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(HANSARD)

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, September 28, 2017

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The Speaker: I have the honour, pursuant to subsection 39(1) of the Access to Information Act, to lay upon the table a special report to Parliament entitled “Failing to Strike the Right Balance for Transparency - Recommendations to improve Bill C-58: An Act to Amend the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act and to Make Consequential Amendments to Other Acts”.

This report is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

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[*English*]

PETITIONS

MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present two petitions today. The first is e-petition 1088, with more than 1,080 signatures, dealing with the comments of the Minister of National Defence about being the architect of Operation Medusa and calling for his resignation.

CONSTITUTION ACT, 1982

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second is e-petition 909, with more than 57,700 signatures, asking for an amendment to the Constitution Act of 1982 to ensure that the rights and freedoms of this country are respected.

WASTE REDUCTION

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present two petitions today. The first petition is from constituents throughout Saanich—Gulf Islands who are calling for a national waste reduction strategy. The petitioners note that there have been collaborative efforts, going back to reports by Environment Canada and Ontario municipalities for extended producer responsibility programs. The petitioners call upon the government to

collaborate with the provinces on the development and implementation of a comprehensive national strategy to reduce solid waste and garbage, and to promote recycling in Canada.

SHARK FINNING

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition relates to an issue the House has dealt with the efforts through previous private members' bills, including one of my own, to deal with the trade in shark fin. The petitioners recognize that shark finning is not allowed in Canadian waters. However, they point out that the House could ban the possession, trade, and distribution for the sale of shark fin, to aid the protection of increasingly endangered species of sharks around the world.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

EXPORT AND IMPORT PERMITS ACT

The House resumed from September 21 consideration of the motion that Bill C-47, An Act to amend the Export and Import Permits Act and the Criminal Code (amendments permitting the accession to the Arms Trade Treaty and other amendments), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my esteemed colleague from Kitchener Centre.

During the course of the first day of debate on Bill C-47, certain members of this House chose to focus their sights on unfounded concerns with respect to the legitimate use of firearms by law-abiding, licensed firearm owners in Canada. Today, I intend to set the record straight.

Government Orders

It was clear during that debate that there was a deep-seated misunderstanding of the objectives of Canada's accession to the Arms Trade Treaty. It is therefore my intent to address and allay these concerns by factually outlining the intent of the ATT and of this legislation.

I will be absolutely crystal clear on this point. Canada's accession to the Arms Trade Treaty will have no effect on law-abiding Canadian firearm owners, whether they be shooting trap or skeet, hunting upland birds and big game, or keeping their farm animals safe from coyotes. The Arms Trade Treaty is about preventing the proliferation of conventional arms to people or places where lives could be put at risk, where our national security or that of our allies would be undermined, or where we might expect serious violations of human rights or international humanitarian law to occur.

Some of our colleagues suggested in the previous day's debate that the treaty and Bill C-47 do not have a carve-out or other protections for legitimate and law-abiding gun owners. On this subject, let me be equally clear.

The Arms Trade Treaty preamble recognizes very clearly the "legitimate trade and lawful ownership, and use of certain conventional arms for recreational, cultural, historical, and sporting activities, where such trade, ownership and use are permitted or protected by law". This language sets the context for the ATT and makes it clear that the ATT is not intending to challenge or prevent legitimate trade and ownership of conventional arms when permitted by domestic law.

The ATT also reaffirms "the sovereign right of any State to regulate and control conventional arms exclusively within its territory, pursuant to its own legal or constitutional system". This is why in this bill there is not a single proposed amendment to the Firearms Act, which is the act responsible for possession, manufacturing, and transfer of firearms in Canada.

I will again reiterate that the rights of law-abiding Canadian firearm owners are not and will not be affected by Canada's accession to the Arms Trade Treaty, full stop. The rights of law-abiding Canadian firearms owners are permitted and protected in Canadian law and regulation, and this will not change.

It is incorrect to say that the Arms Trade Treaty does not recognize the lawful use of firearms subject to relevant national laws. Moreover, we have concrete evidence that there has been no effect on firearm owners in Canada due to the ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty in other jurisdictions, such as Europe, for example. If a Canadian wishes to import a Benelli shotgun from Italy or a Walther target pistol from Germany, the process remains straightforward. First, the individual importing the firearm into Canada must be at least 18 and hold a valid possession and acquisition licence for a non-restricted or restricted firearm. Second, the firearm must be declared to Canadian customs and the appropriate duties and taxes paid. This is the current process, and it will not change after Canada's accession to the ATT.

I would also point out that there is no requirement to seek import authorization in advance for non-restricted or restricted firearms or firearm parts. This would not change with Bill C-47. The Arms Trade Treaty has been enforced in Germany and Italy since

December 2014, and those countries still have no issues with exporting firearms to law-abiding Canadian firearm owners.

Canada's accession to the ATT would also not affect the ability of law-abiding Canadians to travel overseas with their firearms. Whether they are travelling to the U.K. for a shooting competition or France to hunt pheasants in Brittany, the temporary export process is very straightforward and would not change with the implementation of Bill C-47.

• (1010)

Those Canadians would be required to comply with local laws, but if the U.K. or French government wished to verify an individual's permit, we can already provide that assurance without compromising personal information. If people are planning a hunting trip in the United States, the process is even simpler, as long as they comply with the relevant local U.S. laws.

The last issue I wish to address is the concerns expressed by some of our hon. colleagues with respect to the record-keeping provisions in Bill C-47. My colleagues have suggested that article 12 of the Arms Trade Treaty introduces new obligations on Canada to collect information and to provide such information to the Arms Trade Treaty secretariat.

This is not accurate. Article 12 speaks solely to what a country should include in its national record-keeping. In this regard, Canada's existing system of export record-keeping meets the Arms Trade Treaty obligations. No change is needed and no change will be made.

The record-keeping requirements of the Export and Import Permits Act predates the Arms Trade Treaty by decades. Exporters have been required to keep all relevant records to demonstrate that they are in compliance with the act, since 1947. The time limitation of six years plus the current year has been on the books since 2006. Canadian exporters are already very familiar with these requirements, and it is incorrect to characterize these requirements as being new.

The existing record keeping-requirements of the Export and Import Permits Act are familiar to all Canadians involved in the legitimate trade of arms. The slight amendment to add "organization" is related specifically to obligations with respect to brokering only.

There will be no requirement to register or retain information with regard to the purchase of a foreign-made weapon, if purchased in Canada. Once legally imported into Canada, no information will be retained for the purpose of the bill. The Arms Trade Treaty does not apply to domestic trade in arms.

In addition, there is no requirement in article 12 of the Arms Trade Treaty to share national records with other member states or with the Arms Trade Treaty secretariat.

Government Orders

The Arms Trade Treaty reporting requirements are contained in article 13 of the ATT, and these annual reporting requirements are not new either. Article 13 of the treaty clearly states that the data that is reported to the Arms Trade Treaty secretariat can reflect the same data as what was listed in annual reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms for the specific items covered by the Arms Trade Treaty.

Canada has been filing these reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms for 15 years, since 2002. Again, this is nothing new and it is a long-standing national obligation to report that data in aggregate form. No confidential personal or business information is contained in those reports.

The Arms Trade Treaty is about seeking to ensure that weapons exported from Canada or sales brokered in Canada or by Canadians do not accidentally fuel conflict or contribute to violations of international law. The ATT itself is intended to contribute to international peace and prevent human suffering. Canadians expect their government to show global leadership in this regard.

The ATT and this legislation are not about a long-gun registry. Our accession to the ATT will not change the rights and responsibilities of recreational and sporting gun owners in Canada, and Bill C-47 will not create any new obligations on gun owners in Canada. Canadians who export or import firearms will continue to operate exactly as they do now.

•(1015)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know this is a sensitive issue in my colleague's riding because there are many law-abiding, responsible gun owners living in Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

The member says that nothing is wrong, that there is nothing to see here as a problem, but the major firearms organizations that represent firearms owners in Canada do have major concerns. At first blush, who should we believe, those organizations or the member?

He said we already have a strong system of arms control and this new legislation would not involve any new obligations for anybody. That effectively is what he said. If that is true, then why in the world are we even moving forward with this? Why would we not accept the existing system? What is the point if all of these things already exist anyway?

Could my colleague tell me, first, why we should not listen to firearms organizations, and second, if what he says is true, what is the point?

Mr. Francis Drouin: Mr. Speaker, the only thing that has changed with Bill C-47 is the fearmongering on the other side and the emails sent to their party members so they can fundraise on this particular issue. There will be no amendments to the Firearms Act with Bill C-47.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his presentation this morning. I have to say that I was more concerned about what went unsaid, so I would like him to comment on the U.S. exemption.

What are his thoughts on the fact that Canada will be able to slip things in through the back door that the bill will not allow in through the front door?

Mr. Francis Drouin: Mr. Speaker, Canada has always had a good relationship with the United States. The United States is not a high-risk country. We have a very good relationship with them. I think this treaty will enable Canada to work with the international community. We must take care not to lump the United States in with other high-risk countries. They are two different things. We must not compare apples and oranges.

[*English*]

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada already has a responsible internal system to monitor and control the export of military equipment that meets or exceeds this UN treaty. Could the member opposite name three areas where he sees that the UN treaty exceeds in any way what we have in our system in Canada?

Mr. Francis Drouin: Mr. Speaker, the Arms Trade Treaty was about Canada participating with the international community. I understand that some of the members on the other side are causing some fearmongering with their communities, and with rural communities especially. However, I want to reassure them that this has nothing to do with law-abiding gun owners in Canada. I do not know how many times I can repeat it. We are not amending the Firearms Act. They can repeat it as much as they want on the other side, but I challenge him to show me where Bill C-47 amends the Firearms Act.

•(1020)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, who is from a rural community not far from Ottawa. I know is proud to represent his rural Franco-Ontarian community.

I also know he did extensive research that shows that this bill will not affect people in his community, as the Conservatives like to repeat over and over again.

Could he explain in French, for his Franco-Ontarian community, how this treaty and Canada have helped make the world a more peaceful place, and confirm that this will not lead to the situation the Conservatives are describing?

Mr. Francis Drouin: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. It is indeed important to emphasize that Bill C-47 will not affect gun owners.

It is also important to note that the Conservatives are once again trying to strike fear into our communities. This is nothing new, and we are used to it. They have been using this tactic for years.

Let me reassure my constituents in Glengarry—Prescott—Russell that this will not affect them at all. They will be able to do things just as they have done for the past 15 years.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to an export control system that is rigorous, transparent, and predictable. We believe that regulating the international arms trade is essential for the protection of people and human rights. I am proud to live in a Canada that already has, by international standards, an export control regime that stringently promotes transparency and protects human rights through an assessment process.

Our existing system of export controls already meets or exceeds all but two of the 28 articles in the Arms Trade Treaty. Through this legislation, both to enhance transparency and to fully comply with the treaty, legislative amendments are being proposed to the Export and Import Permits Act and to one section of the Criminal Code.

In my view, Bill C-47 is not merely about formalizing existing practices and making policy tweaks. Rather, acceding to the Arms Trade Treaty is of normative value to Canada. It makes a statement to the world.

During the election campaign, we promised Canadians we would re-engage with the world and contribute to development, mediation, conflict prevention, and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. In the words of our foreign minister, “Peace and prosperity are every person’s birthright.” Unregulated arms transfers hinder social and economic development. They intensify regional instability and prolong conflict, and ultimately, they contribute to violations of international humanitarian law and to human rights abuses.

We are once again aligning ourselves with our closest partners and allies in NATO and the G7. We are advancing Canada’s engagement in the responsible trade of conventional arms in a manner that reflects our broader international security and development policies. The global Arms Trade Treaty aligns perfectly with Canada’s broader international development policies.

The ATT is feminist. It is a vital component of international efforts to reduce gender-based violence, and it supports Canada’s international efforts with respect to global health. The Arms Trade Treaty will reduce the risk that the trade of arms at the international level will be used to commit genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

Nations that are party to the treaty will be required to establish import and export controls on a variety of weapons, including tanks, missiles, small arms, and light weapons, something Canada already has in place. This will keep weapons out of the hands of terrorists and those who seek to do harm to Canada and its allies.

This treaty specifically recognizes the right to use conventional arms for cultural or recreational use and the rights of states to trade in conventional arms for political, commercial, or security purposes. We are the only member of NATO, and the only one of the G7 countries, that has not signed or ratified the ATT. We cannot and will not fail to act.

Given my background as a pharmacist, I am going to examine this treaty through a slightly different lens than many of my colleagues. The International Committee of the Red Cross, the World Health Organization, and other public health institutions and NGOs have all prioritized the global Arms Trade Treaty as a public health

imperative. While health-focused groups may not be what first come to mind when we think of stakeholders focused on global arms, a poorly regulated arms trade fuels conflict, which in turn has devastating effects on global health.

Reducing the poorly regulated control of arms contributes to the prevention of the misuse of arms, reducing deaths and injuries as a result. Moreover, improving arms control allows for states to redirect resources currently spent on arms management, security, and defence toward the development of social services and public infrastructure. Not only will the ATT reduce the direct consequences associated with the illicit arms trade, it will help with a wide variety of secondary challenges associated with the spread of illegal arms.

• (1025)

Conflict spawns a myriad of other problems: health challenges, not just from injuries sustained in combat but from diseases that spring up from the unsanitary conditions that arise in war zones, diseases like cholera, dysentery, and malaria; gender-based violence and rape, which so often become used as weapons of war; and the displacement and destruction of entire communities that are forced to flee for their lives. Children are pulled out of school, losing out on their best chance to get an education. In times of war, children miss their opportunity to break the cycle of poverty. They are robbed of the chance to create a better future for themselves and their communities. These are the issues we are trying to address with this treaty.

I am not naive enough to think that one treaty will magically solve all these problems, but we have an obligation to use every opportunity to take every chance we have to take concrete and meaningful action towards tackling these issues.

Let me remind everyone that this year is the 20th anniversary of the Ottawa Treaty, a landmark international agreement to reduce some of the most devastating weapons of war, weapons that continue to kill and injure people of all ages each and every year.

I would like to take a brief moment to salute the hard work of groups like MAG and the HALO Trust, which work diligently in the field each and every day to finally rid the world of this scourge.

Government Orders

The ATT represents another giant step in the right direction in combatting the use of weapons for illegal and often evil means. The ATT is transformational. The inclusion of civil society in the drafting of this treaty was directly responsible for the content of the treaty and the specific language contained within it. This is the first international treaty that explicitly acknowledges the "social, economic and humanitarian consequences of the illicit and unregulated trade in conventional arms". It is also notable that this treaty lists "reducing human suffering" as its primary goal.

Let me provide a concrete example of what can happen when weapon are in the wrong hands. I am paraphrasing a story told to delegates at the United Nations. A boy in the DRC was shot in the face by diamond thieves. He needed to go to Nairobi to receive treatment, and his successful treatment and rehabilitation came to a total cost of about \$6,000 U.S. Had he not been shot, that \$6,000 could have paid for one year of primary school education for 100 children. It could have provided full immunization for 250 children. It could have provided a family of six with 10 years' worth of staple meals.

Make no mistake, this is what we are talking about when we are discussing the ATT. This is what we are trying hard to prevent. This is not the time for Canada to remain on the sidelines and let others lead. This is exactly the sort of treaty that speaks to the heart of who we are as Canadians as a people, and I am proud to support this bill.

● (1030)

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I actually have Bill C-47 in front of me. The Liberals keep talking about how they are not establishing a new firearms registry, but this is exactly what the bill does, and that is exactly the reason we did not ratify this particular agreement when we were in government. I had a private member's bill that challenged us not to sign on to the ATT because of that requirement to keep records.

Does the hon. member understand that the ATT requires organizations in Canada, such as firearms dealers, to actually retain records for up to seven years? Does he understand that?

Mr. Raj Saini: Mr. Speaker, let me remind the hon. member that this treaty was signed, with Canada's support, on April 2, 2013. In all 154 countries voted for this treaty. Only three countries voted against it: Iran, Syria, and North Korea.

His party at that time signed and voted for that treaty. My question for the member is this: Was he disingenuous then, or is he disingenuous now?

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on the topic of disingenuousness, it is easy to speak highly of concepts like human rights, but I notice that adherence to these words often goes out the door when money is involved.

The Liberal government is talking a good line on human rights, but Canadians know that this country has sent \$15 billion worth of light armoured carriers to Saudi Arabia, which is using the vehicles against the civilian population in Yemen. The government knows that and the world knows that, and yet the Liberal government has refused to cancel that contract or to do anything about it, even though Canadian law prohibits Canada from selling arms to

countries that use those weapons against civilian populations, which is exactly what Saudi Arabia is doing in Yemen.

Does the hon. member agree with the NDP that the Liberal government should cancel the sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia in the clear face of Saudi Arabia's use of those weapons to kill civilians in Yemen?

Mr. Raj Saini: Mr. Speaker, I am kind of confused, because during the election campaign, New Democrats supported the same thing, so I do not know where the question is coming from.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we just heard the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell basically say there's nothing to see here, that we have a system of arms control in place and this doesn't really change anything. Then we heard the member for Kitchener Centre say how this treaty would change the world and save children facing terrible situations around the world. I wonder which of those it is.

The member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell was right to point out that we already have a strong systems of arms control in place and that, substantively, this would not actually do anything to address some of the situations the member spoke about. What it would do is to create new obligations on firearms owners in Canada, obligations that in no way inform the Arms Trade Treaty. I would be on board for something that actually made a difference, but too often what we hear from the government is its intentions, but not enough about what the actual implications of the legislation would be.

Mr. Raj Saini: Mr. Speaker, let me reassert something that the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell said, which is that this would not affect domestic gun rights or domestic gun production.

Let me quote someone, who said, "this Treaty will not diminish anyone's freedom. In fact, the Treaty recognizes the freedom of both individuals and states to obtain, possess, and use arms for legitimate purposes." Does anyone know who said that? It was the former secretary of state of the United States, John Kerry. I will take his words over the words of the opposition any day.

● (1035)

Mr. Colin Fraser (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, acceding to the Arms Trade Treaty would allow Canada to be part of the first international treaty aimed at tackling the illicit trade in conventional arms. Could the member touch a little more on why it is so important for Canada to address this issue and to be part of a treaty that is so important to the globe?

Mr. Raj Saini: Mr. Speaker, that is a very important question, and I will use just one slice of why this treaty is so important.

When we talk about gender-based violence, we know that it occurs mostly in conflict states. What are we trying to do? We are trying to alleviate suffering, poverty, and violence in other parts of the world by acceding to this treaty. Is that such a bad thing? Does that not speak to the nobility of who we are as Canadians in trying to do things to better the lives of other people around the world?

Government Orders

The government's focus is on gender balance, but more specifically, as a member of the foreign affairs committee, I have learned how important it is to make sure that women and girls are included in the peace process in post-conflict states. How can a state survive if there are illegal arms throughout its territory? This is an attempt to make sure that we fulfill not only our international obligations but also the obligations that are morally incumbent upon us as a great, rich, and progressive society.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform hon. members that there have been more than five hours of debate on this motion since the first round. Consequently, all subsequent interventions shall be limited to ten minutes for speeches and five minutes for questions and comments.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to debate Bill C-47, a bill that implements an international arms control treaty. It is fascinating listening to the members from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and Kitchener Centre on the government side. We heard so much about the government's intentions. They said that the bill intends to do this and that, and that the government does not intend to cause any problems for law-abiding firearms owners but to address arms control internationally. It lays bare a fundamental difference in the foreign policy approach of the official opposition and the government, which is that the government is always chasing an optic, in general, but especially when it comes to our foreign policy, without looking at the details.

My colleagues on this side of the House have very ably laid out the practical problems with this legislation and the practical reality that we already have a strong system of arms control in this country that achieves the stated objective. The government members barely engaged in a discussion on this point. Instead, we heard them laud their own intentions.

Let me tell the members opposite that on many of these issues, we have the same intentions, but we have read the bill and looked at the treaty and have heard specific concerns from our communities about its substance, especially insofar as we already have a strong system in place.

We oppose the bill on the grounds that it complicates existing arms control mechanisms that are working very well at present, and that in the process, it introduces substantial problems for responsible law-abiding Canadian firearms owners. I want to start by talking about some of those core substantive issues in terms of existing and proposed new arms control measures and then talk specifically about what I am hearing from firearms owners in my riding about the way the government is treating them.

On the substantive side, Canada already has a strong and effective system of arms control that, in practical effect, exceeds the system proposed by the UN treaty. It includes the Trade Controls Bureau, through which the responsible minister prevents us supplying military equipment to countries where those exports might threaten Canadian security or be used in an internal or external conflict in

general. I should say that it is supposed to do that depending on the decision the minister makes. It includes provisions that allow a complete ban on trade with high-risk countries. Under the present system, the Canada Border Services Agency and Statistics Canada collect all such information on goods exported from Canada.

Therefore, we are already doing exactly what we need to do and are meeting the objectives laid out by the member for Kitchener Centre. We are already doing those things, keeping weapons from bad actors and out of dangerous situations and, in any event, certainly tracking our exports.

Some might argue that signing on to this UN treaty is important to align Canada with other nations. One of the members opposite mentioned the nations that had initially signed on to it, but if we look at the actual ratification record of countries, we note that the countries accounting for a majority of the sales of military equipment have not signed on to it, so this treaty is not at all establishing an effective international regime that we can align with.

We already do arms control and do it well, so at best, Bill C-47 is a solution in search of a problem. Paradoxically that was the defence of it by the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. He told us that it is not really changing anything anyway, which is at odds with what the member for Kitchener Centre said. The member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell told us that it is not changing anything, but the member for Kitchener Centre told us it is going to save the world. It is one or the other. Maybe it is somewhere in-between. Probably, based on our evidence, it is making things worse.

At best, if we take the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell at his word, it is a solution in search of a problem. However, our contention is that it is worse than that, because the treaty fails to recognize the legitimacy of lawful firearms ownership and creates all sorts of unnecessary problems and red tape for responsible firearms owners. Most critically, it effectively recreates the federal gun registry by requiring the tracking of all imported and exported firearms and requires that this information be available to the minister for six years. Given that those are calendar years, it could be up to seven years.

Firearms groups and individual owners have repeatedly expressed concern about the implications of this. They want a strong system of arms control, but they point out that in fact we already have one.

Beyond that, firearms owners are generally frustrated by a constantly shifting classification system that does not provide any meaningful certainty to law-abiding gun owners. A gun could be legal today and illegal tomorrow, without even the due process of an order in council.

I also want to make some points in general about the government's approach to firearms owners.

Government Orders

● (1040)

I know that many people in the House have certain ideas about who gun owners are. These presumptions or stereotypes lead the government to dismiss the legitimate concerns and suggestions of people from the firearms owning community. When everything we know about a particular community comes from movies and media, we are perhaps liable to come to incorrect conclusions.

I ask the government to pause and look again and to listen to the many law-abiding firearms owners in this country. Most people who own guns are not like Al Capone or even James Bond. They are scrupulously careful with their firearms and use them for recreation and, perhaps, to hunt responsibly for food.

The responsible use of firearms can be something around which people build community. Just like some of us get together over drinks or to play sports, some Canadians enjoy spending time with their families and friends at the range or out hunting. For some people, guns are also an important part of their family history. In these cases, making it harder for people to possess their guns means we are trying to take away people's valuable family heirlooms.

I ask the government to think about these gun owners, people whom we might not have met but who do not deserve to be judged on the basis of uninformed stereotypes. Liberals, who supposedly champion diversity and openness to experience, should be open to learning about the legitimate aspirations of firearms owners, aspirations that can be effectively and responsibly integrated with a commitment to public safety.

With that in mind, in the remaining time I have, I will read at some length an essay written by one of my constituents who is a firearms owners. He asked that I share this anonymously. He writes the following:

I am the gun owner that is a loving husband and father, I raised great kids and still love my high school sweetheart 27 years later.

I am the gun owner that deplores violence, I respect the police and the law. I fly a Canadian flag in my yard.

I am the gun owner that is a sports coach, a community leader, an involved parent, and the father that booked off work for all those field trips with our kids when others were busy.

I am that gun owner that stopped on that icy highway and brought your wife and child to safety from their stuck car on a cold night....

I am that gun owner that has a successful business, employs people with good jobs and fair wages. I am the gun owner that ensures respect, fairness and proper treatment of people, I speak out against harassment and racism.

I am that gun owner that believes firearms safety and training are paramount to have a successful firearms policy in our country.

I am the gun owner that stores his firearms properly and safely, respects the privilege of owning firearms, and is a respected and committed member of the community, that cares deeply about the safety of your children and mine.

I am the gun owner that lives on your street, down the alley or at the end of the block, I am the one that waves, pushes your car when you are stuck, and my kids and I are the ones that shovelled those neighbors driveways when they needed help, someone passed away or a neighbour fell ill.

I am the gun owner that has firearms for sports shooting and hunting and recreation, my firearms have been passed from generation to generation, my firearms are of all types and many are well over a hundred years old, they have never been used in anger or against another. They are my family history, heirlooms and always used safely and with respect for my family, neighbors and friends. Many belonged to my great-grandfather, grandfather and father....

I am the gun owner who is proud, and enjoys the wonderful people I have met in the firearms community, my dear friends they have become, they are good people worthy of my friendship.

I am the gun owner, that should not be blamed for gang violence, smuggled and stolen firearms, failed public policy not holding criminals responsible for their actions, or drugs in our community. I am responsible for none of these things. But if I was the Public Safety Minister, I would take real action against these plagues on our communities.

I am the gun owner that believes the Government should focus on passing legislation like Wynn's Law, that would make criminal history mandatory at bail hearing's so that if suspects are released into our communities, the Justice releasing them is aware of the risks to our families, our communities and our police officers....

I am the gun owner that requests your support for our heritage sport, target shooting, responsible and ethical hunting practices and acceptance that the two million plus Canadian gun owners are your friends, neighbours and the people who help make caring communities up.

I am the gun owner that recently had his 10/22 magazines status changed to prohibited by this government, effectively making farmers, sports shooters and good Canadians into criminals without notice, without cause or justification. Many who are unaware now face incarceration and don't even know it. If the Liberals are going to turn law abiding citizens into criminals they should at least communicate this to the citizens. I will do my best to let everyone I can know about their actions.

I am the gun owner who will not be silent anymore. I will be politically active, I will speak up, I will endorse the right candidates to speak for my community, I will speak to factual evidence....

I am that Gun Owner.

I am thankful for the opportunity to share that on behalf of my constituents, and to oppose to bill.

● (1045)

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for sharing that piece of correspondence from his constituent. I am happy to share the proper reply to that constituent with him, and he is welcome to take it. It would go a lot like this:

The goal of the Arms Trade Treaty—and this is for my friend's constituent—is to ensure the international trade in conventional arms does not contribute to international conflict and instability. Canadians are in favour of that. The treaty is about the import, export, and international brokering of arms. It does not affect domestic gun controls. Nothing in Bill C-47 would affect domestic controls and the lawful and legitimate use of firearms. It would not create a registry of conventional arms.

In fact, record-keeping for the import and export of arms in Canada has existed since the 1940s. It existed under the Conservative government, and the member can explain that to his constituent. Bill C-47 would leave in place the same record-keeping of conventional arms that was used under the previous government. Again, the purpose of the Arms Trade Treaty is not about restricting the legitimate, lawful use of firearms, and that is recognized in the preamble of the treaty itself.

That is a message that my friend can share with his constituent. Does he want to take me up on the offer of sharing that response?

Government Orders

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I will certainly share the full video and record with my constituent, and he may be contacting that member's office directly with some follow-up thoughts.

However, if I can respond for the time being, the member spoke about the goal of the treaty, and this is exactly the point. With respect to foreign policy, we hear government members repeatedly saying, "our goal", "our intention", and "Here is what we are trying to do." That is all well and good, but we are going to hold them accountable on the basis of what the government is actually doing, not its intentions. Our job is to look at the details and to challenge the government on action, not just on intention. That is what the government will be held accountable for, because that is what affects people on the ground. It is not the intentions of the government that affect people on the ground; it is the actions of the government.

I spoke in my speech about how the changes to the tracking and retention of records are the basis for significant concern from firearms owners and from stakeholders who represent firearms owners. The government would have us believe that they are all wrong to be concerned. However, we are going to listen to the firearms owners community when they highlight the fact that we already have a very strong system of arms control that, in its practical effects, exceeds what is proposed under this treaty, and that this treaty would meaningfully change things that are relevant to their lives.

Mr. Colin Fraser (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-47 would introduce controls on brokering the transfer of arms from one foreign country to another. I know the member has talked about other concerns, but I wonder if he would recognize the importance of this measure to combat the illicit trade in conventional arms and the human rights violations associated with it. Does he agree with that?

● (1050)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I said during my speech that I share the intention of combatting the illicit sale of arms and addressing human rights issues that were raised by this member, the member for Kitchener Centre, and others. However, the reality is that Canada already has an extremely strong system of arms control that, for its practical effects, exceeds what is being proposed under the Arms Trade Treaty.

Again there is this dissonance, in a way, coming from the government. Some government members are saying, "Do not worry; it does not change anything", while others are saying, "No, this is really important." Which is it?

We think it would not help in dealing with the international illicit arms trade, because we already have the mechanisms and provisions in place. However, some of the changes we talked about would have an impact with respect to responsible domestic gun owners and the added red tape that would come with this legislation. It is for those reasons that we oppose the bill.

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again we see the difference between what Liberals understand about the bill and what the reality is on the ground and how it would affect firearms owners in Canada and firearms sellers and exporters in Canada. I would like the member to fully explain so that members fully understand.

They defend some aspects that we agree on. The illicit arms trade is exactly something that we want to get to the bottom of and want to stop. Can you explain for the members across the way why this is really a big deal to our constituents in rural Canada and why another form of registry is a big deal?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, obviously Canadians, rural Canadians as well as urban Canadians, had many concerns about the long-gun registry. Some of it was the cost factor. There was a massive cost overrun. There was also the level of suspicion with which firearms owners are continually treated.

That is why I thought it was important in my speech today to emphasize that firearms owners do not look like a lot of the stereotypes. A lot of people who do not know firearms owners, or maybe do not know that they know firearms owners, have ideas that come from media and movies about what guns are used for, without understanding and appreciating the cultural significance, the recreational significance, and the family significance for many people. The long-gun registry and the way the government continues to approach these issues just demonstrate that the Liberals are out of touch with that experience of very many Canadians.

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we live in a world where global actors seek global solutions for global crises and where the international community and international law play an indispensable role in creating a safer, more secure, and more stable international order. It is in that spirit that I rise today to discuss Bill C-47, an act to amend the Export and Import Permits Act and the Criminal Code.

The implementation of the obligations contained in the bill before us today represents a firm Liberal campaign commitment and is of great concern to a great many Canadians. Bill C-47 marks a common sense and long-overdue commitment on the part of the Canadian government to fully accede to the Arms Trade Treaty and strengthen Canada's arms export regime.

Government Orders

Our accession, in other words, would, first, create a legal obligation for the Minister of Foreign Affairs to consider certain assessment criteria before issuing an export permit or a brokering permit; second, define brokering activities and establish a framework to control brokering that takes place in Canada or is undertaken by Canadians outside Canada; third, set May 31 as the date by which the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of International Trade must table in both Houses of Parliament a report of the operations under the EIPA and a report on military exports in the preceding year; fourth, increase the maximum fine for a summary conviction offence from \$25,000 to \$250,000 in order to support enhancement and encourage compliance; fifth, replace the requirement that only countries with which Canada has an intergovernmental arrangement may be added to the automatic firearms country control list with a new requirement that a country may be added to the AFCCL on the recommendation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs after consultation with the Minister of National Defence; and sixth, add a new purpose for which an article may be added to an export control list: to facilitate the collection of information on goods that have been, are, or are likely to be subject to trade investigations.

