------

Ms. Bergen	10378
------------------	-------

Mr. Champagne	10378
---------------------	-------

Standing Orders of the House of Commons

Ms. Bergen	10378
------------------	-------

Ms. Chagger	10379
-------------------	-------

Justice

Mr. Mulcair	10379
-------------------	-------

Ms. Wilson-Raybould	10379
---------------------------	-------

Mr. Mulcair	10379
-------------------	-------

Ms. Wilson-Raybould	10379
---------------------------	-------

National Defence		Mr. MacKinnon	10384
Mr. Mulcair	10379		
Mr. Bains	10379		
Veterans Affairs			
Mr. Mulcair	10379		
Mr. Goodale	10379		
Finance			
Mr. Deltell	10380		
Mr. Morneau	10380		
Interprovincial Trade			
Mr. Deltell	10380		
Mr. Bains	10380		
Mr. Barlow	10380		
Mr. Bains	10380		
Mr. Barlow	10380		
Mr. Bains	10380		
The Environment			
Mr. Poilievre	10380		
Ms. McKenna	10381		
Mr. Poilievre	10381		
Ms. McKenna	10381		
Marijuana			
Ms. Quach	10381		
Ms. Wilson-Raybould	10381		
Mr. MacGregor	10381		
Ms. Wilson-Raybould	10381		
Standing Orders of the House of Commons			
Mr. Reid	10382		
Ms. Gould	10382		
Mr. Berthold	10382		
Ms. Chagger	10382		
Mr. Richards	10382		
Ms. Chagger	10382		
Mr. Richards	10382		
Ms. Chagger	10382		
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship			
Ms. Kwan	10382		
Mr. Hussen	10382		
Privacy			
Mr. Dubé	10383		
Mr. Goodale	10383		
Interprovincial Trade			
Mr. Picard	10383		
Mr. Bains	10383		
Foreign Affairs			
Mr. Kent	10383		
Mr. DeCoursey	10383		
Mr. Kent	10383		
Mr. DeCoursey	10383		
Public Services and Procurement			
Mr. Clarke	10384		
Mr. MacKinnon	10384		
Mr. McCauley	10384		
		Mr. MacKinnon	10384
		Softwood Lumber	
		Mr. Cannings	10384
		Mr. DeCoursey	10384
		Housing	
		Ms. Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	10384
		Mr. Duclos	10385
		Justice	
		Mr. Cooper	10385
		Ms. Wilson-Raybould	10385
		Mr. Généreux	10385
		Ms. Wilson-Raybould	10385
		Mr. Cooper	10385
		Ms. Wilson-Raybould	10385
		Employment	
		Ms. Sidhu (Brampton South)	10386
		Mr. Hussen	10386
		Taxation	
		Mr. Maguire	10386
		Mrs. Lebouthillier	10386
		Canadian Heritage	
		Mr. Nantel	10386
		Mr. Casey (Charlottetown)	10386
		National Defence	
		Mr. Harvey	10386
		Mr. Rioux	10386
		Human Rights	
		Mr. Genuis	10386
		Mr. DeCoursey	10387
		Justice	
		Mr. Barsalou-Duval	10387
		Ms. Wilson-Raybould	10387
		Mr. Fortin	10387
		Ms. Wilson-Raybould	10387
		Canada Revenue Agency	
		Mr. Ste-Marie	10387
		Mrs. Lebouthillier	10387
		ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS	
		Government Response to Petitions	
		Mr. Lamoureux	10388
		Interparliamentary Delegations	
		Ms. Ratansi	10388
		Committees of the House	
		International Trade	
		Mr. Eyking	10388
		Mr. Ritz	10388
		Foreign Affairs and International Development	
		Mr. Nault	10388
		Canadian Search and Rescue Voluntary Service Medal Act	
		Mr. Arnold	10388

Bill C-347. Introduction and first reading	10388	Mr. Bagnell.....	10392
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	10388	Mr. Rankin	10394
Department of Employment and Social Development Act		Mr. Yurdiga.....	10395
Ms. Hardcastle	10388	Ms. Jones.....	10395
Bill C-348. Introduction and first reading	10388	Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	10396
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	10388	Mr. Sopuck	10396
Criminal Code		Amendment to the amendment	10399
Mr. Fortin.....	10388	Mr. Bagnell.....	10399
Bill C-349. Introduction and first reading	10388	Ms. Blaney (North Island—Powell River).....	10400
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	10389	Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	10400
Criminal Code		Mr. Kmiec.....	10400
Mr. Genuis	10389	Mr. Kmiec.....	10401
Bill C-350. Introduction and first reading	10389	Motion negatived.....	10405
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	10389	Mr. Bagnell.....	10405
Petitions		Mr. Kmiec.....	10406
The Environment		Mr. Cullen.....	10406
Mr. Cannings.....	10389	Mr. Barlow	10406
Veterans Affairs		Mr. Nater	10407
Mr. Oliver.....	10389	Motion.....	10407
Public Service Pensions		Motion negatived.....	10408
Mr. Gerretsen.....	10389	Bill C-17—Notice of time allocation	
Tobacco Products		Ms. Chagger.....	10408
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	10389	Canada Business Corporations Act	
Shark Finning		Bill C-25—Notice of time allocation	
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	10390	Ms. Chagger.....	10408
Genetically Modified Food		Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act	
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	10390	Bill C-17. Second reading	10408
Questions on the Order Paper		Mr. Bagnell.....	10408
Mr. Lamoureux.....	10390		
Questions Passed as Orders for Returns		ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS	
Mr. Lamoureux.....	10391	Rail Transportation	
GOVERNMENT ORDERS		Mr. Berthold.....	10409
Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act		Mrs. McCrimmon	10409
Bill C-17. Second reading	10392	Foreign Affairs	
		Mr. Genuis	10410
		Mr. Rioux	10410
		Indigenous Affairs	
		Ms. Malcolmson.....	10411
		Ms. Rudd.....	10412

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <http://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.noscommunes.ca>