The need for a strengthened international arms regime is abundantly clear. Most estimates suggest that there are over 875 million small and light arms in circulation worldwide. This number is roughly equal to the number of cars or tablets on the planet. To appreciate the magnitude of this figure of 875 million, let us consider that this number is twice the number of people who lived under the British Empire in its heyday. To look at it differently, this number represents 252,306 guns for every Tim Hortons in Canada. In the absence of common sense regimes and international co-operation to prevent the spread and proliferation of small and light arms, this number represents an astounding threat to global stability. Armed violence kills approximately 508,000 people every year on a global scale. It is important to emphasize that most of these people are not living in conflict zones.

The Arms Trade Treaty ensures that countries effectively regulate the international trade of arms so that they are not used to support terrorism, international organized crime, gender-based violence, human rights abuses, or violations of international humanitarian law. Several measures within the ATT help address these pressing concerns. Perhaps most significantly, article 6 prohibits states from authorizing the transfer of arms if they possess knowledge that the arms would be used "...in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, attacks directed against civilian objects or civilians protected as such, or other war crimes...."

In addition, article 7 requires states to examine whether their arms exports regimes "would contribute to or undermine peace and security".

• (1055)

Quite simply, our government believes that regulating the international arms trade is essential for the protection of people and human rights. It is precisely the type of issue on which Canada was once regarded as a global leader. It is on these types of issues that our government once again seeks to return Canada to a principled and forceful foreign policy based on respect for human rights and international law.

Let us remember that formal negotiation of the ATT began in 2006, arising from a growing concern within the international community regarding the proliferation of small and light arms across the globe. The growing security threat posed by these weapons and the lack of international co-operation on this issue were of grave concern. Unfortunately, as this process unfolded, Canada largely remained on the sidelines. As of this spring, 91 states had both signed and ratified the treaty. It is important to highlight that Canada remains the only NATO ally and G7 nation that has not signed or ratified the Arms Trade Treaty.

The bill before us today will rectify this. Bill C-47 would bring Canada into full compliance with the ATT and set global standards into Canadian law.

Acceding to the treaty is not just about Canada's arms trade regime; it is also about Canada setting a principled standard and embracing the need for coordinated global action.

The regulations before us were developed in a transparent, deliberate, and comprehensive fashion. More importantly, our government is matching words with actions. Budget 2017 allocated \$13 million over five years to allow Canada to implement the Arms Trade Treaty and to further strengthen Canada's export control regime. Moreover, we are also contributing \$1 million to the UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation to ensure that we assist other countries in acceding to this treaty.

We are doing this because our government understands that as global security threats become increasingly diverse, dispersed, interconnected, and interdependent, Canada cannot afford to sit idle or to go it alone. We should never neglect our international responsibilities for reasons of domestic pandering or narrow-minded ideology. Canada has a moral obligation to accede to the ATT, and I am proud that our government has taken these concrete steps.

• (1100)

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have listened intently, and there has been more than a little misinformation coming from the other side. The Liberals are saying that all NATO allies have signed the UN Arms Trade Treaty. The United States, our closest ally and a NATO member, has not signed the ATT. Therefore, will the member correct the record and ensure that Canadians understand that the United States, Russia, China, Israel, and North Korea have not signed it? This utopian view of the Liberals that signing this treaty will magically clean up the illicit trade of defensive weapons and firearms around the world is nothing but a sham to get their backdoor gun registry in place and delegitimize all lawful owners of firearms here in Canada

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: Mr. Speaker, I have had the privilege of listening to the debate on this issue this morning. I have to say that if there is anyone who should rectify the record, it is my good friend across the aisle.

Government Orders

There is no doubt that there is an international consensus on this issue. There is no doubt that our allies to the south have signed on to this treaty. This treaty represents international consensus on a very significant issue. However, my friends opposite are choosing to mislead Canadians and use this issue for short-term fundraising objectives. That, I submit, is absolutely the wrong way to approach this very significant issue.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I note the individual said over and over again international consensus. We are aware and very sure of the fact the U.S. has not signed-on to this agreement, nor Russia, China, Iran, North Korea. These are very significant players, when we are talking about international arms.

I would like the member to again take this opportunity to stand up, and basically correct the record, that the U.S. and these other countries that are not our allies, and I would probably use another word for them, are not part of this treaty and therefore, its significance is minimal.

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: Mr. Speaker, it is not for me to correct the record. The reality of the matter is that this particular treaty represents an international consensus. For the record, every country actually agreed to the terms of this treaty. The three countries that did not represent the mainstream support of this particular bill were Saudi Arabia, Iran, and North Korea.

The member should know that even the previous government did support the principles contained in this agreement. Therefore, why, all of a sudden, is the member trying to pretend that this would not do good or enhance global co-operation to deal with a very significant issue? It is truly mind-boggling.

• (1105)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, apropos the last exchange we just heard, I would like to remind members of the House that one of the treaties Canada can be most proud, for which the organizers won a Nobel Peace Prize, was the Ottawa Treaty to ban land mines.

We are now approaching the 30th anniversary of that treaty, which has saved tens of thousands of lives around the world. It has been a very effective treaty. However, to this day, Russia, China, India, and the United States are not parties to it, but the clearing of land mines, the prohibition on their trade, has been effective in countries around the world beyond those that have actually signed the treaty.

It is true that President Obama signed the Arms Trade Treaty, and that President Trump shows no intention of ratifying it. However, fixing the loophole that would allow conventional arms to be sold through the United States without tracking them, and potentially going to other countries in violation of the treaty needs to be fixed. I will put to my friend on the other side that Canada's role in ratifying is an important step in saving lives around the world.

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for once again speaking out much more eloquently on this issue than I could ever do. Yes, as the member is aware, but other members are not, there is a distinction between signing and ratifying.

For the members of the loyal opposition to pretend that the U.S. has not signed the treaty would simply add more confusion to this

issue and mislead Canadians. Therefore, I would ask them to correct the record, and inform Canadians that it has been signed by the U.S. A.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to stand here today to talk about this important issue.

For the record, the U.S. signed the treaty on September 25, 2013, and Israel signed the treaty on December 18, 2014. During the member's speech, he said they signed the treaty. He did not say they ratified the treaty.

[*Translation*]

I thank the House for giving me the chance to address this very important issue. I hope all members of the House share the interest of all Canadians in maintaining high standards for peace, security, and human rights.

Canada's export control regime is one of the strictest in the world. In fact, it is very much in line with the four export control and non-proliferation regimes enforced by our main allies and security partners.

These regimes include the Wassenaar Arrangement, under which member states work together to prevent the destabilizing buildup of conventional arms; the Missile Technology Control Regime, which aims to prevent the proliferation of missile technology for delivery of weapons of mass destruction; the Australia Group, whose members seek to control the spread of chemical and biological weapons; and the Nuclear Suppliers Group, which aims to regulate any materials, equipment, and technologies that can be used to manufacture nuclear weapons.

Canada's export controls and our adherence to export control regimes are based on the long-recognized need to regulate the arms trade in order to assess risk and prevent illicit trade. That is one of the objectives of the Arms Trade Treaty, the ATT. The treaty seeks to minimize the humanitarian impact of the global arms trade, and to establish and globalize higher standards for the global trade in conventional arms.

The ATT seeks to ensure that all states have effective national systems to scrutinize and control the conventional arms trade and to promote transparency measures in order to combat the illicit arms trade. These measures in turn promote accountability and transparency in legitimate arms transactions. To be effective, the ATT needs leadership. Canada has taken too long to join the treaty.

The bill before the House provides Canada the opportunity to resume its place as a world leader in export controls. This bill demonstrates our commitment to join the ATT and our desire to further enhance our already tough export controls. We will not only meet the treaty's high standards, but also help implement them.

Government Orders

That is why our government intends to further enhance the rigour and transparency of these export controls as part of Canada's accession to the ATT. The bill introduced in the House would make the legislative changes needed to comply with the obligations yet to be met. The proposed amendments to the Export and Import Permits Act will ensure that Canada fully complies with two articles of the treaty where we fall short.

We propose to amend section 7 by applying specific codes to the criteria used by Canada to assess permit applications, and to amend section 10 on brokering by creating new brokering controls. Brokering controls are an extension of export controls because they allow a country to expand the scope of its regulatory control of arms transfers between third states, whether the transfer is facilitated by measures taken in Canada or abroad.

• (1110)

[*English*]

Canada is committed to acceding to the Arms Trade Treaty. This treaty would allow Canada to participate in a broader multilateral effort that would create common international standards for the export of conventional weapons.

The implementation of this multilateral treaty by Canada and other state parties would reduce the irresponsible flow of weapons that contribute to terrorism, transactional organized crime, and violations of international human rights law and humanitarian law. It would also provide women and children, often victims of conflict, with greater protection, and the opportunity to live in a more stable, peaceful environment.

Accession would allow Canada, amongst other things, to participate fully in ATT meetings of state parties, and enable our government to be more effective in its push for more transparency and accountability in the global arms trade both in Canada and worldwide. These goals are consistent with our values and policy objectives, aimed at reducing conflict and instability, protecting human rights, and countering terrorism.

Our accession to the ATT would complement Canada's broader engagement on responsible trade of conventional arms. Canada has long been at the forefront of promoting export controls to reduce the illicit trafficking of weapons, particularly in regard to their negative effects on human rights. Export controls are also aimed at balancing the economic and commercial interests of Canadian businesses with the national interests of Canada. Such controls are intended to permit legitimate trade where appropriate.

The ATT requires member states to assess all potential exports, but it also allows the use of expedited procedures for low-risk countries. In fact, many ATT states already use expedited processes for countries that they assess to be low risk. This allows countries to focus their resources on the highest risk activities, namely those activities that are the most serious threats to peace and security.

Our government would ensure that comprehensive assessments are conducted for all export destinations according to the criteria set out in the ATT.

The defence and security interests of the United States and Canada have been intertwined and integrated for the better part of the last

century. Our countries share common ideas, and we also share an understanding about the risks of irresponsible arms diversion.

Exports to the U.S. are also important in the context of international defence, and supporting the North American industrial defence base. According to the most recently available trade data, Canada's defence and security sector employed close to 63,000 skilled workers, and contributed \$6.7 billion to Canada's GDP in 2014.

The reach of Canada's defence and security industry is national, with clusters of expertise in communities from coast to coast, and comprises some 640 small and medium-size enterprises, as well as a number of larger anchor firms.

Many of these firms are integrated with companies in the U.S. Innovation generated by the defence and security industry has spillover effects in a multitude of commercial and civil applications, helping sustain SMEs in high-tech sectors ranging from aerospace to innovative materials, to information and communications technologies.

We are convinced that continuing permit-free export of most military and strategic goods and technologies to the United States would support Canadian interests for the reasons I mentioned. In addition, it would also allow us to make the most efficient use of Global Affairs Canada resources, and to focus our attention on the highest risk destinations and transactions.

To conclude, we must reaffirm our commitment to be global leaders in addressing the consequences of illegal or irresponsible arms trade, whether it be as a national example of strong and effective export and brokering controls, as key participant members in the various export control and non-proliferation regimes, or as leaders in the globalization of the Arms Trade Treaty.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I salute and commend my colleague for his eloquent speech. Not to get too emotional, but we were all very pleased and moved by yesterday's events and the inauguration of the national Holocaust monument. All partisanship aside, I am sure the member feels the same way about what happened yesterday.

I would particularly like to recognize the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister for highlighting the inauguration by starting yesterday's question period with this theme that brings all fair-minded Canadians together.

The member's remarks are interesting, but it is also important to understand that this is a crucial issue. In the bill we have before us, seeking to support the UN treaty, there is a major distinction between the weapons used by terrorists and criminals to kill people, and the kind of firearms used by hunters, gun collectors, and ordinary people who have always thought of guns as a part of life, as they were for their fathers, their grandfathers, their great-grandparents, and their great-great-grandparents. Guns are just a part of life for Canadians. For millions of Canadians, a gun is anything but a weapon of destruction.

Government Orders

Does the member recognize that a distinction must be made and that, unfortunately, the UN treaty, as it now stands, does not do that?

● (1115)

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments regarding yesterday's events. I find it very gratifying that everyone in the House—the Conservatives, the Liberals, and the New Democrats—united to recognize the importance not only of the national Holocaust monument, but also of teaching our young people that such a thing must never happen again in Canada or elsewhere.

With regard to the treaty, I completely agree with him that nothing in the treaty should prevent us from controlling domestic firearms here in Canada. I would like to remind him that the treaty states:

[*English*]

Reaffirming the sovereign right of any State to regulate and control conventional arms exclusively within its territory, pursuant to its own legal or constitutional system....

[*Translation*]

That means that the treaty recognizes that Canada has the right to control arms within the country to ensure that hunters and all those who want to legally own firearms in Canada have the right to do so.

[*English*]

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will begin by saying the same thing that my Conservative colleague said to my hon. friend from Mount Royal, that yesterday was a historic day with the Holocaust memorial and needs to be recognized as such by all Canadians.

New Democrats agree with the member's general position on this bill, but I wonder whether he shares our concern that Canada's exports of military goods to the United States appear to be exempt from regulation and would continue to be so under this bill. Would he agree with me, notwithstanding his point about the interrelationship of our trade with the United States and its importance to our economy, that as Canadians we should stand up and ensure that the Americans are also subject to the rigours of this bill?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank my hon. colleague from Victoria for his consistent support for Canada's Jewish community. I know it is very close to his heart. The first Jewish Canadian elected in the House of Commons was from Victoria in 1871, so he sits in a very historic seat.

I do not necessarily agree with my hon. colleague from Victoria on this issue. I personally believe that the relationship between Canada and the United States is unique and that at this point in time, we have nothing to question in terms of our shipments to the United States. Right now, the United States is our biggest trading partner and closest ally in the world and our economies are so closely integrated that I think we would be diverting Global Affairs Canada's attention were we to monitor shipments to the United States, which are happening on a continual basis, minute by minute, as opposed to paying real attention to countries that we should be paying attention to, like Saudi Arabia, on which I may very well agree with my hon. colleague.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill C-47 and to

express my displeasure at this legislation by the government. First, as the shadow minister for defence, I want to assure Canadians that the current system we have in place to manage the export of military equipment from Canada is robust and safe.

The programs here have so many layers of government oversight and the involvement of government agencies that we can be assured that military equipment is not going into the wrong hands, that it is not a part of the illegal trade in firearms, and that it is being used in a way that is consistent with Canadian values.

What we really have to look at here is that Bill C-47, and the ATT it would allow Canada to accede to, is all about bringing in place a backdoor gun registry into Canada. It would disadvantage Canadian manufacturers of firearms and military defence equipment, and we are incredibly concerned that this is just another attack on legitimate long-gun owners across Canada.

To go back to the assurances we have about the system in place today, I remind members that under Global Affairs Canada, we have the automatic firearms country control list and that only countries approved by the Government of Canada and that are on that list are allowed to buy military defensive weapons, including firearms and automatic weapons, from Canada. However, that does not guarantee that Canadian companies will be able to export firearms and military equipment to those nations. Once a country is on the list and approved by Global Affairs Canada, then we go through a process. When the business deal is signed and a purchase decision is made and a Canadian company wants to export the arms, it has to apply for an export permit under the Import and Export Permits Act through Global Affairs Canada. Global Affairs Canada again has the ability to say yes or no to the sale of that equipment. Conditions may change in the country that it is being sold to, or the military of that country may be under observation or have been removed from the list, as can happen.

Countries can be banned, as has happened in the past. We have taken Myanmar off the list. North Korea is definitely not on the list; it has been banned. Right now, for example, we on the Conservative side would like to see Ukraine placed on the list. The government is looking at that, but Ukraine is not yet on the country control list.

In Manitoba we have a number of companies that build various types of equipment that have to fall under the government oversight list that is in place. In Winnipeg we have PGW Defence Technologies on the list. It builds firearms, automatic weapons, and sniper rifles and exports them around the world. Before it can send them, it has to get an export permit.

Government Orders

Magellan Aerospace in Winnipeg builds all sorts of different components for the aerospace industry, but it is also building pieces of the F-35. We have to remember that even though the United States is somewhat exempt from Bill C-47, Magellan is part of a global supply chain for the entire F-35 program, which includes countries from other consortium members around the world. This Arms Trade Treaty could actually disrupt the flow of these parts that are so timely to the manufacture of the F-35 stealth fighter jet.

In my riding, there is also a company called MicroPilot, which builds autopilots for automated aerial vehicles and also builds micro aerial vehicles. Even though it builds them for nonmilitary use and its customers are not military clients, it still has to go through the same process to ensure that its clients will not put the autopilots into drones for military purposes.

Therefore, the oversight by Global Affairs Canada of export permits, and the oversight by the Government of Canada of who will actually be allowed on the automatic firearms country control list is robust and strong, and guarantees that Canada is dealing with legitimate partners and allies.

● (1120)

All that the ATT will do is to disadvantage Canadian companies versus other nations that are not part of it, including the United States. The United States supports the treaty in principle but has not ratified it, and because it has not ratified the treaty it plays by a different set of rules in its export regime than Canada does. We have a healthy defence manufacturing industry, aerospace industry, and manufacturing sector right across this country and those companies will be at a disadvantage because of this so-called treaty.

As I said in an earlier question for the Liberals, they have a utopian view. They think that by signing this treaty we will magically change the way the world operates in the illegitimate firearms trade and the illegitimate, criminal use of weapons. Treaties are only paper thin and as long as major manufacturing is done by countries that are not a part of this and that have no problem selling to regimes and untrusted partners around the world, like Russia, Iran, North Korea, and China, there will never be a way to control their trade in weapons to terrorist organizations. There will never be a way to control their trade in weapons to regimes that are not trusted right now, like North Korea, that wants to bomb the United States with its new intercontinental ballistic missiles.

We have to take care of our own defensive needs. There is one thing that this treaty does that a lot of people do not realize. Under Bill C-47, the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces are currently exempt from these types of programs. If the Government of Canada wants to donate military equipment to a partner or an ally it can, but under Bill C-47 it will now be tied up by article 5 of the UN ATT.

We already have all sorts of oversight. In addition to Global Affairs Canada, the Canada Border Services Agency and Statistics Canada already keep track of all movement of firearms and military equipment through the World Customs Organization. Canada has the ability to impose blanket bans on the export of our weapons to countries or regions where we believe firearms or weapons will be used in defensive means or against civilian populations. That is why in the past we put Belarus and Myanmar on the list.

This is a back door long-gun registry. I have spent 17 years of my life as a politician fighting against a long-gun registry. We have legitimate trade in hunting and sports shooting firearms. Manufacturers are concerned that they have not been consulted. Firearms owners across this country, who already have to be licensed under the possession and acquisition licensing program, have not been consulted. They are legitimate, lawful, law-abiding firearms owners and yet the Liberals are plowing ahead anyway to bring in this back door registry.

Manufacturers are saying that what is required under the UN treaty is a different marking than what they already have. This would be an added cost. If a U.S. manufacturer of a firearm wants to send a shotgun to Canada, it would have to laser imprint a new serial number. This would be an extra cost. Who is going to pay for that? It will be Canadian firearms owners, our Canadian customers. What happens if the United States or that company decides they are not going to export to Canada anymore? We will have less choice in what firearms we can purchase.

Article 5 in the treaty states, "Each State Party shall establish and maintain a national control system, including a national control list, in order to implement the provisions of this Treaty." That sounds like a gun registry to me. It goes on to say, "Each State Party, pursuant to its national laws, shall provide its national control route list to the Secretariat, which shall make it available to other State Parties." Now we will have to submit it to the UN. We are going to have to share with every country that signed the treaty exactly how many firearms we have in our country, as registered now through the Liberals' new long-gun registry. State parties are encouraged to make their control list publicly available as well. We just created a shopping list for all of the criminals out there.

● (1125)

I like what the Canadian Shooting Sports Association said:

Canada, under former Prime Minister Stephen Harper, requested that civilian firearms specifically be removed from the treaty in order to protect the interests of Canada's lawful firearms community. The UN ignored our nation's request to respect the interests of Canadians and refused to remove civilian firearms from the language of the treaty. So the Harper government did what was right: it stood up for Canadian sovereignty and Canadian gun owners and refused to sign the treaty.

The Liberals have not implemented that. They talk about the preamble that says that civilian firearms ownership will be respected. As legislators, we all know preambles are not law; it is the regulations underneath them that are enforceable.

Government Orders

•(1130)

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I disagree completely with the comments my colleague made. It saddens me to do that because we have worked so well together on other pieces of legislation. I think of bill S-226, and I know through that work that he understands the important role Canada has to play in the world in upholding human rights and the rule of law and holding people to account on some of the bad things that happen in the world. I would think he would agree it is important that we properly play a leading role in regulating the trade of arms that get into conflict areas and have severe negative effects, most often on women and girls. I am sure he would support that.

Let me also provide him the opportunity to correct the record and admit that what this bill would do is, in fact, keep in place the exact same record-keeping regime of conventional arms that was in place under the Stephen Harper government, of which he was a member, a parliamentary secretary if my memory recalls correctly. I do not know what he is talking about in the creation of some new long-gun registry. It is completely non-factual, and he knows this. He was in a government that allowed for the exact same regime we are talking about through this Arms Trade Treaty.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, if he had asked any law-abiding firearms owners, he would know that we removed the long-gun registry. They applauded us for getting rid of the long-gun registry. They see exactly what the Liberals are doing here as a backdoor gun registry.

Firearms companies and the stores that sell firearms keep track of, for their internal purposes, the movement of the sale of guns and parts because of warranty issues. However, under this system, those companies would now be compelled to report under the UN Arms Trade Treaty. If they do not, there are fines and penalties in place. The bill is very clear about a fine that should not exceed \$250,000, imprisonment not exceeding 12 months, or both if the business fails to document and report.

We were never draconian in trying to make companies share their personal and private information with the Government of Canada, but the Liberals have no problem forcing them to do it through law.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am going to return to an issue that is really on most Canadians' minds when it comes to thinking of Canada's foreign policy and our arms export policy, and of course that is the fact that the government is sending billions of dollars of light armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia when we know it is using that equipment in an offensive fashion against civilians in Yemen.

Earlier there was a facile response by a Liberal MP that the NDP supported it since 2015. What nobody knew in 2015 was that Saudi Arabia was using that equipment in an offensive fashion against civilians. We know that today, in 2017, yet the Liberal government continues to say nothing about those arms exports or do anything about it.

Of course we want to see controls on arms and the export of arms, and the purpose of that is to make sure innocent people are not killed by those arms. How does my hon. colleague square his speech today with the fact that he is part of a government that is, as we speak,

allowing the sale of arms to a country that is using them to kill innocent civilians in Yemen?

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, the ATT would not address the concern that the NDP member just raised. In fact, the current system we have in place is still the best system for the Government of Canada to make decisions on which countries are allowed to buy military equipment from Canada, or any other automatic firearms, for that matter. This speaks to the larger issue that treaties are only paper-thin and will not stop a country or any client that Canada may have in the future from doing things that we do not agree with. As the member pointed out, in 2015 members supported this deal because it created jobs in London, Toronto, and elsewhere, and those jobs and the stimulation of the economy are important.

As long as we have situations where terrorist organizations are running rampant across different countries, it is hard to predict how governments will use military or police equipment in a way that may not always line up with Canadian values at that time. However, we have to continue to trust the government to use the current mechanisms that we have, to ensure that we are doing trade deals and selling defensive weapons and military equipment to our allies and partners where they are needed.

•(1135)

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer what I would perhaps call tepid support for Bill C-47, an act to amend the Export and Import Permits Act and to permit the accession to the Arms Trade Treaty.

Unfortunately, while this is a very serious matter, the bill seems to be more of an empty shell than an effective piece of legislation at this stage. Yet again, the Liberals have been extolling the virtue of transparency while completely ignoring the principle in practice.

Members will recall from earlier this week another bill allegedly relating to transparency, the amendments to Bill C-58 that would reform the Access to Information Act. Members stood and pointed out the difference between the rhetoric of transparency and the reality. Today, I note with sadness that our Information Commissioner has done a thorough analysis of the bill, and the title says it all: "Failing to Strike the Right Balance". That could be the title of this bill as well.

Quite recently, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs claimed:

The goal is to ensure that all states take responsibility and rigorously assess arms exports. States must also regulate the legal arms trade and use transparent measures to combat illicit trade.

Government Orders

The bill is filled with non-information, significant room for intentionally omitted information, and promises to outline regulations at some later date, following royal assent. That is why we call it an empty shell. Most of the key issues to be addressed will not be addressed in this Parliament and will not be open to parliamentary scrutiny during this debate on second reading. Rather, they will be put in somehow later when regulations are made by faceless bureaucrats behind the scenes. That is why we say the bill fails on the issue of transparency. For example, the key criteria of assessment of arms permits are nowhere to be found in Bill C-47. How can we know if export controls will be strengthened in order to protect future exports to states that abuse human rights? Who knows?

I said at the outset that I am prepared to offer unenthusiastic support so we can get this to committee and make it better. We are asked to consider an appropriate course for the regulation of arms exports in Canada and our country's long-overdue accession to the Arms Trade Treaty. Shamefully, the Harper Conservatives refused to join the Arms Trade Treaty, which was open for accession as of December 2014. Canada emerged as the only NATO member and the only G7 member not to have signed the Arms Trade Treaty. I congratulate the government for finally taking these halting steps to join the rest of the civilized world.

We are also forced to examine in this debate who we want to be on the world stage and what kind of values we are really honouring, not just on paper but in our policies and practices. We have a prime minister who loves to talk the talk. During the course of the debates and amendments at committee, we will see whether he and the government are prepared to walk the walk.

It is unthinkable and frankly surprising to many of us that Canadian weapons exports have nearly doubled over the last 10 years. After 10 years of the Conservative government, Canada has shifted away from exporting arms predominantly to NATO countries, to exporting arms to countries with notoriously troubling human rights records. For example, according to the defence industry publication *Jane's*, Canada is now the second-largest arms dealer in the Middle East. Arms sales to China, a country with a notoriously poor human rights record, soared to \$48 million in 2015. As well, a recent article published in the magazine *L'actualité* found that in the past 25 years Canada has sold \$5.8 billion in weapons to countries with deeply questionable human rights records. This is not a small problem. Human rights violations cannot be tolerated, let alone facilitated.

With all this in mind, I want to commend the current government for finally agreeing to accede to this international treaty. In endorsing this bill, I want to also salute my colleague, the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, who has done some wonderful work on this issue over the years.

● (1140)

As noted, the bill fails to strengthen export controls, and as written, we would have no idea whether future arms deals with countries that abuse human rights would be prohibited. We have a right to know who Canada is doing business with and under what conditions. When it comes to human rights, it is not enough for us to say one thing and implement policies that allow another.

The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, speaking to the accession of the Arms Trade Treaty, said, “this legislation will set our standards in law.... I am very pleased that we will in turn raise the bar with a stronger and more rigorous system for our country.”

Forgive me if I am not prepared to take the government's word for it. I agree that we need to set out standards in law, but the bill is proof that the Liberals are still demonstrating a lack of transparency about arms exports and a reluctance to address the disparity between talk and action.

As others have mentioned, there are ongoing allegations of Canadian weapons being used to commit human rights violations in countries like Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Sudan. It was reported in *The Globe and Mail* earlier this year that the Saudi military appears to be using Canadian-made combat vehicles against Saudi citizens. What are we doing about that? We are not doing very much. Reports indicate that Canadian-made weaponry has been used in the Saudi Arabia-led war in Yemen, one of the world's worst humanitarian situations, which continues to deteriorate, and 6,000 people to date have been killed.

In 2015, the Prime Minister told the media that Canada must “stop arms sales to regimes that flout democracy, such as Saudi Arabia.” That is great rhetoric. Where is the action?

The NDP has called for the Liberals to suspend existing export permits for the light armoured vehicle deal with Saudi Arabia, pending an investigation into its domestic human rights situation, to no avail.

In the bill, the majority of Canada's military exports would remain unregulated. It would set up a legal obligation to report on military exports, which is a good step, but here is the punchline. This obligation would only apply to exports where an export permit was required, so most U.S.-bound exports would be exempt from the bill. Neither the act nor its amendment under Bill C-47 would address the Canada-U.S. Defence Production Sharing Agreement, which exempts Canadian military exports to the United States from the government authorization required for other arms exports. Therefore, we will be asking in committee that exports of military goods to the United States be licensed in some fashion.

It has been said that the United States is our closest friend and ally, but with a regime change occurring south of the border, it seems to me that this reflects an outdated way of thinking. It should be subject to the same rules as other countries. Indeed, the reason for that is that sometimes Canadian arms are sold to the United States and are used to commit human rights atrocities, an example of which was published, with respect to Nigeria, on September 13 of this year. We think that is important.

Government Orders

We believe there have been some positive moves on the issue of diversion, and we salute the government for that, but we believe that Canada must formalize diversion as a criterion in our export control systems.

It is a good start that Bill C-47 requires annual reports to Parliament, but the job is only half done as long as it does not include exports to the United States. How can Parliament hold the government to account if the bulk of our exports are excluded from the export permit system and from the resulting annual reporting?

We would suggest, as we have said for many years, that there be a new standing committee to oversee arms exports. The Liberals voted that down. We asked them to consider the U.K. experience and see if we could get on board for that so we could actually provide parliamentary oversight, notwithstanding the deficiencies in the bill.

● (1145)

For far too long Canadians have had too little information about our arms exports to countries with troubling human rights records. Any measures taken that fall short of ensuring the highest standards of accountability are doing a disservice to Canadians and to the vulnerable people who are affected by our policies.

Human rights are not optional. It is not enough for our Prime Minister to go on the international stage and talk the talk. It is now time to walk the talk and give parliamentarians and Canadians the tools they need to ensure that we are doing our part on arms trade exports around the world.

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member properly quoting me. I was misquoted by the Conservative opposition a number of times on Thursday. I appreciate the member quoting me properly.

The member started by providing tepid support for this bill. Allow me to warm the water a little by assuring him that, in fact, the regulations that will implement the criteria will be public. I wonder if the member was aware of that. The regulations will indeed go through a process of public consultation, like all regulations, and they will be subject to review by the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations.

As I said, regulations are developed in a transparent, deliberate, and comprehensive manner. Placing the criteria in regulations allows the government to update them in an expeditious manner. For example, after September 11, 2001, there was a strong desire to provide the minister of foreign affairs with security considerations, but because there was no existing mechanism to do so in the regulations, a legislative change was required, and it took four years to become law.

We believe that this process is robust, rigorous, and transparent. With the information I have provided my colleague across the way, will he take that tepid support and perhaps warm up a little to this bill?

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that I managed to quote the parliamentary secretary properly today.

There are very few regulations in the Canadian legal system that are not made public. There are a few, of course, involving national

security, that are notorious, but they are the exception to the rule. Of course we understand that regulations will be ultimately made public. Our point is that they will be made by faceless bureaucrats without any opportunity for parliamentary scrutiny. Regulations are not made by parliamentarians, with Canadians watching. They are made by the government. We do not get a chance to assess the merits of them.

As for the fact that all regulations are subject to scrutiny by the standing committee on regulations and other statutory instruments, that committee's mandate is to deal with the legality of those regulations, not the merit of those regulations. That does not make me feel any more warmly disposed to this bill than before.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, much of this debate has been dominated by the non-issue of the potential of any impact on legal gun owners within Canada.

I wonder if the member for Victoria would like to put on the record any analysis of the treaty itself, particularly article 3, which makes it very clear that the treaty shall not apply to the international movement of conventional arms that stay within the country in which they are directed. There are many other sections that make it clear that the treaty itself, as anyone who is sensible would understand, is entirely about the export of military conventional arms to other countries. It is not about domestic regulations or even about information requirements around domestic use for recreational hunting, or long guns, or guns of any kind used domestically.

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the intervention by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, and of course I agree with her. I think many Canadians watching this debate and hearing the participation by the Conservatives were wondering whether they had tuned into the wrong channel.

Article 3, as the member points is, makes it clear that this is not about domestic munitions and ammunition at all. Much of the debate was, frankly, scurrilous and irrelevant.

● (1150)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very interesting speech. I was paying close attention.

The Conservatives and the Liberals sometimes tell us that we already have a very robust system for controlling the export of arms, but some aspects of that system are governed more by policy and regulations, rather than by the law itself.

Although the government is saying that we must not export arms to countries where human rights are being violated unless we are sure they will not be used against civilians, this strategy, in practice, is not very sound, since we are exporting weapons to Saudi Arabia.

Government Orders

Is my colleague not worried that the same thing could happen with the regulations that would be passed since the bill itself is virtually hollow?

[*English*]

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to not only thank my colleague for her intervention but for her excellent work on behalf of the NDP in the review of this difficult legislation.

I found out that Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and China are among the top 10 destinations for Canada's military goods. We must do better. The regulations may say things the New Democrats would support; they may not. The fact is that the government has chosen to bypass Parliament, and that is not good enough.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I am going to talk about Bill C-47, which should, in theory, have the unanimous support of the House.

Everyone in the House will support Canada ratifying the 2013 Arms Trade Treaty, which would be very useful.

Take article 6.3, for example:

A State Party shall not authorize any transfer of conventional arms...if it has knowledge at the time of authorization that the arms or items would be used in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, attacks directed against civilian objects or civilians protected as such, or other war crimes as defined by international agreements to which it is a Party.

Under this treaty, no country is supposed to sell arms to countries that direct attacks against civilians. I am sure some people are wondering what an arm is, exactly.

The treaty that Canada is planning to ratify clarifies that in article 2.1:

This Treaty shall apply to all conventional arms within the following categories:

- (a) Battle tanks;
- (b) Armoured combat vehicles;
- (c) Large-calibre artillery systems;

Cynicism is a perfectly natural response here. What is the point of ratifying a treaty if a country does not respect either the letter or the spirit of that treaty?

Canada sells weapons to Saudi Arabia, and yet the government has known for years that the Wahhabi Kingdom does not respect human rights. It has known for years that Saudi civilians are constantly under attacks by the army, but money talks.

We forget about human rights when billions of dollars are at stake in Canada's great liberal democracy. Two years ago, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs Stéphane Dion believed that maintaining a strong trade relationship was the best way to influence a country that violates the rights of its citizens.

At least two years ago, when Minister Dion saw Saudi Arabia attacking its civilians, he acknowledged that selling light armoured vehicles to Riyadh was a calculated risk. However, he insisted that the armed vehicles appearing on screen at the time were not Canadian. He stated that there was no proof that any military equipment that Canada had been selling to Saudi Arabia since 1993 had been misused.

Yes, the Saudis are firing on their own people. Yes, we are selling them weapons, but for the Liberals, there is no connection between the two. However, the Arms Trade Treaty, that the Liberals want to ratify, clearly states that a country that is part of the treaty shall not sell any arms to another country if they know, at the time of authorization, that these arms or items would be used to carry out attacks on civilians. It doesn't say "are being used", but "would be used".

Two years ago, Canada was the second-largest exporter of arms to the Middle East, right behind the United States. Is that really the Liberals' vision for Canada? Everyone gets along, everything is fine and dandy, but we still sell weapons to a country that decapitates, whips and stones its own people.

On page 18 of the latest annual report to Parliament on the administration of the Export and Import Permits Act, we can read:

With respect to military goods and technology, Canadian export control policy has, for many years, been restrictive. Under present policy guidelines set out by Cabinet in 1986, Canada closely controls the export of military items to: countries which pose a threat to Canada and its allies; countries involved in or under imminent threat of hostilities; countries under United Nations Security Council sanctions; or countries whose governments have a persistent record of serious violations of the human rights of their citizens, unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable risk that the goods might be used against the civilian population.

We know that Saudi Arabia uses Canadian arms against the civilian population. The July 22 *Globe and Mail* article proved it. We saw the videos of the Canadian Gurkhas, the Minister of Foreign Affairs saw them, and the Prime Minister saw them. Has Canada put a stop to the sale of armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia as required by the guidelines? No.

● (1155)

The government is not obeying its own laws and now wants to ratify a treaty that it is already contravening. Bill C-47 may enjoy unanimous support, but the Liberal Party and every other party that voted in favour of the deal between the arms manufacturer and Saudi Arabia in 2015 was being hypocritical.

We know that Canada is partly responsible every time a civilian is killed by the Saudi government. When civilians are threatened, terrorized or brutalized, Canada will find solace in the money pouring into its coffers. In July, the minister stated that she was very concerned about the use of Canadian-made arms by the Saudi army against civilians and asked her officials to look into it immediately. This is my interpretation of what she said: if it were proven that Canadian exports were used to commit serious human rights violations, I would take action. Two months later nothing has been done.

We support the principles of this bill, but we think its application is even more important. There is no point in passing legislation and then not enforcing it. There is no point in ratifying a treaty and then not complying with it. In 1976, Canada signed the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which authorizes each signatory country to be a watchdog over the other signatory countries. Article 1 of the covenant states:

All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Government Orders

This is precisely what Madrid is denying the Catalan people. The Spanish government is denying the Catalan people not only their right to self-determination, but also their democratic right to vote on it.

Article 41 of the same covenant adds that if a state party to the covenant believes that another state party is not applying its provisions, it can draw that state party's attention to the matter in writing. The Minister of Foreign Affairs believes that the referendum in Catalonia falls under Spanish domestic affairs and that Canada should stay out of it, but what exactly is a domestic affair?

Canada ratified a covenant that invites signatory countries to keep an eye on one another to ensure that civil and political rights are respected. Now Ottawa is turning a blind eye, as though its signature meant nothing, as though the covenant were optional. My fear is that this Liberal government, despite having signed the Arms Trade Treaty, proves once again that its international commitments and its word are not worth much. The Liberals always put economic considerations ahead of human rights. That is the way it is.

• (1200)

[English]

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share my time with the member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Just on a point of order, the hon. member has 10 minutes and it is not about sharing. It will be passed on to the next person, so it is not a problem. The member may continue for 10 minutes.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-47. This bill is part of the Liberals' election promise to implement the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty, the ATT, which has been debated in the UN, brought forward, and signed by some countries.

It is significant to note that some major countries, Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea, have not signed-on. The United States has not ratified and will not likely ratify this treaty. Like many ineffective international treaties, many key participants in the trade are not part of this treaty.

The Conservatives have always supported efforts to establish international standards that help to prevent illicit transfers that fuel conflict and encourage terrorism or organized crime. In actuality, Canada already has a responsible internal system to monitor, and control the export of military and security equipment that meets or exceeds the UN treaty. In other words, the ATT is actually inferior when compared with what Canada already has in place, and has been implementing effectively since the 1940s.

First, we have the Trade Controls Bureau, a department of our own sovereign government that is empowered to make sure the military equipment sales, issues related to security, cryptological equipment, and nuclear and biological risks are not only governed and tracked but controlled.

The Trade Controls Bureau, here in Ottawa not in New York, has been empowered and serving Canadian parliaments, regardless of which political party is in power, for decades. We already specifically name, from a Canadian point of view, items for export

that need to be tracked and controlled under the Export and Import Permits Act, which the Trade Controls Bureau is charged to monitor.

Specifically, military or strategic dual-use goods; that is, some goods that can be used for a military or civilian purpose are specifically tracked. Also tracked are nuclear-energy materials and technology, missile-related technology, chemical and biological goods, cryptological equipment, and code breaking, the latter being so important to national security with the onset of the Internet.

Canada is a world leader in this technology, and our government was sensitive and responsible in controlling and, in many cases, restricting export of these technologies. An area of great concern to Canadians is that the current government has a willingness to see this type of asset sold to China without proper oversight. I have no confidence that Bill C-47 would in any way change the government's turning of a blind eye to the concerns from Canadians in this area.

It is also important to note that our existing system is superior to the UN treaty in the tracking of these goods, equipment and materials, and technologies by the Canada Border Services Agency and by Statistics Canada, using World Customs Organization tracking figures, and not just our own reference points.

We already track and limit the trade in these items far more than what the UN Arms Trade Treaty does. Why would we choose to sign-on to an agreement that is inferior to what we already have in place. Canada is already ahead of the curve and, doing so, leading as a sovereign nation on the world stage. Under the Export and Import Permits Act, through an order in council, Canada can limit sales of anything to another country. Canada can ban a country. As an example, North Korea is currently banned entirely through this area control list. The government already has within its power, without the UN treaty, the ability to limit entirely any sales to another country.

The current government is recording a huge deficit, well beyond its election promise of \$10 billion. Yesterday, we learned it has already imposed higher taxes to the tune of \$800-plus per year on middle-income earners. It has mandated a carbon tax with a compounded GST component already in some provinces that is adding to those people's taxes, hurting everyone and everything.

It is on a collision course to initiate higher, punitive taxes on small businesses, including agriculture, retail, tourism, manufacturing, small businesses, and young entrepreneurs just starting out as well. That is all to deal with the government's already out-of-control spending.

Government Orders

Canadians are tired, angry, and disillusioned with the current Liberal government's inability to manage its own house. Perhaps it is time to start taking care of things at home, and not try to fix something that not only is not broken but actually meets and exceeds the UN Arms Trade Treaty standards.

Another concern is that article 5 of the ATT seeks to include the Department of National Defence in the military equipment provisions of that treaty, preventing or, in some cases, limiting government-to-government transfers.

•(1205)

DND is government. It is a crown ministry. DND is responsible for its own equipment. Military-to-military aid and training materials are an important component of the mandate of our armed forces regarding training and assisting others. This would complicate and encumber that process. It is another bureaucratic challenge they do not need added on to complicate fulfilling their missions.

I want to echo one more concern of a significant cohort of Canadians the current government is ignoring. The UN Arms Trade Treaty must recognize and acknowledge the legitimacy of lawful ownership of firearms by responsible citizens for their personal and recreational use, including sport shooting, hunting, and collecting.

The Canadian Shooting Sports Association made the following statement to the Liberal government in September 2016:

Canada, under former Prime Minister Stephen Harper, requested that civilian firearms specifically be removed from the treaty in order to protect the interests of Canada's lawful firearms community. The UN ignored our nation's request to respect the interests of Canadians and refused to remove civilian firearms from the language of the treaty. So the Harper government did what was right: it stood up for Canadian sovereignty and Canadian gun owners and refused to sign the treaty...The CSSA calls upon the Hon. Stéphane Dion [then Minister of Foreign Affairs] and the Trudeau government to re-examine, re-evaluate and to re-think the decision to sign this oppressive treaty.

The government has a responsibility to ensure there is absolute clarity on the legitimacy of lawful trade and ownership of firearms by responsible citizens for their own use within the Arms Trade Treaty before moving forward to ratify it. The government would be wise to heed this challenge.

Liberal members of Parliament who are currently representing law-abiding gun owners must respectfully and genuinely consult with their constituents, and do their best to be heard by their cabinet and their Prime Minister. They must know they have significant numbers of Canadians in their ridings who have expressed legitimate concerns that their lawful and regulated use of firearms for hunting or sport shooting could be impacted. They must be having some degree of apprehensive déjà vu here.

They would be wise to determine which is more important: aspirations for a UN seat, or standing up for the legitimate concerns of Canadians.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians should be concerned that no matter how often it is clearly indicated there is no impact in terms of gun owners, Conservatives stand up and try to spread misinformation, which is what it is. Misinformation is being spread collectively by the

Conservative Party for who knows what reason, and I will let other people deal with that.

Does the member not agree and recognize that this proposed legislation would in fact make our world a safer place?

The member makes reference to the current export control system, but she seems to be questioning it. I am sure the member is aware that Bill C-47, the actual bill we are debating today, would strengthen the existing system by ensuring criteria are in regulation, and by introducing controls on brokering.

Could the member speak to how Bill C-47 would strengthen, not replace or weaken, export controls, and let us stop the misinformation about local gun ownership?

•(1210)

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to say that I am not misrepresenting constituents. I am representing constituents in Canada who have tried desperately to speak to the current government to come to its senses, and to include them in a clause in that treaty, so they know beyond a shadow of a doubt that our government is standing up for them, and protecting their right to own guns legally and lawfully within our country.

I would again encourage the Liberals to consider their own ridings, the people they represent, who I know in the rural areas are talking to them about this issue, and respond to Canadians with clear communication, so they know they have their best interests at heart. It would take nothing on the part of the government to represent them properly within this treaty and have their backs.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Yorkton—Melville for clarifying that when putting forward comments about the legislation, she is reporting on what her constituents have said.

I believe that as a member of Parliament it is my obligation to help explain to constituents and reduce the fear factor when people have been misinformed by others about the intent of legislation or changes that are coming their way.

I have carefully reviewed the Arms Trade Treaty and I have carefully reviewed Bill C-47, and for Canadians watching at home and for the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville, the key thing is when reading language, they should look at words like “under this act” or “under this treaty”. That creates a bracketing of this fear around the keeping of lists or records.

Government Orders

The treaty specifically says it is entirely about international transfer and export of military equipment for military ends. It specifically says it is not to apply to recreational users domestically. It specifically says in article 3 that it is about international export and not about when a state party imports weapons into its own country, not for export.

The act itself repeatedly says that a list will be kept for purposes under this act. Nothing here could possibly apply to legal gun ownership in Canada, and I urge my friend from Yorkton—Melville to help provide balance and real information on this topic and not encourage in any way legal gun owners in Canada to think this has any application to them.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague a great deal on a personal level and as a colleague in the House. However, she is the one who is misdirected on this point, because I do not need to convince my constituents that they are not thinking clearly. These are very bright gun owners. They are reading this act themselves, and their concern is with the part that states:

Paragraph 10.2(2)(a) of the Act is replaced by the following:

(a) enter any place in which the inspector reasonably believes the person or organization keeps records or carries on any activity to which this Act applies;

This is not talking just government to government; this is talking about individuals, purchasers, and organizations. It needs that clarity, and if the government wants to respond to the people of Canada and their constituents who are concerned about this aspect, it can take care of it simply by addressing this issue with the United Nations.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very moved to stand in the House today to speak to this issue. As parliamentarians, we occasionally have the opportunity to address issues that are of fundamental importance not only to Canadians but to people around the world. I cannot think of any issues that are more important to people in our globe than those that concern safety, security, and peace. These are foundational issues upon which all other activities depend.

We are witnessing conflicts and violence in this world, both civil and across borders, that represent a failure of the international order. The treaty before us gives us an opportunity to improve our world.

As parliamentarians, we spend a lot of time saying “human rights”, “rule of law”, “democracy”, and “freedom”. These are words that have intense meaning and importance to Canadians and people around the globe. The complete antithesis occurs when people resort to arms, to force, to violence as a means of altering political or social reality in this world. There is nothing more antithetical to the rule of law than the rule of violence. There is nothing more opposite to democratic and peaceful resolutions of disputes between people than people picking up guns and firing at one another as a means of trying to settle disputes.

As one member of this House, I am very pleased to see the Liberal government accede to the Arms Trade Treaty. In fact, I had the opportunity to be in New York at the United Nations for one of the sessions where this issue was being debated. Illicit and irresponsible transfers of conventional weapons are a significant factor in human suffering worldwide, fuelling armed violence in all of its forms, including domestic violence, international armed conflicts, and civil disputes.

With the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty in December 2014, the majority of the world states agreed to establish global standards for responsible national decision-making on the transfer of conventional weapons. For the life of me, I cannot understand how any responsible legislator, not only in this country but in the world, could oppose the establishment of such a regime.

At the time, Stephen Harper's Conservative government refused to join the Arms Trade Treaty. Canada was the only member of NATO and the G7 not to have signed the ATT. I was embarrassed by that failure, and I think I speak for the vast majority of Canadians who were embarrassed by that move as well. The majority of Canadians want our country to be a responsible member of the international stage, doing our part to try to reduce violence in the world, to try to be an honest broker and help make and keep peace wherever there is conflict in the world.

In June of 2016, the current government announced that Canada would join the Arms Trade Treaty, and former foreign affairs minister Stéphane Dion tabled the text of the treaty and an explanatory memorandum in the House of Commons. The goal of acceding to the Arms Trade Treaty was included in the mandate letter given to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and I support that measure.

Bill C-47, the bill before this House today, represents the legislative implementation of that commitment, and it includes legislative amendments to fulfill some of the treaty's provisions and bring Canada's laws and policies mostly into compliance with the ATT. Members will have noticed that I emphasized the word “some”. I will be focusing on some of the weaknesses and omissions in this bill, and I hope parliamentarians on all side of the House can roll up their sleeves and in good faith work to repair and improve them.

At present, we support the general thrust of this legislation, but we have serious concerns about its contents, particularly over what is missing.

● (1215)

Generally, polls show that most Canadians disapprove of arms deals with human rights abusers. I think many Canadians would be shocked to learn that Canadian weapons exports have nearly doubled over the last 10 years under the Conservative government's stewardship. While Canada used to export arms mostly to NATO countries, under the Conservative government our arms exports shifted to include many countries with troubling—in fact, abysmal—human rights records. Canada is now the second-largest arms dealer in the Middle East after the United States, according to defence industry publication *Jane's*. Saudi Arabia is now the world's second-largest buyer of Canadian-made military equipment after the United States.

I want to pause for a moment and talk about Saudi Arabia.

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This is a place that practises beheadings. This is a place where women cannot vote. This is a place where, up until recently, women could not even drive a vehicle, although I understand that Saudi Arabia has recently announced that it may start allowing women to drive vehicles. This is a country that has no record of democracy or respect for human rights whatsoever, and most troubling of all, Saudi Arabia is not restricting this heinous and abysmal human rights record to its own borders but has been involved in invading a neighbouring country, Yemen, where it is using Canadian-made military equipment against civilians in another country.

I would dare say that most Canadians do not support that. Most Canadians would like to see the present government take every possible step to cease exporting any military equipment to a country with that kind of human rights record, a country that is using aggressive weapons against innocent civilians.

Canada's existing arms export rules are supposed to prohibit sales of military hardware to countries whose governments have a persistent record of serious violations of the human rights of their citizens unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable risk that the goods might be used against the civilian population. However, the example I just pointed out, and there are others, makes it clear that Canada's arms export controls are not working. While the Liberal government argues, as the Conservatives did before it, that Canada has strong arms export regulations, in recent months Canadians have grown increasingly concerned about those Canadian arms exports falling into the wrong hands. Worse, it was revealed last August that the Government of Canada has actually weakened its arms export policy to make it easier to export military hardware to states that abuse human rights.

The magazine *L'actualité* recently published an analysis that found that in the past 25 years Canada sold \$5.8 billion in weapons to countries with deeply questionable human rights records. Canadian foreign ministers are often reluctant to refuse export permits after contracts are signed, but that is exactly what Canadian law calls for. Companies enter into commercial agreements, and then it is up to the government to issue export control permits and to cease from doing so if Canada has reason to believe that those arms are going to fall into the hands of human rights abusers or be used against civilian populations. That policy has not been implemented well by either the current government or the one before it.

I am going to quickly point out some of the flaws in the bill.

It has been pointed out by many speakers that ironically, most of Canada's arms are integrated with the U.S. military system, yet the bill does not apply to Canadian arms shipments to the United States. There is no principled reason that the United States should receive an exemption from the very laws that we seek to apply to every other country.

The bill also fails to ensure that parliamentarians can scrutinize the regulatory regime that will create the substance of the bill. We are debating the legislative structure before us, but we as parliamentarians will not be able to see or influence how the regulations will be drafted. Those will be done behind closed doors.

I will conclude by saying I think that most Canadians want to see Canada as a peaceful player on the world stage. They want to restore

our reputation, which was severely damaged by the previous government over the last decade, and they want Canada to be a respected international player, doing our part to build bridges between countries to help them resolve their disputes peacefully and building capacity for democracy and respect for the rule of law. The way to do that is by taking every measure we can to reduce the flow of arms to people who would use them for poor purposes.

• (1220)

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to state clearly that our government takes very seriously the export of arms to countries around the world. We have a robust process in place to ensure that we consider the end-user and end use in issuing any export permits for arms headed to countries around the world.

Acceding to the Arms Trade Treaty would strengthen Canada's current export control system; establish a decision-making process, codify it, and ensure that it is more transparent, more robust, and more comprehensive; and ensure that Canada could contribute to greater peace and arms trade compliance in some conflict zones around the world. The ATT recognizes that there is no one size fits all for countries that are acceding to the treaty, and the decision to not require export permits for a majority of goods headed to the United States was determined to be fully compliant with the ATT.

Does the member opposite agree that acceding to this treaty via Bill C-47 would strengthen Canada's role in the trade of conventional arms around the world?

• (1225)

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, the bill before us certainly provides the capacity to do so, but good intentions in this area, while necessary, are not sufficient.

In 2014 and 2015, only 10 export permits were denied out of 7,310 applications. I mentioned Saudi Arabia, but Algeria and other human rights violators are among the top 10 destinations of Canadian military goods. That is according to the Department of Global Affairs' reports for 2015.

As I mentioned, Canadian-made weaponry has been used in the Saudi-led war in Yemen, where over 6,000 people have been killed and where one of the world's worst humanitarian situations continues to deteriorate.

Therefore, I would not be as quick to claim success as the government is with its approach to export controls, although I believe that Canada's accession to the treaty is a positive step in that regard.

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his thoughtful speech. He always presents the facts without getting into a lot of extra rhetoric. I really appreciate that.

Government Orders

The NDP put forward a motion a while ago seeking parliamentary oversight of arms sales, and it was turned down by the Liberal government. I would like to give the member an opportunity to talk about what the benefits would be of parliamentary oversight, and why he believes the Liberal government voted it down.

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, the NDP has long called for Canada to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty, and in 2016 we proposed the creation of a new standing committee to oversee arms exports. That would be a Canadian committee modelled after the successful U.K. parliamentary arms committee. It would be multi-partisan and tasked with examining all aspects of Canada's arms exports regime.

There is currently no parliamentary oversight of Canadian arms exports whatsoever. We believe that a multi-party House committee could examine a full range of questions related to Canada's arms exports, such as where, to whom, how much, and what kind. It could identify loopholes in our existing legislation, regulations, and practices, and enable parliamentarians to hear from the arms industry, NGOs, government representatives, and the public.

Unfortunately, the Liberals and Conservatives voted against the creation of such a committee. We renew our call on the government to consider such a committee, if in fact it is truly committed to making progress in this area.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to discuss a treaty as important as the Arms Trade Treaty, or ATT.

I do commend the Liberal government and Prime Minister for committing to sign and ratify this treaty. I agree with the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway that Canadians were ashamed when we were the only NATO country not to have signed the Arms Trade Treaty. Signing it is important; ratifying it is important. The legislation that comes before us today to allow us to implement the treaty is important.

I am going to take a few moments before I go into the details of what needs to be remedied within Bill C-47 to make it the legislation that Canada needs so that we really implement the Arms Trade Treaty. I am going to a few moments to put to rest, I hope, some of the distressingly flawed scare tactics by friends of mine on the Conservative benches. I am deeply distressed that people in the House would not be sure they understand the legislation before allowing people across Canada, particularly legal gun owners, to become alarmed by a bill they should not be alarmed about.

Moments ago in debate one of the Conservative members read out part of Bill C-47, in fact from clause 10. This is how people are misled. I am going to take some time to go through this, so that members in this place and people watching on CPAC, or however they are watching this, can see how selective reading can spread alarm.

This was read out from Bill C-47:

Inspection

10.2 (1) An inspector may, at all reasonable times, for any purpose related to the administration or enforcement of this Act, inspect, audit or examine the records of any person or organization

That was read out as if this bill to deal with the arms trade, the transfer of military equipment, tanks, weapons, and all manner of conventional arms, would have an impact on any person or organization, such that they could suddenly have their door beaten down by an inspector.

Where the hon. member who read that statement stopped reading was right before the following words:

that has applied for a permit, an import allocation, or export allocation, a certificate or another authorization under this Act

There is no way in the world that the proposed subsection that was read out has the meaning that the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville just implied. The words “any person or organization” are followed immediately by the words “that has applied for a permit”. There is no legal gun owner across this country nor local gun store nor local supplier of recreational equipment of any kind that is dealing in arms and applying for a permit under this bill.

That is why I am so deeply distressed that Canadians who have fought against the long-gun registry, say, “Okay we no longer have a long-gun registry”, but are concerned about this. Canadians who fought against the long-gun registry do not need to worry. There is no way in this world that any portion of the global treaty or domestic legislation would apply to domestic activities.

Let me read these words from the treaty itself:

Mindful of the legitimate trade and lawful ownership, and use of certain conventional arms for recreational, cultural, historical, and sporting activities, where such trade, ownership and use are permitted or protected by law.

The treaty specifically says in article 2(3) the following:

This Treaty shall not apply to the international movement of conventional arms by, or on behalf of, a State Party for its use provided that the conventional arms remain under that State Party's ownership.

To be very clear again, this treaty and the domestic act to bring it into force apply only to those who choose to ask the government for a permit to export the arms described in the treaty as including battle tanks; armoured combat vehicles; large-calibre artillery systems; combat aircraft; attack helicopters; warships; missiles and missile launchers; and small arms and light weapons. Unless the purpose is to export those to another country for military purposes, this legislation would not apply.

● (1230)

Let us see how well it would do in curtailing the arms trade from Canada to countries that we would not want to see using those weapons against their own people, countries with dubious human rights records.

When I was growing up, Canada was not an arms trading country. We did not think of ourselves as big in the arms trade business. The military industrial complex on the U.S. side of the border had not yet started taking over enough of our companies that we became enmeshed in their business.

Government Orders

Some of our defence decisions are influenced by commercial interests. The F-35 fighter plane boondoggle was embraced by previous governments because subcontracts might flow to the aerospace industry within Canada. This enmeshing of our economies has brought with it an enmeshing in parts that go into weapon systems that we would not want to see going to other countries. For instance, the United States recently sold warplanes and armoured vehicles to Nigeria. Those warplanes will have in them Pratt & Whitney engines manufactured in Quebec. Is that a concern? It is to Canadians. We need to track that. If we are serious about the Arms Trade Treaty, we do not want Canadian components and Canadian arms flowing through the U.S. to other countries.

Let us look at our history as an arms trading country. There has been a 48% increase in the arms trade. When it spiked one year there was a lot of national concern, which I remember. It was 1994, and there had been a 48% increase in our arms sales, which took us to \$497 million that year. In 2016, Canada had a trade in arms of \$718 million. That is far more than the peak year of 1994. Of that \$718 million in weapons and arms we exported from Canada, nearly 20% went to Saudi Arabia, or a total of \$142 million in sales.

It is critical that we make the Arms Trade Treaty work for the world. Canada has shown leadership on a treaty like this in the past. I wish we would show leadership as well on the nuclear disarmament treaty, as well as the fissile material cut-off treaty in which we are participating but not leading.

On this issue, we should look to our history with the Ottawa Treaty banning land mines. The movement that led to that treaty won the Nobel Peace Prize, and rightly so. December 3, 2017, will be the 20th anniversary of Canadian leadership in helping to rid the world of land mines. We have not yet rid the world of land mines, but their use has declined dramatically. We have proven statistics, proven evidence, that the land mine treaty has saved thousands of lives around the world, even though major world powers like the U.S., China, and Russia never signed on to the Ottawa Treaty. Still, the treaty works and has massively reduced land mine traffic.

Canada has an opportunity here to step up again. The minimum we can do is to sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty at the UN, but our domestic legislation must meet the purposes of our global commitment, and that means fixing the loophole that would allow military equipment under the definition of the treaty to pass through the United States. At this point, the U.S. has signed the treaty, but it will remain a non-state party to this treaty. This means that it will not have to track where the weapons go or meet the tests and the analysis and the screening that Canada and other parties must meet.

I say to my friends on the government benches, can we please get this legislation to committee and fill that loophole that is big enough to drive a tank through, the loophole that does not limit or record the sales and the transfer of weapons through the United States?

• (1235)

Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always admire the work that goes into the speeches by the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, and I thank her for her words this morning. I also appreciate her legal expertise and her reading the part of the bill that sets out that this will not apply to those Canadians who are legal gun owners. That is

important, because we are hearing that message over and over again. I appreciate the member making that point.

It has been mentioned that we recognize that the illicit transfer of arms often equals violence. Violence is prominent in countries in conflict, and the violence is often against women and girls, who suffer atrocities and suffer a violation of their human rights. Does the member agree that this government is taking a leadership role on this through the ATT? How will this directly help these young women and girls in these countries of conflict?

• (1240)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, when we read of the atrocities by rogue non-state actors like Boko Haram, or the atrocities by state actors, such as Myanmar against the Rohingya people, we recognize that so much of this is made possible because of access to arms that are not manufactured in those countries but that freely flow and fill profit margins. Somewhere there are shareholders who are pleased to see that they are doing so very well. The global arms trade is something we should want to curtail, not expedite.

I spoke earlier of the Ottawa Treaty, which is tangential to the member's main point. There are still land mines in Angola and Cambodia. There are countries that still have land mines that impede the ability of women to collect water easily. As we approach the 20th anniversary of the Ottawa Treaty, I would urge Canada to step up to help clear land mines from countries that are now post-conflict, where women and girls are the most likely to have their day-to-day potential to grow food and travel safely impeded by land mines.

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the Green Party for hopefully bringing a sense of comfort to the many gun owners in my riding, where hunting is very much a part of the way of life for many people and many of my constituents.

The NDP will support Bill C-47 at second reading, and we hope to see amendments at committee. Since the member does not get a chance to participate actively in those committees, I would ask her if there are amendments she would like to see brought forward in addition to the one concerning tracking arms through the United States.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, strangely enough, I am forced by a decision of eight individual committees to present amendments at clause-by-clause study. I will be listening to all the evidence before the committee. I am grateful to the hon. member. I know he will be helpful when it gets to committee.

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There are a number of other places we might want to tighten up the treaty. We may have amendments that are similarly worded. However, the main one, and I hope the Liberal benches will be open to helping us at committee, is to find a way to address the loophole in dealing with the transfer of arms. We do not need to single out the United States. We need to just say that where we are transferring weapons or arms of any kind, when we are dealing with a non-state party, we should also keep records.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to speak to this bill because it is extremely important to me.

The thing to keep in mind about arms treaties is that trading in arms is not the same as trading in potatoes. Arms can result in death and the destruction of the environment, depending on which type is used.

The use of this equipment carries consequences that are too great, which is why much more monitoring and supervision is required. We have to ask questions to determine what this equipment will be used for later, for example. That is one of the underlying questions in the Arms Trade Treaty that we are discussing here today. The urge to regulate the arms trade reflects a greater realization that we cannot simply sell weapons without asking how they will be used later on. That would make no sense.

Take our troops, for example. I think it is essential that we not send them somewhere to fight for the values of freedom, the values of the United Nations, and Canadian values, against people who are using Canadian arms that were sold to them directly, or transferred to them some other way, but ended up in the wrong hands.

Out of respect for our soldiers and because of what we, as a country, ask of them, we must have a solid arms trade policy that takes into account that arms will change hands more than once. If we think we know where arms will end up one day, then maybe we should refrain from selling them. It is not acceptable to turn a blind eye in order to make money in the arms trade. We really need to know where they are going and how they will be used.

This is a bill aimed at supporting the implementation of a treaty on the arms trade, but unfortunately, parts of it remain vague. For that reason, our party intends to support this bill and, by extension, the Arms Trade Treaty, but with the caveat that unless certain parts of the bill are clarified, it will not achieve the ultimate goal of ensuring that arms are sold only to people capable of wielding them responsibly. It is crucial to know whether those that have weapons are capable of using them in a judicious and well-thought-out manner, or whether they will be irresponsible and have no scruples about violating human rights by deploying them against civilians.

We need to be even more careful with our arms exports. Unfortunately, it is unclear whether the bill, as it currently stands, will achieve that goal. The best example before us is our arms deal with Saudi Arabia. We have proof that the weapons we sold to the Saudis are being used against their own citizens as a tool of repression. As human beings and as a society, we cannot live with this blood on our hands. We cannot accept Saudi money if we know that the vehicles they buy from us will ultimately be used for unacceptable purposes, as is happening now. It is a matter of

integrity. I could not feel comfortable explaining to my child that weapons are being sent overseas and used against civilians.

● (1245)

However, I also understand that selling arms is an economic activity, and I agree that we should engage in that sort of trade with countries that abide by the treaty, NATO countries in particular. I know that these countries will use those weapons properly and wisely, and that they will not use them to violate human rights.

When we send weapons to a country that violates human rights as brazenly as Saudi Arabia, I have to wonder about our integrity. On one hand, we participate in this arms trade and we take the money that comes from it, while on the other, we condemn human rights violations. Our attitude does nothing to help stop the cycle of violence in Saudi Arabia. We are telling this country that what it is doing is not nice, but we are still agreeing to sell it weapons. It does not make any sense.

That is why we need to strengthen the provisions of the bill that deal with exports. Right now, they are too vague. The bill is not sound and does not settle the issue once and for all. There is also the matter of signing treaties and passing bills to ratify treaties. Treaties set out specific commitments and when a country signs a treaty, it is agreeing to take specific action. The signing of such documents should not be seen as an opportunity for a selfie. It is serious business. If the government passes bills without any real intention of implementing the very principle on which the treaty is based, we are not really making any progress.

That is why I sincerely hope that we will take the time to seriously examine this bill in committee and that the government will accept amendments to strengthen the provisions regarding the export of firearms to countries that violate human rights. I think that is essential.

The other issue that needs to be addressed is the fact that the Arms Trade Treaty does not allow any exemptions. The United States is currently exempt from the provisions on arms trade. That presents a problem as well. We will have to decide what to do with the United States. Since the treaty does not provide for exemptions, we will have to find another solution. We cannot continue to conduct trade with the United States the way we do now if we truly want to respect the spirit of the treaty. That is another important issue.

When we talk about arms exchanging hands, we must keep in mind that some of the weapons sold to the United States are later transferred to another country. For example, some countries might help groups that find it difficult to arm themselves to ensure stability. On certain occasions we armed groups that we believed were capable of regaining control of their country and their region. Unfortunately, one of those groups turned against us years later.

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When we decide to arm foreign groups, we have to ask ourselves if we are being smart about it and if we can be sure they will use the arms they receive to restore stability. We have to figure out whether there is any chance it could backfire and put us in the position of having to send Canadian troops to fight those groups a decade later.

We can all agree that we have to be smart and sensible about the arms trade, and that we must not ignore human rights issues. If we do, we kind of have blood on our hands.

As lawmakers, I hope the bill we ultimately pass will address this issue very clearly, not vaguely like the bill before us. I hope the committee will be smart and sensible about its work on this.

• (1250)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member opposite and she comes across as being against armaments being exported from Canada. I do not want to misquote her in any way, but rather just remind her of the last provincial election, when the leader of her party campaigned next to the gates of a factory that was producing armaments that were being exported to Saudi Arabia. Many of the concerns she dealt with in her speech are related to Saudi Arabia, and yet the leader of the New Democratic Party, during the election, in front of those workers and our nation, said that he and the NDP would conform and abide by agreements that were signed.

I understood what the leader of the New Democratic Party said then, but then I listened to what the member across the way said today, and I would ask if she believes, as I do, that there are inconsistencies between what she is saying and what the leader of her party said and how she would address that.

• (1255)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, if the member had listened to my whole speech, not just the parts he wanted to hear, he would have heard me say very clearly that I am not against selling arms to NATO countries. I believe they are capable of using arms intelligently. However, I have my doubts about doing business with countries such as Saudi Arabia.

I encourage the member to listen to speeches in their entirety so he can ask much better questions.

[*English*]

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last year, the NDP tried to create a new standing committee in the House to oversee arms exports, so that arms would not go to countries that have massive human rights violations. The proposal for this committee was put forward and, of course, the Liberals and Conservatives voted against such an oversight committee, which would be critical because there is no parliamentary oversight of Canadian arms exports, and this is despite the fact that Canada is now the second-largest arms dealer in the Middle East.

I would ask my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue if she could speak about the importance of the oversight of arms exports.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, oversight is indeed extremely important, especially with regard to procurement. It is imperative that we ask questions about where the arms that leave Canada are going. It is a matter of accountability.

When I was the critic for military procurement, that was one of the questions I would routinely ask companies. I would ask who they did business with and whether they tried to sell their products in a responsible way. That is one of the key issues in the arms trade. We cannot keep closing our eyes and giving companies money to buy us weapons when those same companies export arms to countries we might have to fight. It makes absolutely no sense for us to buy fighter planes to attack armoured vehicles that were made in Canada to begin with. We would not have to fight those vehicles if we had not sold them in the first place. We need to use common sense. When it comes to dealing in arms and military equipment, we need to take our heads out of the sand and start asking questions.

I believe it is precisely the role of parliamentarians to ask these questions and think about how the arms trade is conducted. However, the Liberals decided that creating a committee to oversee arms exports was not all that important. I am very disappointed by their attitude, because the whole reason Parliament exists is to consider all these issues so Canadians can see that their MPs and senators are doing their job and making sure the arms trade is conducted responsibly. Unfortunately, when the NDP's motion was voted down, it meant Parliament and its members were prevented from taking action.

[*English*]

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and speak on Bill C-47, an act to amend the Export and Import Permits Act and the Criminal Code. In 2016, the Liberals announced that they would agree to sign the UN Arms Trade Treaty. This bill, if adopted, would implement the ATT.

Conservatives have always supported efforts to establish international standards for the trade of arms, which would help prevent illicit transfers to tyrannical regimes, terrorists, or criminal organizations bent on harming innocent people throughout the world and fuelling conflicts with their neighbours. I am stating for the record, which I am sure will not surprise many of my hon. colleagues in the House, that I oppose this bill. There are several reasons I oppose it, and for the benefit of Canadians watching on CPAC or in the House, I will explain why.

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First, Canada already has an accountable and robust internal system to monitor and control the export of military and security equipment, controls that meet or exceed those laid out in the ATT. The Trade Controls Bureau, which regulates the Export and Import Permits Act, has provided ministers, since the beginning of the cold war, with the ability to prevent the export of heavily restricted items of a military nature to countries that, for a variety of reasons, are perceived to be a threat internally or externally or are under sanctions by the United Nations. We take this seriously. We restrict dangerous items, which include military, strategic dual-use goods, nuclear energy materials and technology, missile, chemical, or biological goods, and cryptological equipment.

Second, we have a comprehensive and rigorous system in place to track and record more items, not fewer, than will be required under the ATT. What is more, Canadians are doing the tracking, not foreign governments. Canadian agencies, fully accountable to Parliament, like the Canada Border Services Agency, which tracks items, and Statistics Canada, which collects information on all items exported from Canada, classify these items using categories negotiated by the World Customs Organization.

Third, Canada has at its disposal the area control list under the Export and Import Permits Act. Through an act of the Governor in Council, a country can be placed on this list and receive a blanket trade ban. North Korea is there right now. In the past, the list has included other countries like Belarus and Myanmar.

Fourth, countries that represent most of the sales of military equipment, like Russia and the United States, have either not signed or likely will not ratify the ATT. How effective is this? How does the government currently think that the ATT would be very effective when key participants in the trade of these items are not part of the treaty?

Fifth, any military trade treaty should explicitly recognize the legitimacy of lawful ownership of firearms by responsible citizens for uses such as sports shooting, hunting, and collecting. The Conservatives have taken a strong and principled stance on this issue. We believe that any military trade treaty must recognize the legitimacy of lawful ownership of firearms by responsible citizens for their recreational use. This is why we did not sign the treaty when we were in government. We could not guarantee the protection of such traditional Canadian activities like hunting, for example.

We must remember that our primary duty as parliamentarians is to protect the rights and freedoms of Canadians. The member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies stood in the House and did a great job of outlining that issue for law-abiding gun owners, hunters, and recreational firearm enthusiasts. He was asked about this matter in particular and faced a few questions, and there were calls for the member and others to point to where in the legislation there would be a gun registry. I am not going to waste everybody's time here rereading that bill into the record as it has already been done by the member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies.

• (1300)

Before members ask me to point to sections that talk about keeping records, I should specify that it is “any records” that the minister stipulates, or the section that references that the minister can

require “any person or organization that is required to keep records” to retain them for any period. I challenge members to take the bill back to their ridings and have a farmer, a hunter, a sports shooting enthusiast, or even a gun collector interpret it for them. I guarantee there will be a lot of questions on it.

I am sure they will give their thoughts on another gun registry, a registry—I might remind members—that targeted law-abiding firearms owners, cost the taxpayers of Canada some \$2 billion, and did absolutely nothing to prevent firearms from getting into the hands of criminals.

Now we have a government that promised not to introduce a gun registry, yet here it is, the very strong potential for a backdoor gun registry. This seems to be the *modus operandi* for the government: to introduce proposals that it knows will not pass muster, under some guise. As the old saying goes, you can put lipstick on a pig, but it is still a pig.

Summer is the traditional time for vacations or in the case of farmers and entrepreneurs a very busy time, especially in my riding where the summer tourist season is short in some cases. In Ontario we had weather that was not exceptional for some tourist operators, marinas, hotels, and that sort of thing, so that is a crucial period and they are very busy. In the midst of summer, the Minister of Finance tried to slip past massive tax hikes on small business owners, professionals, and farmers, many of whom were in the fields when this was announced. They were busy.

What is it about law-abiding Canadians who are minding their own business that the government has such an issue with? Whether it is responsible gun owners enjoying a recreational pastime or hard-working small business entrepreneurs creating the jobs that grow the economy of this country, the government seems to feel obligated to meddle with legislation that is working fine.

Conservatives agree that Canada's tax system should be fair and equitable for all, and we agree that any military trade treaty we sign needs to protect the rights of Canadian firearms enthusiasts, so why has the government tried to stifle debate and “consult” in the middle of summer? Why is the consultation period set to end next Monday, just 10 days after the resumption of Parliament? Why will the government not prove to Canadians that there was not ill intent, and extend the tax hike consultation deadline?

Government Orders

I can tell everyone why, and it is the same reason that we are debating this problematic bill right now. The Liberal government feels it knows better. It knows better than Canadians and it knows better than the citizens of this country. The government wants to make the world less safe by adopting the ATT, which will do less to protect Canadians, our allies, and innocent lives around the globe. The government wants to remove oversight by trusted Canadian agencies, which are accountable to Parliament and by extension the people of Canada. It wants to do this to reintroduce a piece of legislation it promised not to introduce, a piece of costly legislation nobody wants. Why? It is because it seems to know better. I am here to say it does not, and I suspect it will not be long before Canadians tell it the same thing as well. I look forward to questions from my colleagues.

• (1305)

Mr. Matt DeCourcey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to address the comments made by my colleague across the way. I wonder if he would explain to his constituents that what Bill C-47 would do, in addition to providing a more codified way in which Canada can ensure that conventional arms are not getting into the hands of people who would do undue harm to women and children in conflict zones, is that it would leave in place the exact same record-keeping regime that was in place under the previous Conservative government. Would he explain that to his constituents, and would he also explain to them that Canada has a leadership role to play in helping address situations where women and young children are unduly and negatively affected in conflict zones? Canada can help regulate and resolve some of the terrible things that happen around the world.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the member opposite. I do appreciate the enthusiasm. I see him often in the halls, and we do have great conversations. It is good to see him all fired up over there. I appreciate that. No argument here, I would agree. We just want to ensure that those who are legally possessing firearms in this country do not have a back-door gun registry. That is it.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to rise in the House today to discuss Bill C-47, an act to amend the Export and Import Permits Act and the Criminal Code.

What I am about to say has probably been said by a number of my colleagues, but I will reiterate some of the key points.

I believe, as many government members have already stated, that under article 10 of the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty, Canada is required to establish brokering controls. It is important to note that within the proposed legislation, brokering is defined as arranging or negotiating a transaction that relates to the movement of goods or technology on a new brokering control list from a foreign country to another foreign country.

Under the government's proposed legislation, the act would implement controls around the brokering of military goods between two countries outside of Canada. In addition, a legal obligation would be established whereby the Minister of Foreign Affairs considers specific assessment criteria prior to authorizing permits. For summary conviction offences, the maximum fine under the

Export and Import Permits Act, or EIPA, would be increased from \$25,000 to \$250,000. Under the Arms Trade Treaty, all states are assigned the primary responsibility in establishing and implementing their respective national control systems. Within the framework of the Arms Trade Treaty, the Department of National Defence is required to be brought into the export control system.

There have been many arguments put forward that the legislation before us is flawed. My colleagues have named a number of them. I would like to summarize some of the concerns I have with Bill C-47.

First, it is important to know that Canada already has a responsible internal system to monitor and control the export of military and security equipment that meets or exceeds the UN treaty.

There are three of four areas I will touch on.

The first is the Trade Controls Bureau in Ottawa, which regulates the Export and Import Permits Act. Since 1947, it has allowed the minister to prevent the supply of military equipment to countries for a variety of reasons, including those that are a security threat, involved in internal or external conflict, or are under sanctions by the United Nations.

The second is that specific items are already heavily restricted by Canada include military or strategic dual-use goods; nuclear energy materials and technology; missile, chemical or biological goods; and cryptological equipment. Companies throughout Canada are leaders in many of these areas.

The third is that we are already tracking and recording more than what is required under the Arms Trade Treaty. Canada Border Services Agency and Statistics Canada collect information on all items exported from Canada and classify these items using categories negotiated by the World Customs Organization.

Canada can also utilize a blanket ban on trade with risk countries through the use of the area control list, which, under the Export and Import Permits Act, through an act of the Governor in Council, a country can be placed on that list. North Korea is there at present. In the past, the list has included Belarus and Myanmar.

Furthermore, countries that represent the majority of the sales of military equipment, Russia and the United States, have either not signed or have not, and likely will not, ratified the treaty, which has been mentioned by my colleagues here today. Like many ineffective international treaties, the key participants in the trade are not part of the treaty, which raises alarm bells in itself.

Government Orders

●(1310)

The Department of National Defence, as a crown department, is traditionally exempted from the export control system. Exports of military aid or government-to-government gifts do not require authorization, and occur without oversight by Canadian export control officials.

Article 5 of the Arms Trade Treaty would require bringing our Department of National Defence into the export control system. I know that many MPs have stated that any Arms Trade Treaty should explicitly recognize the legitimacy of lawful ownership of firearms by responsible citizens for uses such as sports shooting, hunting, and collecting.

The Liberals have moved forward with an Arms Trade Treaty that does not respect the legitimate trade or use of hunting and sporting firearms. We are concerned that little or no consultation with lawful gun owners was undertaken by the Liberals before they unilaterally decided to accede to this treaty. That brings to mind a meeting I held in my own constituency early in September, when I met with gun owners throughout my constituency and had a workshop with them. This bill was raised by those individuals in discussions.

They are the ones that were concerned about whether the government would be bringing in a backdoor gun registry again, as my colleague from Kawartha Lakes just mentioned. This is a concern that is on people's minds, not only in my constituency. My colleague from Yorkton—Melville has mentioned as well that there was a concern in her area, my neighbouring constituency in Saskatchewan.

There are a number of reasons Canadians are feeling they cannot possibly trust the Liberal government when it comes to some of these areas, or they have concerns about some of the things that might be in this bill. That is because the government has already not fulfilled some of the other promises they made, and have driven extensive legislation out of the way to overtax citizens in Canada. The carbon tax, the implementation of the corporate tax laws it is looking at, are some examples, and of course, the idea there may be a gun registry coming back.

From the discussions and calls I have received since that meeting in Brandon three weeks ago on gun registries, Bill C-47, and the thoughts on them, we have also seen a much more driven focus by the Liberal government to tax. It is trying to bring in corporate tax changes on small businesses, medium-sized farming operations, and family farming operations. There is much concern in our rural areas about driving away professionals such as doctors, which are already in short supply.

With those concerns, I will not be supporting Bill C-47.

●(1315)

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before my hon. colleague's speech took a bit of a detour at the end, he was effectively affirming what we have been saying in this House over the past two days of debate on this bill. What this bill would do is keep in place a record-keeping regime that has existed since the 1940s, existed under the previous Conservative government, and in no way affects lawful gun ownership in Canada.

He referenced the brokering controls that come into place under the accession to the ATT in Bill C-47, a system that would mimic the regime that has been in place since the 1940s. All we are saying is that Canada has a role to play in ensuring the brokering of conventional arms that often enter into conflict zones, where they are used for terrible purposes, is something we as a country should be stepping up to the plate to help better oversee and monitor.

Bill C-47 is a commitment to strengthen Canada's role in the arms export regime. It does nothing to law-abiding gun owners in Canada. Does the member realize that early on his speech he effectively affirmed just that?

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, like my colleague from Kawartha, I want to make sure there is legitimacy in the bill. It has not been confirmed by the act as it is written in certain sections, or else the local citizens, which many of my colleagues have talked about, would not be raising the issues of concern they have. It would have been very simple for the government to make a blanket statement that those were removed, but it has not.

●(1320)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, following up on the comment from my friend, the parliamentary secretary, it is so interesting that the Liberals want to completely downplay any impact of this, as if they think there is no point in the legislation in the first place.

We know that people have raised substantial and legitimate concerns. If the government is so dismissive of the substantial effect of its own legislation, does the member have any thoughts on why it is doing so in the first place?

We have an arms control system. While there are other countries that need to improve their arms control, we have a very strong arms control system in Canada. Why not just leave it at that?

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, that is an extremely good point. It is the point I was trying to make in my earlier comments that the parliamentary secretary was alluding to. A good deal of what is there was already in place before the Liberals ever brought the bill forward. All we are saying is that the government has other issues in the bill that it could have either left out or clarified. Therefore, Canadians are leery of the process of why the bill is before them in the first place.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

He explained his position very clearly, but since there is a good chance the bill will be sent to committee for further study following the vote at second reading, I want to ask him if he thinks Canada would be justified in reducing our trade with countries that violate human rights and not authorizing trade through the United States, when it cannot be done directly.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, my colleague has pointed out that a number of years back when our foreign affairs minister was dealing with this, Canada's position was based on fairness and law-abiding rules. One of the statements I received in an email was, "We received a strong mandate to implement our platform, including abolishing the wasteful long-gun registry [here in Canada]. It does not make sense to abolish that registry at home only to support one internationally." I will leave it at that.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak against Bill C-47, An Act to amend the Export and Import Permits Act and the Criminal Code (amendments permitting the accession to the Arms Trade Treaty and other amendments).

As Conservatives, our party has always supported efforts to establish international standards for arms transfer that help prevent illicit transfers that fuel conflict, encourage terrorism, or organized crime.

There is nothing new here. The argument is around what the bill could do and whether it is really needed, and whether it is fair and effective. I will be addressing the bill from these standpoints.

However, we also believe that any treaty should recognize and acknowledge the legitimacy of lawful ownership of firearms by responsible Canadian citizens for their personal and recreational use, including sport shooting, hunting, and collecting. This is a focal point in this whole argument, so how can we agree to any act that would not at least address some internal issues that really matter to our own citizens in Canada? That is a very important element that we should address and pay attention to.

As such, this bill is ineffective and unfair. I will address those points. This bill would establish controls over brokering in military goods between two countries outside Canada, create a legal obligation on the Minister of Foreign Affairs to consider certain assessment criteria before authorizing permits, and increase the maximum fine under the EIPA from \$25,000 to \$250,000 for summary conviction offences. The ATT assigns the primary responsibility of all states in establishing and implementing their respective national control systems. Article 5 of the ATT requires bringing DND into the export control system.

At the outset we know that Canada has a very responsible internal system to monitor and control the export of military and security equipment, a system that meets or exceeds the UN treaty.

Based on that, we are ahead of the game and ahead of the world in how we address certain issues. The question that comes to mind is, why are we entertaining something that is less important, less effective, and also far behind? Are we taking a step forward here, or are we taking a step backwards?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Forward.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Mr. Speaker, I do not think so. I think this bill is ineffective because the Trade Controls Bureau already regulates the trade under the Export and Import Permits Act, which since 1947 has allowed the minister to prevent the supply of military equipment to countries for a variety of reasons, including if they are

a security threat, are involved in internal or external conflict, or are under sanction by the United Nations.

Our regime already addresses the issue of countries under sanction by the United Nations. We are already ahead of the game, addressing and working with the United Nations. I cannot understand why this bill is necessary. It repeats existing work. It is definitely not a progressive move, but a regressive one.

Somebody has to stand up and raise the flag and ask, "Why are we doing this?"

• (1325)

Second, specific items are already heavily restricted by Canada. They include military or strategic dual use goods, including nuclear energy materials and technology, missiles, chemical or biological goods, and cryptological equipment. What is new? What would Bill C-47 do for us that we have not already been doing for a long time? In the 70 years since 1947, we have been ahead of the world. Therefore, if I do not call this a total waste of time, I would call it an unnecessary and time-consuming shift in focus.

Third, we are already tracking and recording more than is required under the ATT. The Canada Border Services Agency and Statistics Canada collect information on all items exported from Canada and classifies these items using categories negotiated by the World Customs Organization. Again, we have data. The ATT does not share data, which is something we also have to pay attention to. When we have our own data, we control our borders. We have all these high standards, so why should we, under any circumstance, take a step backward?

In addition, Canada can also utilize a blanket ban on trade with risky countries through the use of the area control list under the Export and Import Permits Act. Through an act of the Governor in Council, a country can be placed on the list. North Korea, at present, is an example. In the past, we have included Belarus and Myanmar on that list. Again, Canada's role has always been ahead of the international community's and on those measures. We have always been there, and our role has been a fine example to the rest of the international community, with all due respect to the United Nations itself.

Also, a very interesting point I should be bringing up is that major countries that represent the majority of sales of military equipment have declined to sign the agreement. This is evidence of why the bill is ineffective. If three of the top six countries that export military equipment are not in the treaty, logically speaking the treaty would be very ineffective. Therefore, we had better stick to our system, which we can control. It is a system that we created and under which we have been ahead of the whole world for 70 years.

Government Orders

The Department of National Defence, as a department of the crown, is traditionally exempt from the export control system. Exports of military aid or government-to-government gifts do not require authorization and occur without oversight by Canadian export control officials. Article 5 of the ATT would require bringing DND into the export control system.

On a final note, the bill is unfair. It is unfair to our citizens. It seems like the government is only working on improving its image, without paying attention to the interests of law-abiding Canadians, like hunters and sport shooters.

Another important argument I would bring to the House is that the government has not consulted Canadians. Where is the consultation? Where is the government that consults on everything? Why did it not consult on this with law-abiding Canadians?

Moreover, what are the benefits? There are no benefits. It is a total waste of time to even go that route. We could pay attention to more important stuff instead of just repeating something again and again. It is not a step forward. It is a step backward.

In summary, I have spoken on two important elements in regard to the bill: its ineffectiveness and its unfairness.

• (1330)

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is unfair is the complete and utter phony rhetoric coming from the Conservative benches on the non-issue of supposed changes to domestic firearms ownership in Canada.

That said, I would agree with the member that this government has had to work doubly hard to improve its image on the international scene after 10 years of isolation and darkness under the Stephen Harper government of Canada. It let itself slip in how the rest of the world viewed us as being the leading country on the international stage.

Moving out of that darkness, let me enlighten the member on one of the new aspects contained in this bill, the regulation of brokering, which is the facilitation of the trade of goods from one country to another. That is a new aspect of this bill, and the brokering regulations in this bill would fall under the exact same regulations that have been in place since the 1940s, including under the previous Conservative government. That is one thing that is new. Let me just reaffirm for everyone paying attention to this debate that one thing that is not new is any change to domestic firearms ownership in Canada.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before we go to the hon. member for Edmonton Manning, I just want to remind the hon. members that although do get some heckling back and forth, I am hearing some stuff that is very personal and could be considered unparliamentary. I just want to warn the individual, without naming him, that it is coming to my ears and that is not good.

The hon. member for Edmonton Manning.

• (1335)

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Mr. Speaker, what is phony and bogus is the government members trying to claim that Canada was a bad boy,

running from its responsibilities in the international community. This is the negative rhetoric coming from the current government. The Liberals try hard, thinking that people will believe the rhetoric that Canada was a bad person running from its responsibilities to the international community. Canada has never run away from its responsibilities on the world stage, and it is bogus for the government members to argue that someone who claims otherwise is bogus and phony. There is nothing more phony than a government that takes every opportunity to show it is the best and everyone else is worth nothing.

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just want to bring this to the attention of the House. We all remember former minister Baird as a great guy who represented a Toronto riding. This is just something that his office said. He wanted to have fairness for law-abiding hunters and sportsmen. One of the reasons we signed on to the original agreement was the desire to exempt sports hunters and sports shooters, etc. However, that did not happen and that is why we could not sign it. Former minister Baird referred to how afraid the Liberal Party was of being branded as re-establishing that registry because it has a lot of rural ridings. He said that it does not make sense to abolish that registry only to support one internationally. That is exactly why we are opposed to Bill C-47.

Does my hon. colleague think it is okay on the one hand as a government to get rid of a registry that nobody seemed to like in Canada, and that was brought in by a former Liberal government, and then establish another one internationally? Does he think that is okay?

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Mr. Speaker, that is why I referred to this bill as a total waste of time. The government has time to consult with the Canadians to whom this bill matters. There is no consultation. We do not hear anything. When somebody raises a question, the Liberals call him or her bogus; they call them phony. That is not fair. At the end of the day, the government has to do its job in regard to what matters to Canadian citizens, what matters to our own people first, before making any attempt to change anything that falls around us.

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak today to second reading of Bill C-47, an act to amend the Export and Import Permits Act and the Criminal Code with amendments permitting the accession to the Arms Trade Treaty and other amendments.

This legislation is of concern to law-abiding firearms owners in my constituency of Battle River—Crowfoot. Many of us own firearms, and we use them on our farms and ranches as tools for rodent control and so on. We also enjoy sport shooting.

The Liberals' firearms laws have cost us dearly over the past decades. They have cost us considerable worry and paperwork. They have cost money that many of my constituents just do not have to spend on renewing licenses and filling out application forms and more.

Government Orders

Once again we see the Liberals pandering to the United Nations in their attempt to win a seat on the UN Security Council. The Liberal government is desperate for that seat and is willing to do anything to ingratiate itself with anyone who might cast a vote in favour of Canada's becoming a member.

The Liberals have snooped around and have found a military equipment treaty that Canada has yet to ratify, and that is what Bill C-47 is about. The Liberal government is forcing Canada to meet certain obligations contained in this treaty. Canada will be required to implement brokering controls. Under the proposed bill, brokering is defined as arranging or negotiating a transaction that relates to the movement of goods or technology on a brokering control list from one foreign country to another foreign country.

Our previous Conservative government did not ratify this treaty because it was really a treaty that was written for other nations. Canada is recognized as having a very responsible internal system to monitor and control the export of military and security equipment that meets or exceeds the United Nations treaty.

Canada's Trade Controls Bureau regulates the Export and Import Permits Act, which since 1947 has allowed the minister to prevent the supply of military equipment to countries for a variety of reasons, countries that are a security threat or are involved in internal or external conflict or are under sanctions of the United Nations. Canada can decide whether or not it will export to those countries.

Specific items that are already heavily restricted by Canada include military or strategic dual-use goods; nuclear energy materials and technology; missile technology; chemical and biological goods; and many other kinds of equipment. Treaties are already there for these goods.

Canada is already tracking and recording more than required under the treaty. The Canada Border Services Agency and Statistics Canada collect information on all items exported from Canada and classify the items using categories negotiated by the World Customs Organization.

Canada can also utilize a blanket ban on trade with high-risk countries through the use of the area control list under the Export and Import Permits Act. Although it takes an act of the Governor in Council, a country can be placed on that list. North Korea is currently on that list. In the past the list has included Belarus and Myanmar, as my colleague from Brandon—Souris mentioned.

Major countries that represent the majority of the sales of military equipment, Russia and the United States, have either not signed on to the treaty or have not and likely will not ratify it.

Why did I go through those four items that already show that Canada has the opportunity to regulate and to watch a country? I did it because this legislation is simply overkill. That is why the United States is not going with it. That is why Russia and other countries are not likely to ratify the agreement, although they may have signed on to it.

As with many ineffective international treaties, the key participants in the arms trade are not part of the treaty, but the Liberals want Canada to sign this treaty anyway. Why on earth do the Liberals want Canada to sign on to a treaty that was not designed with

Canada in mind and is focused on other countries? Who knows why the Liberals would bring this legislation forward?

I can tell the House why I believe they did and I will tell the House in a few moments exactly what my constituents believe the Liberals are up to.

I believe this treaty will affect Canada in a negative way. Let me give the House a couple of examples.

● (1340)

The Department of National Defence, as a department of the crown, is traditionally exempted from the export control system. Bill C-47 would force the Department of National Defence to adhere to erroneous sections of export control systems like never before, but the Liberals do not really care about that. They just want to be able to say that Canada has ratified this United Nations agreement, this UN treaty. The United Nations will indeed be surprised, because former Prime Minister Stephen Harper declined to put Canada through this, and the international community understood why he said “no thanks” and accepted it.

We were not pushed into this. The folks at the UN will be surprised that of all things, the current Prime Minister is willingly and feverishly and actively trying to ratify this treaty. Many at the UN will consider this dusting off of an old treaty rather odd, but they will recognize that it is simply the Prime Minister desperately trying to do something, and in this case it may be that he might be able to get a few extra votes for the United Nations Security Council. They will understand and see right through this disingenuous offer to ratify.

Right now exports of military aid or government-to-government gifts do not require authorization and occur without oversight by Canadian export control officials, but with the passage of Bill C-47, Canada will be required to bring our Department of National Defence into the export control system. In other words, our national defence will now be under this agreement. This arrangement would actually work against helping other nations. It will burden Canada whenever we want to help other nations. The Department of National Defence will have more red tape—a lot more, perhaps—to cut through before we can provide the goods or services we used to be able to provide without hesitation.

How does this fit with “Canada is back”? The Prime Minister is actually putting Canada in a much more difficult position. Canada is one step back with the Prime Minister making the statement, but he has set Canada two steps back when it comes to being able to help other countries. The Prime Minister said Canada is here to help, but again, the bill would add more red tape and require the Department of National Defence to do much more.

The Liberals are denying that they are launching any new form of gun registry with the bill. However, there is a requirement for exporters or importers to retain records in a specific electronic file for a period of up to six years. This file must be made available to the ministry upon its request at any point of time. Again, my constituents question whether this requirement does not create some kind of a registry. Does this not create a registry that would be available to the minister in electronic form, naming firearms and the people who have them?

Statements by Members

The information has to contain all the particulars pertaining to the sale, import, or export of a firearm. As well, the information does not just deal with firearms alone—

● (1345)

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I will have to interrupt the hon. member. He will have one minute and 30 seconds left when we return. At this time, we are going to suspend until we return at the call of the Chair. I urge everyone to evacuate the building. Thank you.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 1:47 p.m.)

● (1400)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 2 p.m.)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot had a minute and a half left before we were so rudely interrupted by the fire alarm.

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 17 years as a member of Parliament, that is the first time that has happened while I have been giving a barnburner of a speech. I did not realize that somebody would pull the fire alarm because it was such a smoking speech.

I was talking about the concern that the Liberals are trying to push through the back door what they would not be willing to bring through the front door: something very much like a registry, if not an actual registry of the kind we had. Make no mistake: when Allan Rock established the long-gun registry in the 1990s, my constituents were against it and have been against it since then. When the Conservatives were elected under the Right Hon. Stephen Harper, it was one of the commitments we made, and we did it. We said we would get rid of the long-gun registry, and we did. We said that we would get rid of all of the data so that it could not be brought up again, and we did.

Now the government is saying that if we do not have the ability to do it here, let us do it somewhere else, and the United Nations stands as a beacon for an opportunity to bring forward some type of registry. Conservatives say no. We are not going to take the chance. Liberals give us platitudes and tell us to worry not and fear not, but we have seen this show before and we are not going to stand for another registry.

In closing, I would ask this one question. When red tape is added, do members believe that will make the export and import of firearms more expensive or less expensive? If somebody bringing firearms into Canada now has to deal with all of this paperwork and red tape, will it make it more difficult to bring them in? Is it going to drive the cost of firearms up?

The Liberal government is going to do all it can to punish lawful firearms owners in this country, and Conservatives will have nothing to do with it.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

CAPE SAINT MARY LIGHTHOUSE PARK

Mr. Colin Fraser (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on August 30, I travelled to Cape Saint Mary in my riding of West Nova to announce financial support from the Government of Canada to help create Cape Saint Mary Lighthouse park.

[*English*]

Thanks to the leadership of the Municipality of Clare and the dedicated support of many community volunteers, Cape Saint Mary Lighthouse park will provide a focal point for showcasing the breathtaking views, beautiful sunsets, and rugged coastline along St. Mary's Bay. The park will also be home to the community's lost at sea memorial, which will commemorate the many local fishers who have lost their lives while trying to support their families back on dry land.

[*Translation*]

I want to congratulate the committee, which was so instrumental in moving this project forward.

[*English*]

I look forward to celebrating its achievements at the official opening of the park later this fall, and I congratulate it on a job well done.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Bob Benzen (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, constituents in my riding of Calgary Heritage are expressing genuine concern about the cash grab the government is making at the expense of small business owners. These measures penalize entrepreneurship and wrongly depict law-abiding small-business owners, who have built their business models around long-established rules, as somehow now cheating the system. In addition to insulting hard-working Canadians, the government is also threatening growth by disrupting a sector of the economy that accounts for much of the country's private labour force.

It is not too late for the government to backtrack from these harmful measures and to step away from a proposal that will prove punishing for many middle-class taxpayers. Will the government do right by business owners, or will it continue on this punitive path?

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Mary Ng (Markham—Thornhill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, I had the pleasure of joining the Prime Minister and the executive chairman of Alibaba Group, Jack Ma, for Gateway '17 in Toronto.

*Statements by Members**[English]*

I learned about China's new class of consumers and that high-quality products like fresh food, lifestyle brands, and travel experiences are hugely sought after by China's large and growing middle-class population, which is looking online for the best products and experiences from countries like Canada. With the rise of the digital marketplace, Alibaba offers exciting new opportunities for Canadian small and medium-size enterprises to sell to this market.

I am proud of our government's initiative and its efforts to invest in innovation and technologies that are crucial to international trade and that support Canadian businesses and entrepreneurs. These commitments will help grow a future innovative economy that will create Canadian middle-class jobs for today and tomorrow.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this summer I had the pleasure of visiting the Coldwater reserve near Merritt, British Columbia. Chief Lee Spahan showed me where the existing Trans Mountain pipeline cuts through the reserve and its water supply. He reminded me that this pipeline, now owned by Kinder Morgan, is a strong symbol of our colonial past. It was rammed through Coldwater and other reserves in the 1950s, when indigenous people were prohibited by law from voting in elections or hiring lawyers.

Yesterday the Federal Court of Appeal ruled that the federal government failed in its duty to protect the interests of the Coldwater band by granting new land access rights based on old, unjust colonial arrangements, thus jeopardizing Kinder Morgan's future pipeline expansion plans.

The Prime Minister portrays himself as the champion of reconciliation. A reconciliation champion would not appeal this ruling. A reconciliation champion would not contemplate using the army to force new pipelines through reserves by arresting first nation people and their allies. A true reconciliation champion would reverse the decision on Kinder Morgan.

* * *

● (1405)

100TH BIRTHDAY WISHES

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish Mr. Lloyd Seaward, of Bishop's Falls, Newfoundland and Labrador, a happy birthday. On October 3, Lloyd will be turning 100 years old.

In 1939, Mr. Seaward joined the Royal Navy. While on patrol in the English Channel, he was injured and sent to the Royal Navy hospital. The doctor recommended sending him home to Newfoundland, but Lloyd said, "No way." He demanded that he stay and work back on the patrol boats.

In 1942, while on patrol, his cruiser sank in the Java Sea, and he was taken as a prisoner of war by the Japanese. In prison, he was seen making a pair of wooden clogs by an officer. When asked if he was a shoemaker, he said, "Sure." He was transferred to Makasura

camp, where he made boots for the Japanese army. While there he learned to speak Japanese and Malay, which he now speaks to his grandkids. Lloyd stayed with the Royal Navy until 1947.

I am happy to say that Lloyd is still in good health. He says he runs more than he walks. I wish Lloyd a happy 100th birthday.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals do not want the small business tax increase debated in this House, so I am going to take this opportunity to stand up for my constituents of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex and voice their concerns.

My riding is made up of small and medium-sized businesses, with agriculture as the main driver. My constituents are concerned, frustrated, and angry about this planned Liberal tax increase. Only 75 days were given, during the busy season of harvest time, for farmers to respond. Here is one of the big questions from my constituents: Why tax us and leave your wealthy Liberal friends untouched? It is called Liberal entitlement and hypocrisy.

To the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, extend the consultation time, and do not lock the doors on ordinary people who need to be heard.

* * *

KAIROS BLANKET EXERCISE

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on September 30, we remember the children who survived the residential school system and those who did not. However, our historical mistreatment of indigenous peoples extends well beyond residential schools and is our most fundamental injustice, one we must all be committed to correcting. An important step towards that reconciliation is education, and my office recently co-hosted a Kairos Kitchi blanket exercise, alongside MPP Arthur Potts and Councillor Mary-Margaret McMahon.

Statements by Members

I want to thank Kairos for their educational outreach, which should be in every school across Canada. More than 100 constituents joined us, and dozens more attended our public forum on reconciliation that followed. The message my constituents asked me to take back is this: we have made the right commitments on access to clean water, on ending discrimination, on implementing UNDRIP, and on meeting the needs of indigenous children, among others. We must continue our work to ensure that these promises are kept. Reconciliation depends on action.

* * *

ABANDONED VESSELS

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the national strategy on abandoned and wrecked vessels, part of the \$1.5 billion oceans protection plan, is an important part of our commitment to preserve and restore Canada's pristine marine ecosystems.

Our government has acted on many cases of derelict vessels, such as the *Farley Mowat*, which for too long threatened the marine environment in my riding. We will work with our partners to develop proactive plans to address large commercial vessel problems according to the risks they pose. Another concrete step in our plan was the tabling last week of the Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks, 2007, which brings Canada one step closer to aligning with international standards and strives to make Canada a leader in marine protection.

Our government takes environmental stewardship seriously and will be introducing legislation shortly to further address this issue as we continue to demonstrate that a clean environment and a strong economy can and must go together.

* * *

CFB SUFFIELD FIRE

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on September 11, a grass fire started on Canadian Forces Base Suffield. The fire jumped the fireguard and spread to ranchers' fields, which lost nearly 90,000 acres. One hundred and sixty cattle died. Farms were evacuated. One farm site was destroyed, and undetermined miles of fence and infrastructure were burnt. An 89-year-old man has been left homeless. Winter feeding pastures have been lost and will take years to replenish. Residents had to leave their homes in the middle of the night, and everyone tirelessly fought this fire.

Fires coming from CFB Suffield are common as they explode ordnance and carry out their exercises. There remain many unanswered questions about this fire. Why did the base cause a fire when southern Alberta was under a fire ban? Why was the base's emergency response so inadequate?

I thank the Minister of National Defence for meeting with me to hear my constituents' concerns. We hope that progress will be made quickly with the internal review and that the local community will be kept advised as to the process and the results.

● (1410)

NATIONAL HOLOCAUST MONUMENT

Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Friday night, Jewish people around the world will observe Yom Kippur, the holiest day in Judaism. Yom Kippur translates to the Day of Atonement and marks the culmination of 10 days of reflection that began on Rosh Hashanah.

This year we have another cause for reflection. Yesterday the Prime Minister inaugurated the National Holocaust Monument in Ottawa. This memorial will allow Canadians of all faiths to remember the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust. It will ensure that the lessons of the Holocaust remain within our consciousness for generations to come so that we may never again see history's darkest period repeated.

I want to recognize the hard work of the National Holocaust Monument Development Council, led by Fran Sonshine, and the incredible generosity and effort of the many Canadians who worked to make this dream a reality.

In this time of reflection, may we resolve in our words and our deeds to combat hate, intolerance, and anti-Semitism.

* * *

CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, a chance to honour the 10,000 children currently fighting cancer today, to remember the many children we have lost, and to support childhood cancer survivors.

Although 75% of children survive cancer, more than 80% of survivors face late effects of their diseases and harsh treatments, including heart failure, lung disease, and secondary cancers. There is no known cause for childhood cancer, and therefore no prevention strategy.

Our government will continue to support cancer research so that children will have the chance to grow up. I see many of my colleagues across the aisle and on all sides of the House wearing gold pins today. They were donated by the parents of Maggie Jenkins, who passed away in 2014 at the age of 13.

It is clear to me that this House stands united in continuing to work to end childhood cancer for Maggie and for every other child suffering needlessly at the hands of this insidious disease.

*Statements by Members***NATIONAL HUNTING, TRAPPING AND FISHING
HERITAGE DAY**

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions that hunters, anglers, trappers, farmers, and ranchers make to Canada's conservation successes. While activists focus on talk and politics, it is those who actually live and work on the land who are Canada's most effective conservationists.

September 16 was National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day, which is a day to recognize the millions of Canadians who enjoy hunting, trapping, and fishing. I am one of them, and I am proud to defend our interests every step of the way.

Hunters fund most wildlife management projects. Anglers are the first to get in the water and improve fish habitat. Trappers care more about wildlife ecosystem balance than anyone else. Farmers and ranchers sequester carbon, preserve habitat, and work the land with pride. These are Canada's best conservationists and true environmentalists, and they deserve to be accorded respect.

Heading into the fall, I wish them all bountiful harvests, tight lines, and straight shooting.

* * *

[Translation]

TOURISM

Mrs. Alaina Lockhart (Fundy Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome to Ottawa the ministers of tourism and indigenous leaders attending the meeting of the Canadian Council for Tourism Ministers.

[English]

Our government knows that tourism is an economic driver, representing almost 2% of GDP and supporting more than 1.7 million jobs across Canada.

[Translation]

That is why the Minister of Small Business and Tourism announced Canada's new tourism vision, our plan to support the growth of Canada's tourism sector, create jobs, and grow our economy for the middle class.

[English]

By working with our provincial, territorial, and indigenous colleagues, we are ensuring that the momentum we experienced this year celebrating Canada 150, and expect to continue in 2018 with the Canada-China Year of Tourism, continues for years to come.

* * *

[Translation]

SAGUENAY COMMUNITY

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, over the course of the summer, I had the privilege of talking to many of my constituents about matters that are important to them, such as softwood lumber, support for seniors, and the future of agriculture.

I deeply value the trust that my constituents have placed in me. That is why I am proud to join in the community support for such major projects as Théâtre Palace Arvida, Jonquière en musique, and Distillerie du fjord, the first of its kind in my area.

My region of Saguenay has an abundance of great projects, such as the Cercle des fermières de Saint-Charles-de-Bourget; they were able to invest in looms, which are key to artisanal knowledge.

These are just a few examples of the community's wealth and engagement and why I am proud to support and be a part of the Saguenay community.

* * *

● (1415)
[English]

TAXATION

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my offices in Parry Sound—Muskoka have been inundated with calls and emails from small business owners expressing their deep concerns at the proposed Liberal tax grab.

Recently, I met the owner of Sawdust City Brewing, one of several craft breweries in my riding. The owner, Rob Engman, told me the Liberal money grab will be damaging to his business prospects.

Let me run down the list of some of the other small businesses in Parry Sound—Muskoka whose owners have expressed the same concerns: Ontario Cottage Rentals, Kidd's Home Hardware, Festing Motors, Muskoka MediSpa, Knox Chiropractic, Miller's Eaves-troughs and Doors, Desmasdons Boat Works, The Stair Guy, Jake's Place Restaurant, and Chestnut Lane Kitchen and Bath. I could go on.

I simply urge the government to hear the voices of worried small business owners and put an end to this harmful tax grab.

* * *

YOM KIPPUR

Mr. Dan Ruimy (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Friday's sunset marks the beginning of the holiest day of the year for Jewish people across Canada and around the world.

Yom Kippur, the day of atonement, is the most holy day on the Jewish calendar. It is a day of fasting, prayer, and reflection, and a day on which Jews are required to take stock of their lives, to ask forgiveness from friends and family, and to take steps toward self-improvement for the year to come.

As my fellow Jewish Canadians gather on this holy day, I would like to remind all Canadians that diversity makes us stronger. We are a mosaic of other cultures, and in my riding of Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, I am proud of how we have created a place where all can come together to respect and celebrate the various religions, cultures, and differences that make our community and country great.

I would like to wish everyone observing Yom Kippur in my own riding, across Canada, and around the world an easy fast.

*Oral Questions**Tzom kal.**[Translation]***ORAL QUESTIONS***[Translation]***JUSTICE**

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister moved quickly to reach a secret agreement to compensate Omar Khadr. He did it in the middle of summer when he thought the media would not be paying attention and when MPs were not in Ottawa. He did so even before the families of Omar Khadr's victims had a chance to testify in court. He did everything he could to keep this hidden from Canadians.

I am giving him the opportunity to be honest with Canadians and to tell us himself how much money he really gave Omar Khadr.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to Omar Khadr, there is only one issue, and that is the actions of previous governments that failed to stand up for and even violated Canadians' rights.

When Canadian governments do not respect and defend Canadians' rights, everyone pays the price.

I am outraged, the opposition is outraged, and Canadians are outraged by this settlement, and understandably so. They should hold on to that feeling because if people remember this, then a government will never again violate—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Leader of the Opposition. *[English]*

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he seems to be forgetting that these rights violations happened under a Liberal government. Now he claims he is outraged, and that he is so angry. I am sure his hands were just shaking in anger as he was adding more and more zeroes to the cheque he gave to Omar Khadr.

Canadians are outraged over this. They are outraged that he completely ignored Omar Khadr's victims and their families. They are outraged that Omar Khadr received \$10.5 million of their money while the Prime Minister continues to fight veterans in court. The previous Conservative government respected the decision by the courts and repatriated Omar Khadr. That was the only compensation he was entitled to.

Why did the Prime Minister go over and above that?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the previous government violated Omar Khadr's fundamental rights. What is at issue is not Omar Khadr's behaviour; it is the behaviour of the Canadian government. When the Canadian government does not defend people's rights, we all end up paying. That is the principle that is at play here, and it is one that everyone, particularly members of the Conservative Party, need to remember.

We cannot just stand up for rights when it is easy or popular, we have to do it when it is hard too.

TAXATION

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Finance admitted that the Liberal tax reform for small businesses poses, and I quote, some problems.

I must say that I am impressed by the minister's ability to underestimate. The Prime Minister keeps saying that he will not budge on his tax increases.

Does the Prime Minister agree with his Minister of Finance, who says that the Liberal plan poses serious problems, and will he cancel it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for weeks and months we have been hearing from Canadians who have questions and concerns about our proposed plan to ensure that all Canadians pay their fair share of taxes. We hear those concerns and we can assure Canadians that we will continue to protect and help the middle class while asking the wealthiest Canadians to pay their share of taxes.

That is what Canadians expect from this government and that is what we will do as the government.

[English]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the record on these tax issues is clear. It was our Conservative government that lifted more than one million low-income Canadians off the tax rolls all together. The parliamentary budget officer confirmed that Conservative tax changes benefited low and middle-income Canadians far more than any other group.

This Prime Minister decreased tax revenue from the 1% by over a billion dollars, and he has raised taxes on 81% of middle-class families who are paying almost \$1,000 more per year because of him.

Why is it that every time this Prime Minister tries to help the middle class, they always wind up paying more?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, the first thing we did was lower taxes on the middle class, and raise them on the wealthiest 1%. Canadians might ask why the Conservatives voted against those measures.

The next thing we did was bring in a Canada child benefit that gives more money to 9 out of 10 Canadian families by not sending child benefit cheques to millionaires, a program that will lift hundreds of thousands of kids out of poverty.

Right now, we are looking at ensuring the system no longer encourages wealthy Canadians to use private corporations to pay lower taxes than middle-class Canadians. That is what we are going to stay with.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is one millionaire who is still getting help from taxpayers for his child care, and that is the Prime Minister.

Oral Questions

We know the Prime Minister currently owns at least two numbered companies which help manage his vast family fortune. We also know he incorporated a small business back when he was billing charities for thousands of dollars just for the privilege of listening to him speak, but now he wants to kick the ladder out from other small business owners who are trying to get their own operations off the ground.

Could the Prime Minister explain why he set up his speaking business? Was he one of the wealthy Canadians who incorporated to avoid paying taxes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize that we have inherited from previous governments, including the Conservative government, a system that favours the wealthy, that offers advantages to wealthy Canadians that are not there for middle-class Canadians.

We have committed, both in the election campaign and since, to fix that system, to change those rules, to make sure we are giving help to middle-class Canadians and those working hard to join it, and not to the wealthiest Canadians.

The previous government was quick to help wealthy Canadians. We are focused on the middle class, and those working hard to join it.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are used to selling out the country's interests to their friends without asking for anything in return. Today, we have another example with Netflix. We have no guarantee as to Canadian content, French content, content for indigenous peoples, or content that reflects our history and our identity.

After 50 years of strong cultural policies in Ottawa, the Minister of Canadian Heritage is going to hand over the responsibility for our cultural policies to an American company.

Have we stooped to sub-contracting the protection of our culture to the Americans?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are determined to grow our creative sector with new investments that open up opportunities to creators and producers across Canada.

Our creative Canada plan will help fund high-quality, unique, and varied Canadian content for Canadian and global audiences. Our plan includes an unprecedented investment by Netflix in Canada, the first of its kind in the world to be announced, and it will create good jobs for Canadian creators. Canada is a good place to invest. We are proud of our cultural community and we will continue to invest in our future.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it almost sounds like the government plays favourites with our friends to the south. The Canadian media industry asked for a level playing field on publicity, yet in the announcement today the

minister failed to mention anything about Google, Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube.

Worse, the government spent \$13.7 million on ads on those platforms. While our industry is in danger, the government is giving money to foreign companies without asking them to pay their fair share.

When will the minister protect Canadian content and jobs?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have world-class content creators and creative industries. We know that investing in them, and supporting our creators is the best way to ensure not just that Canadians hear our stories but the people around the world understand and hear the stories that Canadians have to tell.

We are incredibly proud of the innovative work that our minister of heritage has done to look at the future of broadcasting and creativity, and recognize that we can move forward with strength and pride, relying on the extraordinary capacity of our creators to create great content for the world.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if only they had ears.

The heritage minister is surely not receptive to recommendations from the industry or provincial governments. She automatically rejected the possibility of making foreign companies pay their fair share like any other Canadian company. She claimed she did not want Canadians to pay more taxes.

However, it is interesting to note that Netflix raised its prices, netting itself almost \$100 million more, just before announcing the deal. Is it a coincidence? The minister might be proud of this, but the cultural sector is worried. That is \$100 million per year.

Had Netflix not already committed to spending that on *Anne of Green Gables*?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are incredibly proud of our cultural industries, and we know that building stronger cultural industries for the 21st century, recognizing the transformation of the broadcast universe, is something we need to do to guarantee the kinds of good jobs that our producers, creators, crews, and innovators across the creative industries are demonstrating every single day.

We will continue to fight for our creative industries. We will continue to fight to share our stories with the world. This is good news for creativity in Canada. It is great news for the future of Canadian cultural industries.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are sharing our money with the Americans.

[*Translation*]

Over the past few weeks, the Liberals have been going after little fish instead of big fish. They had a golden opportunity to get it right with the Minister of Canadian Heritage's announcement, which could have required online companies to pay their fair share just like Canadian companies do. Once again, they dropped the ball.

Oral Questions

Do the Liberals understand that equality means treating everyone the same? Will the Prime Minister commit to making Netflix pay its fair share, or is he going to pull a fast one, as he and his cronies always do?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very proud to announce that Netflix is going to invest \$500 million in Canada. This money will encourage our creators and fund the production of high-quality content across the country. We know that the future is changing for our creative industries. The leadership this government is showing in building that future is something we can all be proud of.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, is the Prime Minister aware that 90% of our jobs are created by our SMEs, our local entrepreneurs, our farmers, and our professionals? They are proud people who work hard every day, are active in their communities, and struggle every day to create jobs in Canada.

Will the Prime Minister please stop trying to take more money out of their pockets so he can pay down his enormous deficit, which he created all on his own?

• (1430)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know how important SMEs are to our economy. We know that it is very important to have a low tax rate for SMEs. We currently have the lowest tax rate for SMEs in the G7. That is very important. At the same time, however, we must have a system that is fair. Under our current system, wealthy people can simply set up a private company to benefit from a lower tax rate. We want to ensure we have both a very low tax rate for SMEs and a system that is fair for all Canadians.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, only Liberals would believe that upping taxes creates jobs. Only a Liberal prime minister would talk to our business people about not paying enough tax when he knows full well that he will never pay a penny more under his new tax system. Only a Liberal prime minister would think he has a thing or two to teach local business people when he himself cannot even get his own deficit spending under control.

I have one simple question: Will the Prime Minister do his job and let business people do theirs, which is creating jobs?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are doing our job. It is very important to have a growing economy. It is very important to make things better for the middle class by lowering taxes. We have also introduced a very important measure for people across the country. We introduced the Canada child benefit, which has helped both families and the economy. Now that we have a growing economy, it is very important to have a fair tax system. That is our goal, and it will be good for our economy.

* * *

[English]

ETHICS

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance committed in writing “to abstain from any

participation in any matters or decisions...relating to Morneau Shepell”. Today, experts told the finance committee that, as a result of the Liberal changes, the finance minister's changes, individual pension plans will become more popular and more used. A witness also said that the minister's family company, Morneau Shepell, provides individual pension plans to Canadians. Why did the minister not recuse himself from discussions surrounding these changes?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of my key jobs as finance minister is to make sure we have a tax system that is not creating inappropriate incentives. Right now we have a system that creates inappropriate incentives for the wealthiest to arrange their affairs in such a way that they can pay lower taxes than the middle class. We are going to make sure our system is actually fair. At the same time, what we want to do is make sure there are incentives for businesses to invest in their business to grow the economy, to create jobs. We are doing this. It is going to make an enormous difference and a continuing difference for our economy and for Canadians across our land.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is non-answers like that that are causing Canadians to become suspicious. It is clear that Morneau Shepell has a very clear opportunity to benefit from these changes. The minister told Canadians in writing that he would recuse himself from any discussions surrounding Morneau Shepell.

Again I ask the minister this. Why did he not recuse himself when discussions around these tax changes came up, when they so clearly affect his family company?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, taxes affect every Canadian across our country. They affect every business across our country. What we know is that what we have done with taxes since we have come into office has been particularly important for our economy: lowering taxes on middle-class Canadians while we raise them on the top one per cent; introducing the Canada child benefit; creating a great situation for nine out of 10 families; and helping our economy at the same time. We are going to make sure our tax system is fair for the long term. We are going to make sure people continue to invest in our economy. We can do those two things at the same time.

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TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Andrew Lovell is a farmer from New Brunswick who is looking forward to passing his farm on to his kids. Today he testified before the finance committee that the minister's amendments to section 84.1 of the Income Tax Act would double the tax that his family would pay on that transaction. Meanwhile, there would be no tax if he sold the farm to McCain Foods. That means that farms like Andrew's will be taken over by big corporate giants.

Oral Questions

Will the minister announce today that he is backing down on the draft legislation that would take Andrew's farm out of his family?

•(1435)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, creating a tax system that is fair for the long term is very important. Listening to Canadians along the way to make sure we understand how we can do that best is also important. We are making sure we do not have incentives for the wealthiest not available to the middle class. As well, we are going to make sure that businesses that have created jobs that are within families can be transferred from one generation to the next. That is true for farmers, and that is true for all businesses. We want to make sure they can be successful and can pass them on to the next generation in an appropriate way, and we are going to listen to make sure we get this right.

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ETHICS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is an honourable man, but he did not answer the question of the House leader. He committed in writing that, to prevent a conflict of interest situation from arising and to avoid the perception of preferential treatment, he would abstain from any matters relating to Morneau Shepell. Today we had two witnesses who testified under oath that his tax changes will lead to a large increase in the number of people who put money into individual pension plans, plans that are offered fairly uniquely by Morneau Shepell. Why did he not abstain from this conversation?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can only say that saying something does not make it true. What we need to do is focus on—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, order. I have to hear the answer from the hon. minister, and we all have to hear so we can know whether there are any rules broken, among other things.

The hon. Minister of Finance has the floor.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, what we need to do is focus on what we are actually trying to achieve here. We are trying to make sure that Canadians across this country have a tax system that they can feel confident is actually creating the kind of opportunities they want. That means that it should not be creating more opportunity for the richest people who can go forward and arrange their affairs in a way that they get more and more advantages, which are not available to the middle class. We know this is happening. We have done the work to examine this issue. We are going to make sure we get it right for the long term.

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HEALTH

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary budget officer just released a report on universal pharmacare. The PBO says a public drug plan could cover every single Canadian and save \$4 billion a year.

Canada is the only developed country in the world with a public health care system that does not include prescription drug coverage, and the high cost of pharmaceuticals is forcing too many Canadians

to choose between refilling their fridge and refilling their prescriptions.

Will the Liberals join with the NDP and commit to creating a universal pharmacare program?

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to strengthening Canada's health care system, including enhancing the affordability, accessibility, and appropriate use of prescription drugs. We look forward to reviewing the parliamentary budget officer's analysis of the cost of a universal national health care program.

Let me make it clear. We need to make sure that Canada's existing prescription drug system is more efficient and responsive before we can begin to discuss universal drug coverage.

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the dream of a public health care system has not yet been fully realized in Canada, but it is well within our reach.

The parliamentary budget officer's report clearly shows that we can reduce the cost of prescription drugs with a national pharmacare program and save billions of dollars. Quebec has already demonstrated its leadership in this area, and it is high time the federal government followed suit.

Let us finish the job by offering all Canadians a truly comprehensive public health care system.

Will the Liberals join the NDP in making lower-cost prescription drugs a reality?

[English]

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, by taking bold steps to address affordability, accessibility, and appropriate prescribing, we are working with all of our provincial partners to bring prices down and to improve pharmaceutical management.

We look forward to reviewing the parliamentary budget officer's analysis on the cost of a universal health care system. We remain committed to continue to work with the provinces, territories, and all of our partners to lower drug prices, to provide timely access to medicines, and to improve patient care through appropriate prescribing and use.

* * *

•(1440)

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has finally admitted that there are problems with his tax reform.

Oral Questions

That is the first step. I will give him some ideas to help him out. The problem with his reform is that small businesses will pay more taxes while the Prime Minister's private companies will not be affected by the tax hike.

The problem is that Morneau Shepell will not be affected by the finance minister's reform, but small businesses will have to pay more. The problem is that Morneau Shepell will benefit from the minister's reform but is not withdrawing from the discussions.

Is the minister aware that his reform is a big mistake and that Canadian business owners are the ones who will have to pay for his mismanagement?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to be absolutely clear.

We want to continue to offer SMEs the lowest tax rate in the G7. That is very important. We know that it is important for SMEs to be able to invest in their active business. That is critically important. We are going to make sure they can continue doing that.

At the same time, we need to do something about the fact that the current tax system encourages the wealthy to incorporate so they pay a lower tax rate than the middle class. That is not a good system for the future.

That is our goal.

* * *

[English]

ETHICS

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is an honourable minister of the crown. He has given assurances in writing to prevent a conflict of interest situation from arising and to avoid the perception of any preferential treatment.

We want to see accountable government. Part of being accountable means to give an accounting of how we have handled our affairs and the affairs for all Canadians.

The finance minister has not answered the question. Why did the minister not abstain from promoting these proposed tax changes?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not only did I not abstain but I actively engaged in working to make sure the tax system is fair. This is very important for Canadians.

We want to make sure middle-class Canadians know that the opportunities from the tax code are there for them and not just for the wealthiest. This is critical. We want to make sure our tax system encourages the activity we want, which is investing in business.

I will continue to actively engage to make sure our system is fair, that it encourages activities that are important, like investing, and that we know that for the long term the next generation has a really positive opportunity with growth in this country.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rather shocked by the answer from the Minister of Finance. Witnesses who appeared before the Standing Committee on Finance this morning told us that the finance minister's company would

benefit from the government's proposed tax changes. On top of that, the finance minister just told us that he is proud of them and that he did not abstain.

Why did the Minister of Finance not abstain from promoting the tax changes that will benefit his own company?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the fact that, in the future, we will have a tax system that is fairer for the middle class and all Canadians. That is very important.

I am proud of the opportunities our system will provide to SMEs and other companies so that they can make significant investments in Canada's future. That is important for our growth and our level of confidence in our system. This issue is very important to us and to all Canadians. We will continue with the steps we are taking.

[English]

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find the responses by the Minister of Finance very disconcerting. We heard from two witnesses at the finance committee today that the changes proposed by the Liberal tax minister—the Liberal finance minister—could very well benefit Morneau Shepell, and the minister is saying that he actively participated in those discussions. He signed an agreement that he would avoid any perception of any influence and conflict of interest.

Why has the minister not abstained from promoting these proposed tax changes? I am going to give him one more time to answer that question.

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to tell the House and all Canadians that I did more than actively engage in this. I am deeply involved in working to make sure our tax system is fair.

This is critically important. For Canadians to have confidence in our tax system, they need to know that it works for all Canadians, not just the wealthy few. We are going to continue these efforts.

They also need to know that, first and foremost, I care about growing our economy. I absolutely do. We know that making sure that people can invest in their active businesses is critically important. We are going to move forward and make sure that our system works for all Canadians.

* * *

● (1445)

TAXATION

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for many small businesses, summer is a busy time and when a lot of them make their bread and butter for the year. Small business owners are questioning why the Liberals chose this time for these consultations. They also do not understand why they are being singled out while the biggest abusers of our tax system are being ignored.

Instead of shutting down these talks in a few days, will the Liberals extend the consultation period and expand the scope to include big business, CEOs, and tax havens? Let us put the fairness back in tax fairness.

Oral Questions

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have worked for a year with tax experts to focus on the places where we see significant advantages going to wealthy Canadians to arrange their affairs in a way to create lower taxes for them than other Canadians. At the same time, we have given more than \$1 billion over the last two years to the Canada Revenue Agency to go after tax evasion. At the same time, of course, we have lowered taxes on middle-class Canadians. With the Canada child benefit, we have helped those who are most challenged. We are doing multiple things that are helping Canadians and improving our economy over the long run. We are listening to Canadians to make sure that we get this right, but, make no mistake, we are going to move forward—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Sherbrooke.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know quite well what a fair and equitable tax system is. It is a system in which the CEOs and millionaires of this world, like the minister, pay their fair share of taxes.

Today, however, the rich are still exploiting tax loopholes that save them millions, even billions, of dollars, and the Liberals are still shielding them. There is nothing fair about this situation. The Liberals have yet to table any legislation for cracking down on international tax evasion.

Why has the minister decided to turn a blind eye to the tax havens costing us upwards of \$8 billion a year?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for giving me an opportunity to tell Canadians about the results of our crackdown on tax evasion and tax avoidance.

We have invested an unprecedented amount of money, nearly \$1 billion, in tools for tackling tax fraud. Our plan is yielding results. We are about to recoup close to \$25 billion from tax evaders and tax avoiders. Since we came into power two years ago, there have been 335 cases transferred to criminal investigation, \$10 million in fines, \$44 million in—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Brampton East.

[English]

Mr. Raj Grewal (Brampton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, my colleagues and I on the finance committee took a comprehensive review of tax evasion and tax avoidance to ensure that all Canadians are paying their fair share.

In our report, the committee recommended that the Government of Canada establish a reporting program for the CRA that would ensure that Canadians have access to information about the agency's efforts when it comes to tax avoidance and tax evasion.

Can the Minister of National Revenue please update this House on the progress of those recommendations?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was happy to receive the finance committee's

recommendations. I want to thank the committee for its hard work on its study.

Since receiving the report, we have put in place regular reporting of our results. We have good results to share: 335 cases were transferred to criminal investigation, \$10 million in fines were levied, and \$44 million in penalties were imposed on third parties. Tax evaders have nowhere left to hide.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we were deeply concerned to hear the decision by the U.S. to impose a levy of 220% on Bombardier's aircraft. This will put many Canadian jobs and businesses at risk.

It is time to end this subsidy race because it is unfair and we cannot do it anymore.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Does he have a better solution? We have a better solution for him. It is time to sign a new international aircraft agreement to get rid of subsidies. We believe in a free market.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will always defend Canadian companies and Canadian workers against unfair and costly protectionism.

While this is only a preliminary determination by the Department of Commerce, we strongly disagree. Boeing's petition is clearly and unfairly aimed at eliminating the C Series aircraft from the U.S. market.

We will continue to raise this issue at the highest levels. We are going to defend our workers. We are going to defend our aerospace sector.

* * *

● (1450)

[Translation]

TAXATION

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is deeply disappointed in Boeing's decision, but the minister's response is an even bigger disappointment. She is not fighting for Canadian taxpayers.

The only way to solve the problem is for the government to lower taxes and sign a new agreement to cancel and reduce business subsidies.

Most importantly, the Minister of Finance's policies must promote growth in Canada, but according to a witness who appeared before the committee this morning, he is creating policies that will help his own firm, Morneau Shepell, get more clients. It looks like he himself will benefit because he himself wrote that he will make sure he implements pro-Canada policies.

Oral Questions

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we want to talk about our economic growth. That is very important. Our situation right now is very good, the best it has been in a decade, and our growth rate is the highest it has been in 10 years. It is higher than that of the other G7 countries. We have also seen the creation of nearly 400,000 jobs in the past decade.

We are in a very good position now. For that to continue into the future, we have to keep investing in our economy.

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[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the process for replacing Canada's fighter jets has disintegrated into a very expensive and embarrassing mess for the Liberals.

Dithering with interim jet purchases and made-up capability gaps, the Liberals have now painted themselves into a corner after refusing to engage in an open and transparent competition and have opted for a sole-source jet from Boeing.

Can the Prime Minister speak to the status of the sole-source Super Hornet purchase after he himself confirmed that Canada will not be doing business with Boeing anymore?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is committed to providing the Royal Canadian Air Force with the essential equipment it needs until a replacement fleet of fighter jets is fully operational. That is why we continue to study the possibility of acquiring an interim fleet to supplement the CF-18 fleet until the permanent replacements arrive.

We are actively reviewing various options to determine whether they meet our requirements and are acceptable for Canada in terms of capability, cost, schedule, and economic value.

[English]

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' fighter jet replacement fiasco has gone from bad to worse. The Prime Minister has stated that Boeing is no longer a trusted partner and has threatened to cancel all future projects with Boeing. This includes the Liberals' asinine interim purchase of 18 Super Hornets, which has been mocked by the entire defence community.

Will the Liberal government stop playing partisan political games with our troops and immediately launch an open and transparent competition?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we clearly stated in our new defence policy, we are procuring 88 fighter jets to replace the current aging fleet of CF-18s, and we will make sure we have an interim fleet, so that we can keep our commitments to NATO and NORAD and ensure the safety of Canadians here at home.

[English]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, foreign diseased fish are now in Pacific waters threatening wild salmon. The industry knows it, the courts recognize it, and yet the government ignores it. More than 5,000 Canadians wrote the Prime Minister demanding that his government take action. The government's response has been silence.

When will the government follow its own rules and regulations, and when will the Liberals stop the transfer of dangerous infected salmon into B.C. waters?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a British Columbian, I know and share the real concerns that British Columbians have around this issue, especially after the incident that happened in Washington.

While Fisheries and Oceans B.C. aquaculture regulations are among the most rigorous in the world, all options to improve are on the table. It is also our responsibility first and foremost to protect our wild Pacific salmon, which is why we are investing and implementing the Cohen commission's recommendations, as well as the wild salmon policy. In addition, we will do no less than 20 salmon enhancement projects in British Columbia just this year.

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● (1455)

[Translation]

SHIPPING

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in July we got confirmation that the devastating waves that caused considerable damage in Yamachiche and Pointe-du-Lac were the result of human error. A ship was travelling too fast despite the fact that several notices had been issued.

Despite myself and my colleague from Trois-Rivières having risen several times on this issue, we recently learned that nothing, absolutely nothing, is being done to compensate the victims in Yamachiche and Pointe-du-Lac. That is completely unacceptable. These people deserve justice.

Can the Minister of Transport confirm today that there will be a compensation plan for the victims in Yamachiche and Pointe-du-Lac?

Oral Questions

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our thoughts go out to those affected by the events my colleague just described in Yamachiche where a ship exceeded the speed limit and created a wake. The Pilotage Act that governs the treatment of pilots who do not meet their obligations or obey the law is being reviewed right now. In my opinion, the act clearly does not go far enough to punish offending pilots, and we are addressing—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Lakeland.

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[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 86% of oil refined in eastern Canada comes from other countries. The majority of foreign oil producers, like Algeria and Venezuela, do not prioritize environmental stewardship, in which Canada is already a world leader. However, the Liberals changed the rules and added roadblocks for Canadian energy, risking investment and jobs. Of course, the Liberals' rules do not apply to foreign oil tankers in the St. Lawrence. That is a double standard.

My question is clear. Will the Liberals add upstream and downstream emissions assessment as a condition for foreign oil imports?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the interim principles that we established in 2016 apply to the energy east project—the very same assessment.

By the way, the assessment of the projects that have already been approved resulted in 3,000 jobs for the Nova Gas pipeline, 7,000 jobs for the Line 3 replacement project, 15,440 jobs for the Trans Mountain expansion project—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. We need to hear. The Minister of Natural Resources has about 10 more seconds.

The hon. Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Jim Carr: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member and the House want to know about more jobs created in the energy sector, I would invite the question.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of talk and no answers. A 2014 WorleyParsons study, before the Liberals created complete chaos, said that Alberta's regulatory standards are the best in the world.

The Liberals are deliberately stopping Canada's highly regulated, socially and environmentally responsible oil from getting to market with roadblocks and delays, but not oil from regimes with dismal human rights and environmental records. Liberal uncertainty actually puts world-class Canadian energy second.

When will the Liberals finally champion Canadian resources and stop putting Canadian oil and gas workers out of jobs?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are deliberately creating good jobs in the energy sector throughout the country, and mostly in Alberta. I could go on. There is the Arnaud apatite mine, with 910 jobs, and the Woodfibre LNG, with 700 jobs. We have created thousands of jobs in Alberta,

Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and across the country in the energy sector because we know natural resources drive the Canadian economy, and they will continue to do so under this government.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, construction of the energy east pipeline is vital for creating thousands of jobs in Quebec and New Brunswick. Studies show that it could generate billions of dollars in economic benefits.

The Liberals were never going to support this important project for eastern Canada. They prefer to make ideological decisions instead of sharing Canada's natural resources from coast to coast to coast.

Why does this Prime Minister, who claims to defend the middle class, refuse to stand up to create good jobs here in Canada?

● (1500)

[English]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been saying since this government was elected that it is a primary ambition of the Government of Canada to move our resources to markets sustainably and that environmental stewardship and economic growth go hand in hand, and the third pillar is meaningful consultation with indigenous communities.

We have changed the process. We have made sure that all three pillars have been essential in the way we have made decisions, and in so doing we have created tens of thousands of jobs for Albertans and Canadians in less than two years. We think that is not a bad record.

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STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year we celebrate the 150th anniversary of Confederation and we can reflect on our legacy for the future. Despite the important milestones witnessed in these 150 years, women, girls, and gender-non-confirming people still face hardships. There is more work remaining for gender equality to become a reality in Canada.

Can the Minister of Status of Women update this House on how our government is contributing to the overall goal of building a strong and independent women's movement?

Oral Questions

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Pickering—Uxbridge for her commitment to gender equality. We all agree that a strong and resilient women's movement is integral to the sustainability of our collective efforts.

Since forming government, our government has relied heavily on the expertise of leaders from the women's movement to shape the first federal strategy to address and prevent gender-based violence. The same leadership has taken the \$48-million investment in grants and contributions and is transforming and saving lives each and every day. We will continue to work in partnership.

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TAXATION

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unlike the previous government, which understood how trade works, the Liberal government just does not get it. Small businesses need to be competitive to take advantage of trade. These tax hikes raise the cost of doing business and make our country uncompetitive.

If the Prime Minister cannot protect local businesses from massive tax hikes that undermine their survival here in Canada, then how could he possibly be trusted to protect our local businesses when he is negotiating with the United States?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we start with a point of view that it is critically important for small businesses to be successful. We know how important they are to our economy. We know that keeping small business tax rates low is very important, and that is in fact what we are absolutely committed to do.

We also know of the need to be able to continue to invest so they will be able to continue to invest, but we also know that the next generation of small business owners want to have a fair tax system so they can have the opportunities to invest as well.

We are going to satisfy all those goals: allowing business to have a low tax rate, making sure they can invest, and making sure the next generation has a fairer system.

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[*Translation*]

PARLIAMENTARY PROTECTIVE SERVICE

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the changes made to the Parliamentary Protective Service are not working.

The House of Commons protective service officers have been without a contract since March, and negotiations have stalled. Furthermore, we recently learned that the employer has started threatening employees who are simply exercising their charter rights.

Let me be clear. The colour of a baseball cap does not make me and my colleagues feel any less safe.

Will the government amend the Parliament of Canada Act to guarantee the independence of the Parliamentary Protective Service?

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working to restore a culture of respect for the public

service, and we will continue to do so throughout our public service, which includes the House of Commons protective service.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this summer, I had the opportunity to travel around my riding of Marc-Aurèle-Fortin in Laval to talk to many of my constituents and to again note the congestion on our roads.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities inform the House of the action taken to support public transit in Laval in order to improve the quality of life of workers and their families, who use it every day?

• (1505)

Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank my colleague from Marc-Aurèle-Fortin for his question and his commitment to the citizens of Laval.

On August 8, together with my four colleagues from Laval, I was delighted to announce that our government will be contributing more than \$16.9 million to 29 public transportation projects in Laval, including the purchase of 22 hybrid buses, the renovation of many bus garages, and the addition and replacement of bus shelters. More reliable and efficient public transit systems will result in stronger communities in Quebec and Canada.

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in a posh room at the Chateau Laurier, the Minister of Canadian Heritage announced the creation of Netflix Canada, a foreign company that is exempt from the QST, GST, and income tax. Up for grabs, though, is \$500 million over five years towards the creation of Canadian productions.

Can the Minister of Canadian Heritage give us assurances that at least 33% of that money, the same as what is provided by the Canada Media Fund, will be allocated to French-language productions?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our commitment to Canada's creative industries is clear. This agreement, the first of its kind, includes an investment of at least \$500 million, as the member said, in original Canadian productions in both official languages.

This investment will create jobs and opportunities for creators and producers so that they can share their content with the rest of the country and around the world. The investments planned for Creative Canada will help us ensure that our creative industries are reliable—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Montcalm.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Saudi Arabia uses Canadian weapons against civilians. On July 28, the minister said that she was going to take action. Nevertheless, armoured vehicles are still making their way to Riyadh, and Saudi money is still making its way to Canada.

Why does the Minister of Foreign Affairs want to sign the Arms Trade Treaty, when her government does not even intend to abide by it?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada expects the end user of all exports to abide by the end use terms in issued export permits. I requested a review of the situation and department officials are actively requesting more information on these allegations. I can confirm that no new export permits have been issued for Saudi Arabia.

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[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Blaine Pedersen, Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade for the Province of Manitoba.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: Now I believe the House leader for the official opposition has the usual Thursday question.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, you may recall that last week I asked the government House leader if we would have an opportunity to have a supply day so that we could discuss some of the important issues that are affecting Canadians.

We know what we are all hearing about, so this week we asked the government, because it had not given us any opposition days over the last two weeks, if we could possibly have a take-note debate. At this point in the last Parliament, we had already had nine take-note debates, whereas in our current Parliament we have had only two, so there was a reason to grant us the take-note debate. That was not allowed, so we have had no opportunity. Basically, members of Parliament have been completely shut out of the consultation process on these tax changes that are so fiercely impacting and concerning Canadians right across the country.

I would ask the government House leader if she or her representative would be able to tell us what the upcoming business is and if we would be able to have a supply day so we can discuss some of these important issues.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure my colleague across the way will be happy with what we are about to say.

We will continue today with second reading of Bill C-47, the Arms Trade Treaty. When the debate is completed, we will then proceed with Bill C-55, the protection of Canada's marine and coastal areas. Tomorrow we will return to Bill C-55.

Business of the House

The business for Monday and Wednesday next week will be Bill C-48, the oil tanker moratorium bill. Tuesday and Thursday shall be allotted days.

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● (1510)

RESIGNATION OF MEMBER FOR BONAVISTA—BURIN—TRINITY

Hon. Judy Foote (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I ran to be a member of Parliament in beautiful Newfoundland and Labrador, I did not expect to be standing here today resigning from a job I love, representing people I love, and spending time with an incredible caucus, but as well, in the company of incredible individuals on both sides of this place. That includes you, Mr. Speaker, the table officers, pages, security, and all who work in the public service.

We work here because we know we can play a part in making a difference in our country. As MPs, we are here, because others made it possible for us to have the privilege to serve. I am so thankful to my constituents for giving me this opportunity. It has been an honour to be here. It has been an honour to serve with all fellow MPs, and it has also been an honour to serve for 10 years as cabinet minister in Newfoundland and Labrador and here in Ottawa, supported by a dedicated public service, men and women who are committed to doing their very best.

I have also been blessed with very caring and capable constituency employees in both Newfoundland and Labrador and Ottawa. They worked tirelessly with me over the past 20 years to respond to the issues facing our constituents. To the many volunteers who worked on my campaigns over the past 20 years, there are no words to express just how much I appreciated their commitment and hard work.

Making my decision was not an easy one for all of the reasons I just stated. However, given my reasons for reaching that decision made it easier, and the outpouring of support for and appreciation of that decision has been overwhelming. No one has been more understanding and supportive than my seatmate and friend, the Prime Minister. He continually reminds his caucus to put family first, because it is so easy for us as MPs to get caught up in our work, work that we love, but can consume us if we let it, and many of us do that.

Standing here saying goodbye, I think of our friend and colleague Arnold Chan, who was taken from his family and friends way too soon. I think of all who battle cancer, and do so with courage. I can think of no one who faced a battle with cancer with more courage than Arnold.

Business of the House

I was the whip when he was elected in 2014, and in addition to other responsibilities in that role, became a confidante and source of strength when needed. For Arnold, I know that sharing my experience with cancer helped in some way as he fought to survive while doing a job he loved. We often spoke about how staying involved and keeping one's mind occupied really does help. He was such a kind, courageous man who fought until the end, and inspired many, including all of us in the House.

Things happen in life to all of us that impact, and sometimes change completely the direction in which our lives go. Things also happen in life to help prepare us for those changes, and while we may not realize it when they happen, it does become apparent that strength and courage are needed to get through difficult times.

The memories I have of the strength and courage of another young man, who dipped his leg in the Atlantic Ocean in Newfoundland and Labrador before starting his marathon of hope, will always stay with me.

I was a reporter with CBC at the time and assigned to cover the story. Terry and I talked about his bout with cancer, and his vision of using his experience to bring a focus to the need for research. As the interview ended, I commented on his curly hair. He had a lot of it. He told me it was a positive outcome for him, having lost his hair while being given chemotherapy drugs to battle the cancer. As anyone who has fought cancer will say, remaining positive is half the battle. Unfortunately, there are other factors beyond our control.

I followed Terry's trek across the country and, like other Canadians, was saddened when it was reported he could not continue. While Terry could not complete the marathon, he made a difference, and 37 years later, people throughout our country take part in the annual Terry Fox Run. In fact, this week is the Terry Fox school run throughout Canada. Terry inspired many, and just as I was inspired by Arnold, I was inspired so many years ago by Terry.

• (1515)

Little did I know that several years later I would be diagnosed with breast cancer, not once but twice, most recently three years ago. Like Terry, I lost my hair, and while it may not look like it now, it grew back curly. As it grew back, I thought of Terry and his curls, but especially his positive attitude.

When illness strikes a family the natural thing to do is pull together and go in survival mode. I saw that with the Fox family, and that is what happened in my family. No one was more determined that I was going to survive my first bout with cancer than my daughter Carla, who was only 25 at the time.

Carla sat through all of my chemotherapy and radiation treatments, and made sure a chart was prepared listing all of the medications I needed to take if I was going to survive. She was determined to make sure I did not miss any. Needless to say, she has a full appreciation of the toll cancer can take, but she also knows surviving cancer is possible.

Being aware of that became even more important, when it was discovered two years ago that I carried a BRCA gene. Having the BRCA gene means the body is susceptible to any number of cancers. It also means those closest to the person are at risk. Getting my head around what having the gene could mean for my children Carla,

Jason, and Heidi, and their children, if they inherited it from me, was difficult, and needless to say remains so, because unfortunately, two of my three children did.

While we believe knowledge is power, very personal decisions that involve taking measures to prevent cancer require a lot of courage.

Having a BRCA gene also means running the risk of dealing with genetic discrimination in areas like insurance access and workplace practices. No one should be discriminated against on the basis of his or her genetic characteristics.

I am pleased this government supports adding genetic characteristics as an explicit prohibited ground for discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act. The Minister of Justice has written to the premiers of the provinces and territories to get their support. In her correspondence with the premiers, the minister wrote:

In conclusion, I reaffirm the high importance that the provinces and territories take the necessary steps within their respective jurisdictions to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of genetic characteristics.

With an interlocking scheme of federal, provincial, and territorial legislation, our country has achieved comprehensive human rights measures prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, and others.

The prohibition of genetic discrimination should be added to that proud human rights heritage. My plea today, on behalf of all Canadians who have genetic characteristics, is that every premier in our country would join the federal government, and take the action required to do so.

As a woman who has spent 28 years in political life, I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to encourage more women to get involved in what I consider an honourable profession, where it really is possible to make a difference in the lives of others, especially the most vulnerable.

Unfortunately, I have observed over the years why they may choose not to go down that path. It takes a strong individual to stand up and fight back against bullying of any sort, especially if the bully is in a position of authority. While I refer to politics as a profession in which women may choose not to get involved because of these tactics, the harassing and belittling is not limited to politics, nor is it limited to women, but it is safe to say it is more pervasive among men toward women. The question is, why? Why do some people feel it is okay to treat another individual as less than equal?

As I continue to encourage more women to get involved, I tell them of my positive experiences, and that in my opinion there is no profession more rewarding. I also say to them my encouragement does not mean I think women do a better job; instead, we do a different job, based on our experiences.

Business of the House

I thank the Prime Minister for the opportunity to serve in a gender-balanced cabinet. It reinforced my belief that when men and women work together, respect each other, and are treated equally, the best work can be accomplished.

In my 28 years of political life, I have seen and heard it all. I have dealt with and heard about experiences of others that should never have occurred. As I look at my daughter and granddaughter in the gallery, and know that in the 2015 election only 88 of the 338 members of Parliament elected were women, just 26%, the fight for gender equality is far from over.

While some in-roads have been made, it is a fight that all of us, men and women, should take on, so that daughters and granddaughters in our country can have the opportunity to serve and make a difference. As the Prime Minister says repeatedly, better is always possible. By working together, better is indeed possible.

I have said to anyone who will listen that I am blessed with an amazing family. As they watch today from the gallery and at home, I thank them for their tremendous support during the entire 28 years I have been in political life, support that never wavered. They knew how much I appreciated the opportunity I have been given, and that I thrived on it.

Having served in provincial politics prior to being elected in 2008 as a member of Parliament, we knew as a family the job would take me away from home more often than I would be at home. As an MP representing a riding of 240 communities, even when I was in Newfoundland and Labrador, it meant I was rarely home.

• (1520)

My husband of 43 years, Howard, has put up with such a crazy lifestyle, and knowing how much I enjoyed my job, he campaigned vigorously every election to help me keep it. In fact, I always said it was we who ran.

He has been the stalwart in our family: a husband, a dad, a father-in-law, and now a poppy to Katie May, Meadow, Ruby Jude, and Elliott to whom we say, “We love you to the moon and back.” Katie May’s response is always “I love you more.”

I thank you for always making me feel you understood how important my job was. Thank you as well for showing me that, as important as it was, you knew it was never more important than you. I am so looking forward to spending more time at home making memories with you for many, many years to come.

• (1525)

[*Translation*]

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with some pleasure and sadness that I rise today to thank a colleague and dear friend, the member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity.

[*English*]

From the first moment I arrived on Parliament Hill, almost 10 years ago, I got to meet good people who every day strived to do great things; people who were focused on serving Canadians, on tackling difficult challenges, on trying to figure out the best way forward for our country; people whose diligent efforts and dedicated work never failed to make a positive, meaningful difference in the

lives of those who elected them. The member for the then-riding of Random—Burin—St. George’s was one of those people.

Newly elected to the House together in October 2008, we were both technically rookies, but I knew very well that, unlike me, the member did not fit that label.

[*Translation*]

Having previously worked as a senior adviser to Premier Wells and a provincial minister in Newfoundland and Labrador, she had answered the call of public service well before we crossed paths. She had already dedicated her career to what she does best, and that is serving the people of Newfoundland and Labrador with passion and commitment.

Once she arrived in Ottawa, she quickly became known for her incredible work ethic and her determination to help others.

[*English*]

She was appointed opposition deputy House leader and then Liberal whip. We all know that the whip’s job is nominally about discipline, but she understood that it was actually more about morale and team-building. Remember, the party had been dealt its worst-ever election defeat in 2011, and we were reeling without a permanent leader. It was this member who wrangled and managed and motivated the 35 of us, helping us with her strength and resilience to remain united and focused.

Once I became leader, I relied on her time and time again, through some extremely difficult moments, for her support and leadership. No matter what the situation, she has always been, for me, a model of grace and compassion, a source of intelligence and deep wisdom.

[*Translation*]

Whether in opposition or in government, as a member of caucus or cabinet, the hon. member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity was always an excellent voice for her constituents here in Ottawa. She always made sure that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador had a place at the decision-making table and that their interests were represented and their voices heard. Canadians are all the better for it.

[*English*]

However, what has perhaps left the greatest impression on her colleagues, constituents, and fellow citizens is the member’s strength of character. We will miss not only a skilled politician but also a dedicated citizen, a devoted wife, an incredible mother, and a loving grandmother; a great Canadian who will continue to inspire women across the country to choose a career in politics; who will continue to motivate young people to serve their community, and continue to encourage those who are fighting an illness to keep on fighting.

Canadians, like the members on all sides of the aisle, will not forget the courage and fortitude shown by the member in the face of adversity. She is and always will be an example of resilience, passion, and grace to us all.

• (1530)

[*Translation*]

The hon. member is without a doubt one of the hardest-working people I have had the pleasure to know.

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It was a true privilege to have her by my side since the day I decided to serve this great country.

[English]

She has dedicated her career to serving the world in which her children and grandchildren would grow up, and now the time has come for her to enjoy it with them, and of course with Howard, her extraordinary husband to whom we are all deeply grateful for having shared her for so many years in service to her community, her province, and to her country. Thank you, Howard.

Judy, my dear friend, I am going to sorely miss you, miss having you by my side, but I know, we all know that your family and friends need you by their side even more. I love you. Thank you.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have to say at the outset what a pleasure it is to see again my friend from Newfoundland sitting in her accustomed place at the right hand side of the Prime Minister.

One of the most commonly asked questions we MPs get when we go back home from our constituents is, “What is that MP like; what is that person like who you work with?” When it comes to answering questions about my friend opposite, I only had one answer and will always have one answer, and that she is one of the good ones.

There are so many reasons for that, but primarily it comes down to one thing. She just simply has a good heart, and that is the measuring stick I use when evaluating MPs, or citizens, or people whom I meet perhaps for the first time. Do they have a good heart? Not only does the member opposite have a good heart, but she has a big heart and that has been exhibited time and time again over the last few decades that she has been in public service.

I know what motivated her back in 2006 to seek public office and it was not the glamour, not the money; it was merely the fact that she wanted to help people. She wanted to make a positive contribution to her constituency, to her province, and to her country, and she has surely done that in spades.

From 2006 to 2008, she served in the cabinet of the Province of Newfoundland in several capacities. She was a minister looking after several portfolios. She did all admirably well. Then of course came the inevitable call to move up and onward, and she did. She arrived in Ottawa in 2008, and as the Prime Minister said, immediately demonstrated to all of her parliamentary colleagues on both sides of the aisle her work ethic, her competency, and her love for this place.

Almost immediately, she was appointed deputy House leader and fulfilled all of those obligations admirably, but I think she left perhaps her greatest mark on this Parliament starting in 2011, when she was appointed party whip. Mr. Speaker, I know that you understand and many others in this place may understand that being a party whip is not the easiest job in the world, and the Prime Minister has referenced that. Think of this. Not only is the job of whip itself a difficult position to attain and a difficult job to perform well, but this member inherited the job, was asked to do the job of party whip of a third party, a party that, as the Prime Minister explained quite rightly, had just suffered one of the most devastating electoral defeats that the grand old Liberal Party had seen in its long, storied history. It was reduced to 35 seats, having only a few years previously been in government.

Not only was that a daunting task for anyone to take on, to be the whip of a morale-ridden party in third place—the interim leader at the time, Mr. Rae, asked my friend from Newfoundland to take on this job—but the challenges were even greater than one would think. First, she was a female in a very heavily ridden testosterone-driven caucus, whose morale was low, whose unity was questioned, and yet against all of those obstacles she not only survived but she thrived. Why? It was not only because she is competent, but she is the consummate team player.

As we all know in this place and in politics in general, loyalty is everything. My friend demonstrated her loyalty to her party, her friends, her colleagues, and her constituents time and time again, and for that I say not only do we thank her, but I admire her and respect her greatly, and I always will.

The year 2011, when my friend opposite inherited the role of whip, also brought with it some other challenges far greater than anything she had experienced before in her life, and that is when she discovered she had cancer. As many of us have experienced through our families' personal tragedies—family members who have contracted insidious diseases like cancer—it is not the easiest thing in the world to talk publicly about it. In fact, many people try to keep their condition private.

● (1535)

This member did not do that. She chose not to take that path. She chose to go public with her cancer, letting thousands upon thousands of women and men across Canada know that it is okay to talk about a disease that could potentially kill her. She wanted to demonstrate the fact that she was willing to fight as hard as she could to beat this terrible disease, and she did.

Back in those days, every Tuesday afternoon I had the pleasure of spending time with my friend opposite because we were both members of the House leaders' offices, I in government and she in the third party. From 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. every Tuesday we would have House leaders' meetings and would discuss all the issues of the day, come to some conclusions, and move on. That period of time was also when the member opposite was severely ill. Some meetings she could not attend, and others she did. I remember watching with great admiration how she faced this insidious disease head on with courage, equanimity, determination and, more than anything else, an unflinching sense of humour. I recall on several occasions wondering whether, if the situations were reversed and I were the one facing these health challenges, I would be able to meet the challenges with the grace and dignity of the member opposite. I think I could not.

To her I say this: she has demonstrated above and beyond not only her courage and determination, but also her unflagging spirit for life. She truly is an inspiration to all of us, and to all women across Canada who have battled a similar disease. We thank her for that. It will never be forgotten.

Thankfully her health returned, and other challenges were just around the corner. As a matter of fact, if I recall, in 2015 there was an election in which the Liberals sprang from third party to government. Almost immediately, one of the first appointments the Prime Minister made, and I congratulate him for it, was the appointment of my friend to cabinet. I always learned and heard from my former boss Prime Minister Harper that the way he approached cabinet positions was simply to find the most competent people and give them the toughest jobs. My friend from Newfoundland must be competent, because the job she was given by the Prime Minister was almost unspeakable.

Let's think about this for a moment. Think about the files that the member had to manage in her time as cabinet minister: Phoenix and the payroll problems, Canada Post and the conflict of whether home delivery would be abandoned or retained, and Shared Services Canada with the massive government IT transformation. I would think those would be formidable for three cabinet ministers to manage, yet this cabinet minister did all three, and exceedingly well.

My only regret is that I was hoping that the minister would stay in Parliament and continue her role. As chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, where the minister appeared on several occasions, I was looking forward to continued appearances by the member until at least 2019, when I hoped I would be meeting her as an opposition member. However, that is for another discussion that we will not get into now.

Without question, her level of politics has only been exceeded by her love of family. Anyone who knows this member knows that she has an unqualified and unreserved love for her entire family. They are her heart, her soul, her being. Family is everything to this minister, and for that I admire her so very much as an example of what can be done to combine both the love of family and the love of country in one very competent package. Even though we will miss her in Ottawa, I know that her family is going to receive her well.

● (1540)

Probably the only little people who are going to love seeing their grandma more are future grandchildren. I am sure that they will know, as I do, since I am a grandfather myself of two beautiful granddaughters, they are going to be receiving the greatest gift all. They will see their mother, their grandmother home at last to stay. I have no doubt that the member opposite will be the greatest grandma in Canada.

On behalf of all of my colleagues in Her Majesty's loyal opposition, I want to congratulate my friend for her many years of service to this place, to her constituents, and to her country. I wish her nothing but health and happiness in the future. Let me just conclude by saying that the member is and always will be one of the good ones.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my leader and all members of the New Democratic Party, I also rise in the House today to pay tribute to the member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, who is leaving public life to spend more quality time with her family.

I am sure it is a decision that many of us struggle with from time to time, but as we hear today about this member's journey through

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her public and professional life, we know that she has made a decision that is in her best interests and those of her family.

Truly, this was not something arrived at lightly, given that the member has been involved in public life for more than 28 years. We know that people are often called in service of their communities, provinces, or country.

[*Translation*]

When someone manages to build as fine and impressive a political reputation over the years as the hon. member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity has, it is easy to see why the people put their trust in her so many times.

She was a member in our provincial and federal legislatures and a cabinet minister, but above all she was a very popular political personality who dedicated a very large part of her life to representing her constituents.

[*English*]

Those who are most familiar with her record and work, her constituents, have consistently supported her efforts on their behalf. It is no small testament to her good work that the voters returned her with 82% of the vote, the largest percentage of votes in Canada during the last election. In that respect, she will go out at the very top. That is something we can all congratulate her for.

The member talked about her constituency and how many communities she represented. It is only an honour for me to be able to speak today and honour her, given the large constituency that I represent of Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing. I fully understand when she said, "Even though you're home, you're not home." I have not been home for two weeks now. I really enjoy what I do, but I know there will come a time as well when I will decide at some point that it is time.

The people in our constituency understand that as well. Sometimes we feel extremely sad that we cannot be there for birthdays or anniversaries. However, it is those people who keep us going. Therefore, none of us are able to hold these posts without a lot of help. We ask for the goodwill of our constituents, but we rely on the teams we are a part of to help us along the way: the like-minded individuals, in truth an army of volunteers, who help us get elected; staff members who support us in Parliament and in our constituencies; community contacts who keep us grounded and help focus many of our efforts; and, of course, our families who carry us through the roughest patches and help us celebrate the very best moments too.

Perhaps it is the family who pay the highest price when someone is called to public service. While we can speak of the commitment, dedication, and sacrifice of the individuals who decide to embark on this path, we understand that those who make the greatest sacrifice are often the ones at home. The path of political success can be a hindrance to the goals and desires we have for our homes and lives. In that respect, we are borrowing the politician from his or her family. Therefore, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the member's husband Howard; her children Carla, Jason, and Heidi; and her grandchildren for their generosity in sharing the member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity with us.

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I became an MP in the same election that brought the member to this place. Although we did not have an opportunity to work together much while she was in opposition, I did have occasion to work with her once she became a minister. In that capacity, she was always approachable and understanding. It was clear that she understood that although we can be partisan players, the work we do on behalf of our constituencies and the people who trust us to represent them must cut above that fray. I am sure that many of us would echo these sentiments, and I would like to thank the member for her kindness and work on behalf of all people of Canada.

The member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity is leaving us so she can spend more quality time with her family. That is entirely understandable, but few of us would be surprised if we see her adding her voice to the issues of the day from time to time. It would be too much to ask someone who is so obviously driven to disconnect in every way.

I want to wish the member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity farewell but not goodbye. On behalf of the New Democratic Party, we wish you the very best as you begin the next chapter in your life. Good luck.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour for me to say a few words on this truly moving occasion, because the member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity is not only a colleague, but a dear, close friend.

[*English*]

I was privileged to work with the member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity in the 41st Parliament. I remain personally grateful for many kindnesses, not least of which was the use of a couch during the 62 hours of the filibuster over the Canada Post lockout. I had a very nice nap in her office, and no one else noticed that I looked like I might be needing one.

There were many acts of kindness, but what sticks with me so much is that at the time, she was so busy. We have heard from other members—accurately, generously, and graciously—what kind of job she did and what kind of person she is. As busy as she was, she never adopted the mantle of, “I am busy and important. Who are you?” I am not naming anyone in particular, but we all know people who when they get to an elevated position are suddenly like that. That never happened with the hon. member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity. She never failed to have time for colleagues and time for friends.

When the cancer came back, and all of us who know and love her were wrenched by it, she was consistently courageous. She reassured us that she was okay, and she showed up day after day, even at times when I really wished she could go home and have a rest.

There have been many good things pointed out about the hon. member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity. I was particularly moved by the remarks by the member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan.

Those of us who say goodbye to her today do so with tears in our eyes and love in our hearts, because this is a member who will continue to make a difference at home. The reasons she is stepping

down now are entirely just and proper. As loved as she is in her riding, she is walking away from a job she loves for the best possible reason: being a good mom.

Thank you so much.

• (1550)

The Speaker: I wish to thank all the members who have spoken and certainly endorse what has been said about my dear friend, the hon. member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity. I would like to express my own admiration, affection, and best wishes to her and her family.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1600)

[*English*]

EXPORT AND IMPORT PERMITS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-47, An Act to amend the Export and Import Permits Act and the Criminal Code (amendments permitting the accession to the Arms Trade Treaty and other amendments), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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 nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the recorded division for second reading of Bill C-47 be deferred until Monday, October 2, at the end of Government Orders.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Accordingly, the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, October 2, at the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders.

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek it, you would find that there is unanimous consent to further defer the deferred recorded division for second reading of Bill C-47 until Tuesday, October 3, at the end of the time provided for oral questions.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Accordingly, the recorded division is further deferred until Tuesday, October 3, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

* * *

OCEANS ACT

The House resumed from September 27 consideration of the motion that Bill C-55, An Act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a little more challenging to stop a speech or intervention mid-point and pick up a day later, which is what I am doing today. However, it is always an honour to have the opportunity to rise and speak in this House, especially representing the incredible riding of North Okanagan—Shuswap and in my role as deputy shadow minister for fisheries, oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard.

Rather than starting off mid-paragraph, I will briefly recap some of what I mentioned in my first half yesterday.

First, and most significantly, is that ministerial power would significantly increase under Bill C-55, if passed. It would reject scientific certainty as a basis for the designation of MPAs. Second, Bill C-55 would press inflexible timelines and would accelerate the process that has been used for many years for in-depth consideration.

Bill C-55 would significantly increase the power of the minister, allowing the government to no longer require scientific certainty or consensus among affected stakeholders before imposing closure or restrictions associated with marine protected areas. That may be just what this minister wants, but is that in the best interest of all Canadians?

It has been said that the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard already possesses more power than any other minister in cabinet under Canada's current legislation. However, we know that this minister will be replaced, and believe me, we on this side are working hard on that. This minister will be replaced by another minister, and another one after that. All this power placed in the office of one individual may seem okay in the short term, but no one can predict what the long term will bring.

First nations, fishermen, cargo shippers, tourism operators, conservation groups, academics, and many other stakeholders would continue to face the consequences of the government's frantic and

half-baked approach to speeding up the process of establishing MPAs, among other things they are doing.

Our Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans is currently studying the criteria and process for establishing the MPAs, because we have seen a government hell-bent on reaching a political target. The government seems to be either oblivious to or callous about the havoc its decisions would wreak on the workers and residents who depend on marine and coastal areas for their livelihoods and subsistence.

The government has reneged or failed on so many other political campaign promises that it is now desperately trying to meet its unrealistic timeline to deliver the MPA campaign promise. In moving forward with this bill and short-circuiting the consultation process, the government fails to realize that it is breaking another one of its campaign promises, the promise of delivering openness and transparency.

In recent days we have witnessed the government short-circuit the debate and consultation process for its tax change proposals, effectively quashing debate in the House, but even more so, across Canada. Canadians are continually complaining to our offices in phone calls, emails, and letters. It has been unending, yet the government fails to hear it.

The government is refusing to listen to the thousands of small businesses and family farms that will be financially harmed by ham-fisted tax grabs that will not touch the family fortunes of the Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance. In the same way, through Bill C-55, the government is trying to eliminate the long-established structures and processes for engaging Canadians who will be affected by the new MPAs.

In the course of the fisheries and oceans committee's ongoing study, the committee has heard directly from a number of witnesses who have testified that the process for establishing MPAs should not be rushed.

• (1605)

For example, Ian MacPherson, executive director of the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association, stated that his association:

...understands the requirement to protect marine environments, but we do have concerns surrounding the tight timelines to accomplish these goals. The first step to designating a ministerial order MPA is to gather existing scientific, economic, social, and cultural information on the area. Prince Edward Island is a small province driven by small fishing communities. The displacement of fishers from one community to another as a result of an MPA would shift the economics of the island. Throughout the consultation process, fishing areas were discussed, but not the economics of how a large MPA along the small coastline of Prince Edward Island would impact the island.

Time and again during the committee's examination of the criteria and process used to establish MPAs, we have heard how essential it is to consult with local first nations and stakeholders. Consultation is essential to preventing displacement of traditional uses. Consultation is essential to avoiding undue fishing pressures on adjacent areas that may not be sustainable.

The committee has also heard from Chris Sporer of the Pacific Halibut Management Association of British Columbia, who stated:

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Further, if fishermen are forced from productive, high catch per unit effort areas to less productive ones, this means increased fishing time and the need to use more gear to catch the same amount of fish. If you increase fishing time, that means more fuel. That means greater carbon emissions. More gear means increased benthic impacts and the risk of bycatch, for instance, of things like seabirds, something that we've worked very hard in our industry to minimize.

During his testimony, Mr. Sporer also stated that:

The MPA process needs to take into consideration and evaluate the ecological consequences of displacing fishing effort, but it also needs to take into account all the sustainability measures that have been implemented to date.

At present they're not being factored into the analysis.

I support protecting our coasts and offshore marine environments, but these protections must be in the right place and developed over the right time frame, with clear objectives that can be measured on a scientific basis and with all the support of locals and Canadians who will be affected.

What I see in Bill C-55 is the ability for the minister to use unrestrained power, without the backing of scientific certainty, to impose restrictions and closures with complete disregard for the culture, heritage, livelihood, and interests of Canadians.

I also see that proposed section 35.3 of the bill proposes a strict timeline of five years from the time an interim MPA is designated by the minister for the government to render a decision to either issue a permanent designation for the MPA or repeal the interim order. This timeline flies in the face of testimony and anecdotal evidence that shows that seven to 10 years are required to thoroughly establish an MPA. How can the government so blatantly choose political expediency over respect for Canadians? The government must recognize and respect the essential value of engaging Canadians affected by the proposed MPA, to hear their concerns, to receive their perspectives, and to respect their opinions.

If the government fails to fulfill these important steps, it prejudices the future sustainability of the MPA. As the government tries to discard scientific basis and democratic consensus from the MPA process, it runs the acute risk of undermining the legitimacy of future MPAs.

There are documented warnings that the government is rushing into our MPA process. If we cannot recognize the mistakes of rushed MPA processes that have happened elsewhere around the world, we run the same risk of repeating them here in Canada. I call on the government to step back from this bill's attempt to further accelerate and exacerbate the MPA process and reset its timeline for achieving MPA objectives.

That is what is needed to ensure that Canadians, especially those who will be most affected by MPAs, are able to factor into the MPA development process.

• (1610)

It is not what one does, it is how one does it that counts. I certainly hope that the government can put its own political interests aside in this instance and do what is right for the people of Canada.

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the member opposite from beautiful British Columbia for his speech and also to

express how much I enjoy working with my colleague at the fisheries and oceans committee.

A lot of my constituents back in British Columbia expressed that we are not moving urgently enough to protect our oceans and that in fact we might be taking our oceans for granted, which is why I was so excited when we made the commitment to get to 10% of marine protection by 2020.

Under the Oceans Act currently, there is no protection until there is full protection, and that is a problem because, as the member stated, it could take seven years on average and up to 10 years to pass one of these MPAs. Certainly the precautionary principle under which so many decisions in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans are made is in line with the concept of what we are trying to do. We are trying to give people the tools they need to protect the areas that we urgently need to protect.

I would say to the member opposite that certainly the concept of scientific certainty cannot be used as a justification to do nothing when our oceans are in fact in trouble.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member from B.C., the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, for the question. It has been an honour to get to know him over the past few months.

The member brought up the fact that some of the residents of B.C. are asking the government to move faster on this issue. However, I compare that to travelling down the highway and having a truck coming up behind that wants to go faster. Does that mean we should exceed the speed limit? I do not believe so. I think the same analogy should be applied to marine protected areas. I think that rushing into something that is so permanent and so involved and intricate is a mistake on behalf of Canadians.

• (1615)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for North Okanagan—Shuswap. I have had a chance to sit with him on the fisheries and oceans committee. Certainly as British Columbians we have a lot in common.

One thing I want to ask the member is if he agrees with the Liberals that oil and gas exploration should be permissible in marine protected areas, and maybe even aquaculture and fish farms. Does he think it would be adequate that they could be located in marine protected areas?

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, Canada has a robust assessment system in place. Environmental assessments take place before any development can happen. Exploration, development, etc., are all done under quite strict scrutiny. If those exploration and development proposals are not seen to be environmentally sustainable, they are not permitted to move forward.

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I think marine protected areas need different definitions for different areas of the country. We are certainly hearing from witnesses in testimony at committee that Canada should not have a designation for MPAs in Canada that would meet a worldwide standard. We have a vast coastline, three different coasts, and at least three different types of climates. These simply cannot be covered by one cut and dried definition.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my question for the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap comes from direct experience in my own riding, where there has been a proposal for a national marine conservation area for some time. It is described in the government documents as the Southern Strait of Georgia national marine conservation area. It is known within our community as the Salish Sea conservation area. To give the member an idea of how long the proposal has existed, it was endorsed in 1972 by Jacques Cousteau.

I believe that Bill C-55 is long overdue to create mechanisms to speed up the process of establishing marine protected areas. I have many questions for the Liberal government and I have amendments that will come forth in committee, but I just want to put on record that I do not agree with the idea that this bill would give the Minister of Fisheries unwelcome draconian powers.

I would ask my hon. colleague if he does not think that after waiting from 1972 to 2017, we might be able to do something to speed up the process.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for all the work she does as the lone member of her party. It is a daunting task to try to keep on top of all of the legislation that comes before the House, so I recognize her for that.

I understand what she is saying about the proposed designation of an MPA off the B.C. coast going on for a long time, since 1972 or 1973. That is certainly a long time. That can be used as an example of how complex some of these proposed MPAs are. All of them cannot be understood within a five-year time frame.

While I do agree that 20 or 30 years is too long, there are processes in place for protecting fish stocks and for protecting ecological areas. We cannot simply put a fixed timeline on something that is so complex.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands brought up a great point. The process has been slow in some areas, and things do need to be done.

I want to ask my hon. colleague from North Okanagan—Shuswap, who sits with me on committee and is my deputy shadow minister on this file, if he could perhaps share with those who are in the House some of the comments that we have heard from hundreds of Canadians from coast to coast to coast, people and families who depend on the fishery for their livelihood, the stakeholders, the true folks on the ground, the local communities and indigenous communities who do not feel they have been consulted or listened to.

•(1620)

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to work with my colleague from Cariboo—Prince George as his deputy shadow minister.

The member asked about some of the testimony and comments that we have heard from individuals across the country. They really focused around not being heard by the government. We hear constantly from fishermen, from processors, and from first nations, especially those in British Columbia, where they have long been fighting for their unceded territories. They do not have treaties or agreements with government. Those types of things are going to take much longer than the five-year time frame that is being proposed in this legislation.

That is why I am not going to support this legislation in its current format. The five-year time frame will be unreasonable. I do not see any allowance in the bill for any extension of the temporary MPAs that may be put in place. These are the types of problems I see with this legislation.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, perhaps our hon. colleague could share with the House an example of a marine protected area that took about seven to nine years and started with true consultation. I am talking about the testimony that we heard from the gentleman from California. It is one of the best examples of an MPA that we have seen to this point.

Canada has the longest shoreline in the world and is being compared to other countries with small shorelines. We can certainly learn from California's experience with the MPA process. I would like our hon. colleague to comment on that.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, we heard amazing testimony. The witness from California testified that its MPAs were created through full consultation with fishermen and local communities, and they have been a success.

We saw another example of that when we travelled north with the committee to Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk, and Paulatuk. Those MPAs were put in place in full consultation with the local indigenous community and in full consultation with government to understand what needed to be protected for a long period of time. Those MPAs have been a success because of that consultation process.

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my hon. colleague from North Okanagan—Shuswap in talking about amendments to the Oceans Act and the Canadian Petroleum Resources Act. The title somewhat bothers me, but I will speak about that a bit later.

My hon. friend from North Okanagan—Shuswap is compassionate about fishing in the interior and coastal waters of British Columbia. I have talked to him many times. I believe he is quite an expert on that, much more so than I am. However, both my interests and my heart lie in some of the points in Bill C-55 that deal with consultations with the aboriginal community, communities, businesses, and stakeholders.

Government Orders

I sat on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. Last year, our committee presented a report entitled “Taking Action Today: Establishing Protected Areas for Canada’s Future”. I believe it was an excellent report that all parties on the committee worked well on together. I have to commend our chair, the hon. member for King—Vaughan, who led us to prepare that unanimous report, which was sent to the government. I see the government has jumped on parts of that report and has included them in Bill C-55.

When we were preparing that report, we heard from people from coast to coast to coast. We heard from a large number of aboriginal communities on the west coast, from the Inuit in the Arctic, from the aboriginals in the interior of Canada, and from aboriginal communities on the east coast in the James Bay area. There was one specific message they sent to us: consultation. I see that has been somewhat missed in Bill C-55.

I note the Prime Minister's mandate letter instructs the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to:

Work with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to increase the proportion of Canada’s marine and coastal areas that are protected—to five percent by 2017, and ten percent by 2020—supported by new investments in community consultation and science.

Let us look at those numbers. The government is hoping to reach 5% three months from now. As of June of this year, Canada was at less than 1% for coastal areas and protected spaces, and only at 11% for land and inland water protected spaces. Now we want to go from 1% to 5%.

Let us look back at the history of this. These numbers came from the Aichi targets that came out of the convention on biological diversity that was held back in 2010. Our Conservative government attended that conference. We agreed with many other nations around the world to establish protected spaces, both inland and on our coastal waters.

We agreed on 10% of coastal waters to be protected by 2020, and 70% of inland waters and lakes to be protected by 2017. However, as a government, we looked at those as aspirational targets. Could we reach them? No, not without proper consultations with our aboriginal communities, municipalities, provinces, and industry stakeholders. It would take a great amount of time and a lot of work.

• (1625)

However, we looked at those targets and agreed to those targets. We thought they could be reached. There is a large segment of environmentalists out there who think we should go much higher. In fact, during our committee's work, there were people who made presentations who thought 50% of Canada's coastal waters should be protected, and 50% of the inland should be protected. Those were unrealistic amounts.

I noticed it also stated in that mandate letter that since the designation of the marine protected areas, MPAs, would take several years, the Liberal government is introducing, through Bill C-55, an interim designation of significant or sensitive areas identified by scientists, through consultation with indigenous people, local communities, and other interested groups.

I would like to read part of the report that was submitted by our committee which was unanimous. It states:

Federal protected areas account for about half—45% terrestrial and 83% marine—of Canada’s total protected areas.

That is where we are at, but that is not the 17% or the 10%. The report continues:

Accordingly, collaborative action by all levels of government including Indigenous governments, landowners, industrial stakeholders and civil society is required to resolve issues of competing uses for land and water in order to achieve and exceed our targets. Protecting areas in the Arctic marine and boreal regions are of particular importance.

That is what the committee had proposed and sent to the government. However, the government, in its usual format of consultation said it was only going to listen to identified scientists. It was going to pick the areas because it was going to do this really quick. We have three months to do it, all of a sudden. The government is going to pick out 5% of our coastal waterways, and it is going to protect it, because the scientists are going to pick it.

Throughout the report, I thought we really talked about working with indigenous people, talking with indigenous people, talking with stakeholders, and talking with municipalities. That is not being done. The Liberals are not saying, they are dictating. They are dictating this. The scientists are going to tell them what land they are taking, and people are going to listen, and then they will have some consultations so they can say they had consultations. That is after the fact. After the fact is not what the report stated. It stated to have active consultation with all stakeholders.

I want to read another part of the report:

The federal government has a variety of roles to play to meet our targets. It must provide the leadership needed to ensure coherent and coordinated plans are developed to reach the targets. It must partner with Indigenous peoples to establish and recognize new types of protected areas in Indigenous territories while providing new opportunities for Indigenous economic development and advancing reconciliation. The federal government must also put its own house in order by coordinating its efforts, accelerating the establishment of federal protected areas and demonstrating political will, including through the provision of funding.

The Liberals do say that, somewhat, in Bill C-55 and, yes, we did recommend in Bill C-55 that we speed things up. However, to move to 5% in three months, by dictating the areas first and then start consultations after, is not what the standing committee reported to the government to do after listening to a number of witnesses across this country.

• (1630)

Again, a broken promise. The government does not even want to listen to its own members on the committee. It just wants to do as it sees fit, and expects people to follow suit.

I would like to go to another area of this report. One of the recommendations, in fact the first recommendation by the committee that studied this only a year ago was:

That a national stakeholder advisory group to advise the conservation body be established representing, among others, municipal governments, civil society, private landowners, conservation specialists, industry, academics and Indigenous groups; and that a process be put in place through which individuals, in particular Indigenous peoples, or organizations may suggest priority areas for protection.

Government Orders

Let us go back to what the Liberals are stating in Bill C-55. They state that by introducing Bill C-55, the legislation would allow for an interim designation of significant or sensitive areas identified by scientists.

Where in there does it say scientists? It says academics. It says aboriginal groups. It says stakeholders. It does not say scientists. I am not mocking scientists. Science is needed to establish these areas. However, the Liberals have gone completely, totally, against a standing committee that made very strong recommendations. Those recommendations were made on the information received from aboriginal people and stakeholders from coast to coast to coast.

However, it is not in the interests of the Liberals to follow the recommendations that were presented by the committee. They are just going to do as they see fit.

As I mentioned earlier, it bothered me to have the Canada Petroleum Resources Act thrown in with Bill C-55. Why focus on oil and gas? It appears, over the last little while, that the Liberals are attempting, any which way they can, to stop future oil and gas development in Canada.

I want to read recommendation no. 1 again. It says:

The federal government has a variety of roles to play to meet our targets.

It is not one specific target; namely, to get rid of the oil and gas sector in Canada. All we have to see, if we go from the last three or four months, or the last year, is that the Liberals want to probably change the strongest regulatory controls in the world held by the National Energy Board, the Alberta Energy Regulator, and the B.C. Oil and Gas Commission. We have much scientific evidence that shows that these are the best anywhere. However, it is not good enough for the government. It is going to come up with new forms of stopping the oil and gas industry.

I want to read recommendation no. 22 from this report, entitled “Taking Action Today: Establishing Protected Areas for Canada’s Future.”

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada place a priority on collaborating with indigenous peoples, northern governments, and stakeholders to protect highest ecological value arctic waters for traditional uses and future generations.

●(1635)

Is this being done? No, it is not. They are putting scientific evidence in there. They are telling them what areas they are going to pick. They are then going to consult with them, and basically tell them that this is what they will end up with.

On page 2 of the report, the recommendations refer to accelerating the establishment of national parks, national marine conservation areas, migratory bird sanctuaries, national wildlife areas, marine protected areas, and other federally protected areas, by establishing multiple protected areas concurrently; ensuring that no federal policy or legislation such as the mineral and energy resource assessment and the Canadian Petroleum Resources Act slows the process of establishing protected areas.

The committee did not say to get rid of that act, but Bill C-55 is saying that. Why did they just pick on the Canadian Petroleum Resources Act and not talk about the energy resource assessments or any of those others? They are just going after the oil and gas sector.

The report further talks about helping to coordinate the establishment of networks to protected areas: creating a federal protected areas system plan that incorporates not just national parks but all federal protected areas, terrestrial and marine, creating a mechanism for federal, provincial, municipal, and indigenous co-operation and encouraging public participation in the establishment of protected areas; and leading science-based assessments toward identifying protected areas, and so on.

They are using science to help, after we go through the consultation periods, meet with industry, the stakeholders, the indigenous groups, and we work together, united, Canadians, to come up with the areas that should be protected spaces.

I want to read a quote from a witness who appeared before the fisheries and oceans committee recently. Sean Cox is a professor at Simon Fraser University, and quite a leading expert in marine life. He said:

Looking at some of the previous testimony, there was a claim that there was overwhelming scientific proof that MPAs are beneficial and widely successful. I think that was misrepresentation of the actual science.

He went on to say:

Just enforcing MPAs would be hugely expensive. Again, if you're looking at it from a fisheries management point of view, it's far more cost effective to do other things that don't cost that much....

MPAs aren't likely to be effective scientific tools, either. They're not easily replicated. When you put in an MPA, it's subject to a high degree of what we call “location and time” effects. You can't just create a nice experiment where you have three of the same type of MPA in one place and then three control areas in another place. You just can't do that. They're wide open to outside perturbations, environmental changes that are not within our control.

If we want to build on a process of trust and goodwill, we cannot then ignore what our stakeholders have to say and consult only a minority of the protected areas that are being recommended.

This is what is happening with Bill C-55. They are going to tell the aboriginal communities. They are going to tell the stakeholders, “These are the areas we picked. Now we can sit down and talk about that.” Is that proper consultation? No, it is not. It is a completely opposite direction from what our report asked them to do.

He goes on to say that, as soon as we do that, we no longer have a network of protected areas, so it begs the question why we went to such elaborate lengths to put together these design criteria, if in the end all we were going to do was cherry-pick a few sites.

That is what is happening with Bill C-55: they are cherry-picking a few sites.

●(1640)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member brought up indigenous communities. We know that, with marine protected areas, it is often indigenous people who will be looking out for those areas. For thousands of years, they have been taking care of those communities where the MPAs are located.

Government Orders

A year ago, the Liberal government made a promise that it was going to invest in marine training, equipment, supplies, and support for coastal communities in British Columbia so they could be equipped to look after communities. We know it is local knowledge they have of these communities, and they are the ones who are on the water and out there saving lives. When there is an incident that might threaten one of these marine protected areas, it is very likely going to be indigenous coastal communities affected, as it was in Hartley Bay when the *Queen of the North* went down, or when lives were saved when the *Leviathan II* sank off Tofino, or when the *Simushir* was floating adrift off the Queen Charlotte Islands.

Does the member support investments in marine training, and does he see it as an urgent need? He talked about consulting with indigenous communities. I was just at the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council meeting on Monday, and they identified this as an issue. They were given all these promises a year ago by the government, and they have seen nothing delivered to them. They feel betrayed, they are concerned, and as great Canadians do, they are fulfilling a role of looking out for each other and our precious ecosystems. However, they have received nothing so far.

Is the member in support of resources getting to those indigenous communities? I was talking to Al Dick who is on the Ahousaht emergency response team and he was asking me where the help is that was promised and when they would be getting support. It is those communities and people who get out there, save lives, and protect the ecosystems without even thinking about it. I hope the member can speak about the importance of indigenous people being resourced, so they can look after those marine protected areas when they are established.

•(1645)

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Mr. Speaker, I totally agree that we need to work with the aboriginal communities. We need to fund aboriginal communities, wherever they be, whether it is the west coast, the east coast, or the Arctic. They are the true keepers of the land. Through traditional history, they know what has taken place and what may take place, and they are better equipped than any government body or organization to do such a thing.

We heard from many groups from the west coast when we toured there last summer, and we met and talked about expanding these protected areas. They very much want to be part of that. Our committee recommended that very strongly in our report. In fact, we recommended money be put forward and that it be ensured that they are part of these protected spaces.

I do not see that in Bill C-55. In Bill C-55, I see that the government wants to dictate and it wants to consult. I do not know how it is going to consult with everybody in three months. We need to take the time and effort, and we need to meet with our indigenous neighbours. When we make these new protected areas and they are picked, they should be picked in consultation with them, not with some scientists telling them. We should then work together to come up with a plan on how they can manage them for the government.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has a clear advantage over me in that he is part of the committee that wrote the report.

I would like his comments on proposed new section 35.2 of the bill, which says that the Governor in Council and minister shall not use the lack of scientific certainty regarding the risks posed by any activity that may be carried out in certain areas of the sea as a reason to postpone or refrain from exercising their powers. The power, of course, is the power of designation or to repeal the designation.

I am a little concerned about the exact position of the hon. member and his party. Is it his view that the government has erred in presenting this bill by saying that the lack of scientific certainty should not impede a designation, or is it his view that in order to have a designation or repeal of a designation there has to be absolute scientific certainty?

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Mr. Speaker, I agree that science will play a very important role and we cannot ignore science in the selection of protected marine spaces or protected inland spaces, but we need to use science in conjunction with strong consultation with our aboriginal communities.

I think I am wasting my time; the member is not even listening. He is having a better side conversation. If he wants an answer, I would like to give him an answer.

•(1650)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I am afraid that is the prerogative of the individual. The time allotted is that you have three minutes left to answer.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for North Okanagan—Shuswap.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague from Yellowhead on his knowledge on this. I recognize that he sat on the environment committee when it did a study on parks and also marine protected areas. I was wondering if he would like to comment on how, unlike in terrestrial parks, in marine protected areas the environment is constantly changing. Ocean currents change, feed sources change, and water temperatures change.

How can we compare that to the terrestrial parks where the boundaries are basically fixed? The fish will not see the lines in the water, nor will the currents recognize the lines in the water. Should they be fixed delineated areas, or would we be possibly better with stronger measurements over fishing activities and other activities individually rather than being so focused on drawing the line on a map to meet an arbitrary target?

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Mr. Speaker, again I will go back to the consultation with our aboriginal neighbours. They understand our coastal waters probably better than anyone. They have been there longer than anyone. They have fished those waters longer than anyone. They have seen the trends of mother nature changing. They have seen the temperature changes. They have seen the fish move from one area to another and maybe come back. We see that inland with such things as the caribou moving.

Government Orders

The aboriginal people understand this best, so we need to work with them when we come up with these areas. They have to be a very important part. Science has to be a very important part, but I do not know if we can put strict boundaries and say this is where it starts and this is where it ends, because it is going to be difficult for the government to know what the boundaries are. It is going to be very difficult for people to know whether they are in a protected zone or not. We need to be very realistic in the way we go about doing that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): We have time for a very brief question, 30 seconds.

The hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a lot more to say than 30 seconds will allow me, so I will ask a really simple question.

During the Conservatives' time in government, there was a commitment made, and across my riding of North Island—Powell River, which is right on the ocean, we wanted to see some commitment to protecting the oceans. The reality is that the U.S. has over 30% of its oceans protected, but we are just talking about 5% to 2017 and 10% to 2020. Why did the last government not take any steps to make that a reality?

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Mr. Speaker, I think our government did do a lot. Maybe we did not accomplish what my hon. friend wanted, but let us get to some of the stuff we did. Additional measures included the protection of MPAs under the Oceans Act. The Musquash Estuary in New Brunswick, the Bowie Seamount off the coast of British Columbia, and Tarium Niriyutait off the Beaufort Sea are just some of the areas that went into the protected spaces. We were busy, but it takes time.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order. 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 Kootenay—Columbia, The Environment; the hon. member for Calgary Confederation, Taxation; the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

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MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bill, to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-228, an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (prohibiting food and beverage marketing directed at children).

* * *

●(1655)

[*English*]

OCEANS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-55, An Act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-55, an act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act. Having just become a member of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, this is certainly an important topic for me, and I look forward to debate on this bill.

This bill would make a number of changes to the framework through which the government designates coastal and ocean areas as marine protected areas, otherwise known as MPAs. An MPA is defined by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans as “a part of the ocean that is legally protected and managed to achieve the long-term conservation of nature.” Essentially, MPAs prohibit or limit certain activities in the area, depending on their impacts to the ecological features that are being protected. Therefore, the overall intent is conservation, conserving the environment and species within these protected areas.

I have always been a supporter of efforts to conserve Canada's lakes, rivers, streams, and coastal areas. While I know this is outside the scope of this legislation, I have served alongside a number of local sportsmen's associations in Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound to protect the local inland fisheries. Furthermore, I am very proud to say that Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound is home to Fathom Five National Marine Park. Established in 1987 as Canada's first ever national marine park, it protects the local environment, as well as allows Canadians to witness some of the cleanest and clearest water one will ever see. It is a benchmark for conservation efforts.

Conservation efforts are paramount to protecting our environment, but they must be done in the right way, with proper consultation, and must take into account a range of diverse issues, including the specific ecological needs of the area being protected, as well as social, economic, and cultural factors. It is my fear that Bill C-55, in an effort to promote conservation, will not give due consideration to the range of factors that must be considered when establishing an MPA.

Designating an area as an MPA can often take several years, as the process requires a significant amount of consultation with all stakeholders involved and a full assessment of the scientific evidence available. What Bill C-55 would do is create conditions for the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans to simply designate areas on an interim basis, and once the interim protections are in place, the minister would then have five years to recommend that the interim designation become a permanent MPA.

It is quite clear that this bill is in response to the Liberal Party's promise in the last campaign, which subsequently worked its way into the mandate letters of the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Minister of Environment . Their Liberal platform stated that if elected, the Liberals would increase the amount of Canada's marine and coastal areas that are protected to 5% by 2017, and 10% by 2020.

Government Orders

The provisions in Bill C-55 would certainly make delivery on this promise much easier for the government, but there are costs associated with moving at this unreasonable pace. We are again seeing the government move forward with a timeline that is strictly tied to a campaign promises rather than reasonable timelines. This makes for good politics, but it certainly does not make for good policy.

For example, once an area has an interim designation, it would be very difficult to reverse. Once the minister decides to deem an area as an interim MPA, there would be restrictions, regulations, and prohibitions put in place that would affect the use of the area for a full five years. What if, for instance, at the end of the five years, it is determined that the area should not be deemed to be an MPA? This could very easily happen. It would appear to me that this is a classic example of the old adage of putting the cart before the horse. It would be a much more effective process to fully examine all of the evidence in advance in a thorough process to determine MPAs rather than just creating a piecemeal approach whereby areas are designated on an interim basis and then reviewed.

● (1700)

This is all the result of arbitrary, self-imposed deadlines that are unreasonable and will result in a rushed and, quite frankly, messy process. Already a large number of academics, industry representatives, and commercial and recreational fishing groups have come forward to oppose these targets. They state that speeding up the process will only increase pre-existing concerns surrounding lack of consultation, transparency, and inadequate science. That final point is the one I want to highlight, because I have deep concerns about a section of the bill that deals directly with the use of science in decision-making about MPAs.

In the summary section of Bill C-55, paragraph (d) states that the bill will “provide that the Governor in Council and Minister cannot use the lack of scientific certainty regarding the risks posed by any activity as a reason to postpone or refrain from exercising their powers or performing their duties and functions...”

That goes away from what the government has talked about in some cases, in saying it wants to be science-based. It is an open door to basically ignore a lack of science. I cannot get my head around that one. Essentially, what it says is that even if there is no concrete, scientific evidence that an activity is affecting the local environment, the minister cannot use this as a reason to postpone or refrain from a designation.

For a government that is hell-bent on making evidence-based policy, I find this very odd, as do most Canadians. It is saying that even if there is no evidence at all, for example, that vessels are causing a disturbance to a local area, it will still forge ahead and prohibit the operation of vessels in a certain area. It makes no sense whatsoever. This is all despite having no evidence that the prohibition will result in ecological benefits either. Again, this offers the government another way to meet its arbitrary political deadlines.

At the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans we have undertaken a study of this topic to examine whether the current guidelines achieve the intended benefits of MPAs; assess the social, economic, and environmental impacts; and ensure that all traditional

uses and values are respected when it comes to MPAs. We have just started hearing from witnesses this session. On Tuesday both the Cruise Line International Association and the Pacific Pilotage Authority expressed that they were quite concerned about how the proposed timelines would and could affect their respective industries.

I would like to take some time now to highlight what individuals from some communities have been trying to tell the government throughout this process.

Ian MacPherson of the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association stated:

[The Prince Edward Island Fisherman's Association] understands the requirement to protect marine environments, but we do have concerns surrounding the tight timelines to accomplish these goals.

We can sense a theme here. He went on to say:

The first step to designating a ministerial order MPA is to gather existing scientific, economic, social, and cultural information on the area. Prince Edward Island is a small province driven by small fishing communities. The displacement of fishers from one community to another as a result of an MPA would shift the economics of the island. Throughout the consultation process, fishing areas were discussed, but not the economics of how a large MPA along the small coastline of Prince Edward Island would impact the island.

Fishing is the lifeblood of many communities on P.E.I. Protection of the environment is paramount, but it must be done in a responsible and prudent manner.

We all know that the new proposed Liberal tax changes will also be shifting the economics of the island when it comes to small business and local fishing businesses. By the way, just this morning at the fisheries and oceans committee, the Liberals rejected a Conservative motion to study the impacts of these changes on small fishing businesses and businesses that depend on aquaculture. Of course, the government members all voted against this motion. They do not want to talk about the damage that these tax changes would do to the fishers and other small businesses across the country.

● (1705)

There is no denying that the protections need to be in place to ensure the health of our waterways for future generations. We all get that. The Conservative Party is not opposed to the creation of MPAs. In fact, we have championed conservation and marine protection in the past, establishing three MPAs under the Oceans Act, including of the Musquash Estuary in New Brunswick, Bowie Seamount off the coast of British Columbia, and Tarium Niriyutait in the Beaufort Sea. I apologize to anyone from any of those communities if I mispronounced those place names.

Additionally, the previous Conservative government invested \$252 million over five years through its national conservation plan to secure ecologically sensitive lands, support voluntary conservation and restoration actions, and strengthen marine and coastal conservation.

Government Orders

Striking the right balance between the protection of marine habitats and the protection of local economies that depend on commercial and recreational fishing is critical. I, along with the numerous witnesses who have appeared at the committee, agree that the current Liberal government is failing to strike that balance. We understand the economic importance of fish and seafood to the Canadian economy from coast to coast to coast.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: To coast.

Mr. Larry Miller: To coast. To the member for Niagara Falls, that is one of his pet projects, and that is okay.

The previous Conservative government focused on building existing international markets and introducing new ones, while making significant investments in areas like marine research, harbour infrastructure, lobster sustainability, aquaculture innovation, and indigenous participation. Our fisheries are the lifeblood of our rural and remote coastal communities. They drive billions of dollars toward our national economy each and every year.

Rather than consulting the communities that would be most impacted by the government's plan on marine protected areas, the minister has chosen to fast-track this process to meet the government's self-imposed political targets. Speeding up the MPA designation process has the potential to have disastrous consequences in the form of job losses and fisheries closures if true consultation is sacrificed for expediency.

Jim McIsaac, the managing director of the BC Commercial Fishing Caucus, had this to say:

We need to engage stakeholders from the start, not bring stakeholders along at the end. We have to set outcome objectives, and the process should fit the objectives. We should build tools to fit the process and get the place and the scale right for that.

Right now on the west coast we have 10 or 12 different MPA processes. It's impossible for the fishing industry to engage in all of these in a kind of comprehensive way. We need a place where we can sit down and set some of these overarching objectives. If we don't do that, it's just going to disintegrate into a mess.... We need a way to bring all available knowledge into these.

Consultation should not be done with the objective of checking a box and ramming through changes. The dialogue that was happening at committee and is playing out in the media is important.

It is not just the fishermen who would be affected by Bill C-55. The bill has the potential to impact resource projects and create lengthy delays in the approvals process. It would also give activists and non-governmental organizations the right to lobby the government in an attempt to achieve interim protection for a specific area, regardless of the science. That, again, is one of the main problems with this bill. This could alienate fishing grounds, marine activities, or resource projects for up to five years without adequate consultation or science.

It is interesting that the Nunavut minister, Johnny Mike, used his member's statement in the Nunavut legislature last week to speak specifically to the Liberal government's lack of consultation when it came to Bill C-55. He said:

As Pangnirtung residents, we are well aware of the potential in our offshore areas which are used for economic opportunities today by interests from outside of Nunavut....

●(1710)

This proposed bill for marine management and petroleum industry sector management which is being developed seemingly turns its legislative back on the people of Pangnirtung. The federal government never consulted any northerners or my constituents on what concerns they may have about this proposed bill.

I was in Pangnirtung when I was chair of the transport committee. It is a beautiful little community on the northeast shores of Baffin Island. We opened the first Arctic small craft harbour there. I would urge members, if they get a chance, to go there. It is a rural community. It is remote, and the dependency the residents have on the water is immense. I cannot say enough about the value of it to them. Therefore, the residents want to look after the quality of that water so that they have fishing available for them and their families for generations to come.

When I hear about this lack of consultation with people like Johnny Mike and his constituents, I think that sends a signal that we do not really care what they think and we are going to go ahead and do this. That is not the way to do things.

I have used almost the entirety of my speech to show that the Liberal government is once again ramming through a political agenda with no care for the people on the ground who would be directly affected by these changes. Local government, industry, and family businesses are shoved aside. The Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard needs to stop playing politics with our fisheries and come up with a real plan that will support high-quality, well-paying jobs in our coastal communities. We should not be punishing the very individuals who want to come up with a fair plan for the environment and for our oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams.

Instead of expediting this dangerous piece of legislation, we should be working together with these groups that clearly want to be involved in this process. We should take the time, look at the science, and truly engage our stakeholders. Let us figure out what has worked and what has not and base our decisions on legislation on true consultation. If we go ahead and put in interim MPAs without having done that, we could, in the long run, delay the process and harm an area with unintended consequences.

I urge the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and the other 30 members from Atlantic Canada to rethink this legislation and take the time to get it right. We all know what the value of the fishing and seafood industry means to eastern and western Canada. I know that it would be in the best interest of all their constituents to speak up on this, do what is right, and consult in a proper way.

I will conclude by presenting an argument from academics who have commented on MPAs in the past. This particular article expresses concerns about moving forward with designations too quickly when it comes to MPAs. The article states:

In promoting MPAs it is important that there is a good understanding of the conservation science underlying marine protection in terms of the factual foundation and long-term implications. Ignoring this may lead resource managers and policymakers to make ill-informed decisions regarding MPAs, resulting in poor MPA design and performance.

Government Orders

In closing, I urge the government to heed this advice. Stop moving forward with these arbitrary deadlines, abandon the plan for interim designations, and ensure that MPAs are established based on thorough consultations and thorough review of all scientific evidence.

I would like to say that if the government makes the right amendments to the bill, there may be surprisingly more support out there than the minister may have thought. However, until that is done, I will be voting against the bill.

• (1715)

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I understand my colleague's concern in regard to moving ahead too quickly, but the reality is that Canada made a pledge. We promised that we would make sure that these protected areas were in place. We pledged 5% by 2017 and 10% by 2020. Having said that, I agree that this particular bill does not keep up to what is needed. I would call it a bit of greenwashing on the part of the government.

To get to the point in regard to the intent of having a protected area, we have seen the tragic death of many right whales in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. There is something terribly wrong there, and unfortunately, this particular legislation would allow the exploration of oil and gas in these very delicate areas.

Would my esteemed colleague agree that perhaps the government should take another look at this plan to allow the exploration of oil and gas in these areas and show some concern for a population that is endangered, such as the right whale population?

Mr. Larry Miller: Mr. Speaker, after listening to my colleague's opening remarks, if I did not know better, I would think she is part of the government that proposed this plan, but I realize, from where she is sitting, that she is not.

It is quite clear that my colleague believes that this is a flawed bill. I would take it that she will do the right thing and stand up and vote against it.

Whether it is right whales or any other kind of marine life, nobody likes to see things like that happen. My colleague seems to be implying that the right whales that have been found dead died because of something man did. I believe that is not the case. I hope they find out what it is that killed them, whether it was a virus or something they got.

We should do everything we can to protect marine life. In the gulf between the island and the mainland of Vancouver, ships slow down in certain areas. That is all part of protecting marine life. It is costly to businesses, but it is the right thing to do. We just have to keep improving on those kinds of things.

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals cannot meet their deadline of 5% by 2017, especially if they do not get engaged in consultation. That is another broken promise on the pile that is almost as large as our current deficit. The Liberals came up with a workaround, in the form of Bill C-55, that would allow them to meet their political timelines.

Do you see that this may impact our sport fishing recreational activities and our commercial fishery from coast to coast to coast, without having proper consultation?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I would just remind members to put their questions through the Speaker.

Mr. Larry Miller: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. My colleague from Yellowhead gets it. He listened to what I was saying. The only way the government can meet its self-imposed, arbitrary deadline is to basically ram the bill through and not deal with the consultation part. Every witness we have heard so far has talked about the lack of consultation. The government can do it if it wants to do it, but I can guarantee the member that there is no way it can get it right if it does that.

• (1720)

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I certainly am familiar with the member's riding, which is a beautiful riding that has a lot of coastline. It is almost as nice as Scarborough—Guildwood. The member knows, as well as I do, that it is a lovely riding.

The hon. member suggested that he was a little upset with the phrasing in proposed section 35.2, which states:

the Minister shall not use lack of scientific certainty regarding the risks posed by any activity

I am curious whether the member is open to amendments. Does he want the phrasing to say that there should be absolute certainty before any action is taken, or does he want that section taken out altogether and there should be no reference to scientific certainty?

I do not quite understand the hon. member's position. He cannot have it both ways. It is either absolute or it is nothing or it is framed the way the government has framed it, which is to say "shall not use lack of scientific certainty regarding the risks posed".

I will be interested in the hon. member's response to that concern.

Mr. Larry Miller: Mr. Speaker, Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound is so beautiful that the member's sister left Scarborough—Guildwood to come up and live with us. I do not think she regrets it one bit. She actually lived in the township where I was married before I came to this place.

On a serious note, I think the member knows where I am coming from on this. When the government enacts something with a lack of scientific evidence, it is not actually doing something based on science. It is pretty self-explanatory.

That is all we are trying to point out. I pointed it out. I believe a number of other members have pointed it out. Let us do it based on science and not on a lack thereof. The government would have a chance to get a much better bill and would probably have broader support than first thought.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is new to the fisheries committee, and he has done a great job getting up to speed on this file. We have been studying MPAs for a number of months.

Private Members' Business

We heard testimony just today from Dan Edwards, executive director of the Area A Crab Association, B.C. He said that MPAs are oversold as a conservation process. He talked about rockfish conservation areas that have been in place in B.C. They are not considered MPAs, yet they have been doing an incredible job of restoring those rockfish areas off the west coast of B.C.

Could the member elaborate a little more on that testimony we heard today about the consultation and the consideration of other opportunities for conservation?

Mr. Larry Miller: Mr. Speaker, I meant to mention in my comments what one of our witnesses said today about MPAs being oversold. I want to point out that while the witness clearly said that, it is obvious that the witness, whose family has depended on the oceans for their livelihood for generations, wants the water quality and the fish and aquatic life to be healthy as well. All he was saying when he said "oversold" is that creating an MPA just for the sake of creating an MPA is not the way to do it.

There needs to be consultation with everyone involved, all the communities, aboriginal and otherwise. Hopefully the government sees its way to doing the right thing on this.

• (1725)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member and a number of the concerns he has spoken of today. I must admit that I am a little surprised. I had anticipated that the Conservatives would be more sympathetic to the legislation. I do not quite understand why they would oppose something that advances what all Canadians are concerned about. Our oceans affect us all, the entire country from sea to sea to sea, in a real and tangible way.

The bill would move Canada forward not only in terms of our taking a progressive step forward internally but also in terms of continuing that international point of view. It clearly demonstrates that part of our Canadian values is to better understand and appreciate what takes place in our oceans. It is a part of our very fabric as Canadians.

The oceans have provided economic and social leisure, and all sorts of other benefits to us as a society. We all understand and appreciate their humongous economic impact. If one wants to get a better understanding, one should talk to the Atlantic caucus, where concern for our oceans and making sure that we are moving forward are hot topics all of the time. That is not to take anything away from our B.C. caucus, which is also a very strong advocate and supporter of the legislation. Of course, being from Manitoba, some might think it is landlocked, but it is not because we go right up north to Churchill. Even in Yukon and our other territories we have been fortunate as a nation to have what I believe is the longest ocean coastline of any country in the world. Given that background, one would expect to see something positive from the government.

I often talk about the many different accomplishments of this government, and we always highlight the middle class, because they are our first priority. However, the number of things we have accomplished in these past two years is noteworthy. This particular piece of legislation will also make a difference. Therefore, I would encourage the members of the Conservative caucus to revisit their

position on Bill C-55, because it does provide some tangible benefits.

The Government of Canada is committed to increasing the proportion of Canada's marine and coastal areas that are protected to 5% this year, and 10% by 2020. That is a significant amount of territory. It demonstrates very clearly that the government is truly interested in what is taking place in our oceans and wants to protect them wherever it can.

We talked about achieving these targets, and the members across the way made reference to the issue of science. This is a government that generally believes in science, unlike the former Harper government, which at times was challenged on that issue. Rest assured that we will use the sound science that is out there to at least provide us with the necessary guidance, and also to support very transparent decision-making by this government. Those are the types of things we are very much committed to.

The act clarifies the responsibility of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to establish a national network of protected areas. That is something of substance, yet the Conservatives do not seem to think that the bill is moving us forward.

• (1730)

It would empower the minister to designate marine protected areas by an order prohibiting certain activities in those areas. I do not quite understand why the Conservatives would oppose that outright. If they looked at the principles in the legislation, they would find that it is good, sound legislation that would in fact make a difference. They should support it and then look at ways to enhance or change it when it goes to committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The next time this matter is before the House, the member will have 14 and a half minutes remaining to finish his speech.

It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

FEDERALLY FUNDED HEALTH RESEARCH

Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.) moved:

That the Standing Committee on Health be instructed to undertake a study on ways of increasing benefits to the public resulting from federally funded health research, with the goals of lowering drugs costs and increasing access to medicines, both in Canada and globally; and that the Committee report its findings and recommendations to the House no later than one year from the time this motion is adopted.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am both honoured and humbled to have the privilege of rising today to discuss my motion, Motion No. 132. This motion calls upon the health committee to undertake a study that would explore how Parliament can improve outcomes and increase the public benefits from federally funded health research.

Private Members' Business

Before I begin, I would like to take a moment to thank my friend and colleague, the member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, for her strength, wisdom, and courage. Her story is a testament to how far cancer research has come in Canada, but it also stands as an example of how much further we have to go. I wish her and her entire family the very best going forward.

The government has been investing in future research leaders and supporting the scientists whose innovative work is vital both for furthering medical knowledge and for providing the necessary evidence to make sound policy decisions for the future of our health and society. As a matter of fact, earlier this week, the Prime Minister reaffirmed our government's commitment to science with his introduction of Dr. Mona Nemer, a medical researcher, as Canada's new chief science advisor.

Meanwhile, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, CIHR, is Canada's main funder of health research and one of the top funder organizations for health research in the world. This Canadian effort to seek health solutions and combat disease is something we should all be extremely proud of.

However, as Canada invests in health research, we need to be informed and aware that there is room for improvement. We need to make sure that taxpayer dollars devoted to this research are being put to work in ways that achieve the greatest benefit and that will foster innovation while producing results. Canada is a world leader in health innovation, and it is imperative that we continue to lead by example.

We must ensure that our research investments are effective and that the results of our research are sufficiently accessible. According to the Institute of Medicine, there is currently an average lag time of 17 years between the generation of evidence from randomized controlled trials and its subsequent implementation into the health system. I believe that we can do better. Canada cannot afford to leave any of its brain power on the sidelines, and the world cannot afford that our discoveries be abandoned in patent offices or lost to the depths of forgotten academic journals in old libraries.

In the larger scale of human history, it has not been long since the top medical care of the time was delivered in the form of leeches and blood-lettings. Modernity, particularly since the start of the 20th century, has brought rapid change, new ideas, better technology, and significantly improved research methods to the field of medicine.

Standing here today, I am happy to live in a world in which the global polio eradication initiative has reduced polio by 99%, in which smallpox has been declared globally eradicated for more than 25 years, and which a record 979 million people in 2015 benefited from large-scale treatment of at least one neglected tropical disease.

Here at home, Canadian research has led to the development of insulin; the discovery of the hematopoietic stem cell, which forms the basis of bone marrow transplantation; and the discovery of T cell receptors, a vital element of the immune system. These strides come from hard work, late nights, and a lot of experimentation. These breakthroughs have come from research. It is the responsibility of governments like ours to support these researchers as best we can, as we foster the innovation that will find better treatments and more cures.

There is no shortage of public health issues that need to be tackled. As a pharmacist by profession, I am well acquainted with the need for better treatments and continued research. Multiple sclerosis, Lyme disease, diabetes, stroke, cancer, heart conditions, mental illness, asthma, allergies, and osteoporosis are just a few of the many ailments that Canadians face on a daily basis.

• (1735)

As Canadians work in research and combat these illnesses, it is vital for us to have the most effective and efficient system to prioritize the results of federally funded health research. In a time of limited resources, we need to make sure there is a strong, comprehensive strategy in place. It is imperative we know how to use research dollars to a maximum advantage, and guide researchers into areas of national and international priority.

A clearer focus and a better articulation of our priorities would also make it easier for us to work with international counterparts to have a more meaningful impact on the global health crisis. This holds true whether we are discussing efforts to combat neglected tropical diseases, or examining our role in global collaborations to combat cancer. Canada is carrying out some tremendous work on the international stage with our new international development policy. We are helping to strengthen health systems to ensure that medicines and interventions reach the most vulnerable and the hardest to reach.

We are building on our success in immunization, HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. We are working closely with international organizations such as the Global Fund, Gavi, Nutrition International, and the World Health Organization. Meanwhile, Grand Challenges Canada is helping to fund innovators who bring successful innovation to scale, catalyze sustainability, and impact.

Our efforts to ensure the health and well-being of citizens of all countries are essential to poverty eradication efforts and achieving sustainable development. These are laudable goals, but as we work toward them, we also need to work with our allies and partners to implement best practices to increase access to medicines, and to make sure we are creating the conditions that will allow us to achieve both our international objectives, and ensure we provide good value for our tax dollars.

The future of Canadian health research is bright. In the last decade, Canadians discovered a synthetic compound that binds to and inhibits a key enzyme the malaria parasite needs to reproduce and survive, decoded the genome of a metastatic breast cancer tumour, and began phases two and three of clinical trials for a preventive vaccine for HIV.

Proving that breakthroughs sometimes come from new eyes that re-examine old tools, in 2009, a Canada-U.S. research team discovered that the diabetes drug metformin appears to make vaccines in cancer treatments more effective.

Private Members' Business

Meanwhile, in a modern reconsideration of accepted practices, in 2008, Drs. P.J. Devereaux and Homer Yang discovered that the common practice of giving beta blockers to surgery patients actually increases risk of major stroke and death.

Medicine is not static and discoveries like these demonstrate the extent to which research as well as the tools and paradigms which support it are updated constantly. Human progress means there will always be value in reviewing, renewing, and improving upon existing practices. This truth applies not only to medical research but to the bureaucratic frameworks which support it.

Medical breakthroughs are happening all over the world everyday. Earlier this month, a team at MIT announced a technological breakthrough that would revolutionize the way childhood vaccines are dispensed. They have invented a microparticle that can be filled with vaccines and is designed to break down and release the dose at specific times. This could free up the precious time of doctors and nurses. Where this has the potential to truly be transformative, however, is in our international development efforts.

Vaccination programs are incredibly effective, and have made a tremendous impact on the ground, but access to booster shots, and ensuring properly timed programs have always been barriers to the effective implementation of vaccination campaigns.

This recent breakthrough has the potential to be especially useful in responding to acute outbreaks of diseases, where several doses of a vaccine might be required over weeks and months before immunity is sufficiently built up. This technology has the potential to be put into practice much sooner than it might otherwise have been, thanks to MIT's commitment to the equitable dissemination of medical technologies, and its active participation in patent pools.

● (1740)

Research universities around the world, including MIT and some schools in Canada, have been early adopters of the belief that health research is most effective when supported by policies designed with the primary goal of directly and positively impacting patient care out outcomes in a timely manner.

Research policies that support efficient, effective transition periods from research to development to product deployment will lead to the curing of more diseases, administering of more vaccines, and the saving of more lives.

As Canada re-commits to being a world leader in innovation, we need to figure out what we want out of our health research. What are our national goals and desired outcomes, our target priorities, our values, and how can we best empower both researchers and those communities that researcher's efforts seek to help?

We know there is further room for improvement within our national frameworks. Just yesterday, a team from the O'Brien Institute for Public Health publicly called for further integration of patient and public involvement in health research policy as a means to improve patient care. If we want to improve health care outcomes in Canada, we need to create opportunities to listen to health researchers like these.

Meanwhile, many here may be familiar with Canada's tremendous role in the development of an ebola vaccine used with great success

in combatting a devastating ebola outbreak in west Africa. The researchers who developed that vaccine made Canada proud. However, what those here may not know is that this ebola vaccine sat for far too long in a laboratory rather than being dispensed where it was needed most. This was due to an intellectual property dispute with an American company that purchased the vaccine commercialization licence from the Canadian government.

We spend money on research in order to develop products and techniques we can use to make a difference in people's lives. If we are not able to use these things when they matter the most, then we are doing ourselves and taxpayers a huge disservice. Governments and academic labs seldom have the specific expertise, and enormous resources necessary to scale a production of a product like a vaccine.

Agreements with corporations are important and necessary partnerships. In some cases, they are the only way that research can be supported and injected with the necessary resources, and funding to turn development into a final product.

However, the intellectual property dispute over the ebola vaccine proves there are problems with Canada's current approach to these partnerships. I believe there are ways to maximize benefits of federally funded research without negatively impacting the commercialization of products that stem from health research.

Other jurisdictions, such as Sao Paulo in Brazil, and individual institutions such as UBC, the University of Exeter, and Johns Hopkins University have put in place innovative licensing regimes designed to maximize the benefits the institutions receive, but also advances the ability to advance their research agenda.

Should this motion pass, I hope these examples, and the licensing regimes put in place between Canadian researchers and corporations will be one element of our federally funded health research framework that the committee will explore in more depth. This represents one of the best ways of increasing access to medicines all over the world.

We have the opportunity to really make a difference. We have the desire, and the means to help combat some of the most devastating diseases here at home and around the world. We owe it to our constituents, as taxpayers, and also to all those in need of medical relief around the world to get this right.

I urge all my colleagues to support this motion, and help ensure that our world class health researchers are best equipped to deal with the challenges of the 21st century.

● (1745)

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise today in support of Motion No. 132 and Canadian health research. As a former health research coordinator, I was very interested to hear my hon. colleague speak about advancements in research in diabetes care. Canada has the proud honour of being the home of Sir Frederick Banting, the researcher who discovered insulin as a treatment for diabetes.

Private Members' Business

This year I had a chance to visit Banting House and to learn about Dr. Banting's discovery. Outside Banting House is a burning flame that will only be extinguished when a cure is found. I know that Canadian medical research will find a way to reach that goal.

Could my hon. colleague please describe how we can help increase access to new medicine that will advance our cause of defeating diabetes?

Mr. Raj Saini: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my distinguished friend for her role on the health committee and for being the chair of the diabetes caucus. I know how hard she works in that role.

If we look at the evolution of medicine and health, insulin was discovered many, many years ago. That discovery has helped both Canadians and the rest of the world. Right now type 2 diabetes is proliferating in the world. Now is the time when Canada can lead in the research and invest the proper health care dollars to make sure that our researchers are well equipped and that we work with decision-makers and governments and private companies to create an ecosystem that can help with the disease my hon. friend mentioned, and other chronic diseases as well. I know as a pharmacist and someone who has studied science that in this country we have the best researchers in the world. If we can encourage and empower them and give them the necessary resources, I am sure that we can make a difference with diabetes and with all of those diseases that have been neglected for too long.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, I commend the member opposite for his efforts for medical research, especially when it comes to diabetes and some of the very common diseases we face every day.

Is the hon. member aware of the efforts made in my hometown of Edmonton through the Edmonton protocol and by the University of Alberta, which has been a leader for a long time? Is the member aware of the efforts and how those using the Edmonton protocol and other researchers will work within this private member's bill?

Mr. Raj Saini: Madam Speaker, western Canada has always been very progressive when it comes to health care. In particular, it has started a program that I believe has been very advantageous to health researchers, namely the inclusion of patients in the process of figuring out a protocol. This is very important, because for far too long, the patient has been ignored. Researchers in the west and throughout other parts of Canada at other research centres are now making sure that when research is done, when a protocol is being developed, the patient is at the centre of it. As the O'Brien Institute for Public Health has recommended, from now on any research that is done should include not only the researchers and decision-makers, but also the patients.

• (1750)

Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I welcome the hon. member's statement and his initiative. I come from Montreal, so we often fight over what is the high-tech capital of Canada. I would like to give him an opportunity to clear the record and speak about some of the amazing initiatives in his riding on the motion in question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Kitchener Centre has 40 seconds.

Mr. Raj Saini: Madam Speaker, I will just say that it is a tie right now, that Montreal and Kitchener Centre are about equal.

The unique thing about my riding is that we have created an ecosystem where we have the Centre for Family Medicine, which is part of the family medicine protocol from McMaster University, and a pharmacy school. Even in Kitchener, we have developed an ecosystem in which we are including patients, researchers, and municipal politicians to make sure that we can further health research in Canada.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to further discuss Motion No. 132, put forward by the member for Kitchener Centre. If passed, Motion No. 132 would result in the Standing Committee on Health undertaking a study on ways of increasing benefits from federally funded health research with the goals of lowering drug costs and increasing access to medicines, both in Canada and globally.

Researching the various ways to lower costs of drugs for Canadians as well as researching the level of access to medications by different societal groups could drastically improve the well-being of all Canadians. I agree with the intent of this motion, and thank the member for bringing it forward.

As the official opposition deputy shadow minister for health, it would be an extremely valuable study for the members on the health committee to undertake. We should be examining how federally funded health research can assist to lower costs for prescription medications. In fact, as a Conservative, I think we should always be considering how to get the most value from taxpayers' dollars.

I was very fortunate to work for a short time at Merck and Company pharmaceuticals, and I have a great appreciation for the drug development process. Drug companies are working hard to provide Canadians with the necessary medications to keep them healthy, and I recognize the high cost of discovering new and effective pharmaceutical products.

However, Canada's costs for prescription medications are currently the second-highest in the world, and drugs have been the fastest growing expenditure in Canadian health care, surpassing even the cost of hiring doctors. When people or their loved ones become sick, the last thing they want is to be thinking about the cost of their medications.

Approximately one in four Canadians, who do not have drug insurance, will not take the medications prescribed to them by a doctor, solely due to cost. That number is just too high. Individuals who do not fully comply with the directions set out by doctors could be putting their health in serious jeopardy, and thereby potentially costing our health care system even more over the long term.

The high cost of medications forces those who have difficulty affording medication to split pills, skip medication, and maybe even go into debt. Some may even die as a result of the high cost of prescription medication, making it unaffordable.

The rising price for prescribed drugs is due in part to the more frequent use of pharmaceuticals in general, and the use of newer and more expensive medications. Currently, Health Canada regulates the prices of patented drugs to ensure they remain moderate.

Private Members' Business

One of the key problems, however, is that these regulations have not been substantively changed in the last 20 years, and therefore have not been able to accommodate the significant changes in the pharmaceutical market. Because these current price regulations are only applied to patented medications, the price of generic medications in Canada can be as much as 90% higher than in other countries.

We need to stop Canadians from potentially putting unnecessary money into prescription medications and high drug-dispensing fees, when there are potentially cheaper options. Doctors also only receive much of their information on new drugs from the pharmaceutical companies themselves. This leads to a situation where companies may promote just their products, which are not necessarily going to be the best or the cheapest option for patients.

I want to just briefly point out as well that having falsely high prices for medications can ultimately have adverse effects on the private sector. Because these medications can be crucial for survival, patients will do what they can to afford them, especially when family members are at risk.

When Canadians spend more than they should have to on pharmaceuticals, that money is gone, and they are unable to invest in other areas of the economy. If drug costs continue to rise, the private sector may not have the necessary resources to cope.

• (1755)

Seniors in my home province of Alberta are very fortunate that the cost of their prescription medications is covered by the provincial government. However, seniors in other regions of Canada are not so lucky. We need to understand the impacts the growing costs of drugs can have on aging Canadians, as they will be the demographic that stands to gain the most from this research.

I think we all know that the high costs of prescription medications are also putting immense stress on governments in Canada at all levels. One of the areas we can make a real difference as legislators would be to figure out how to lower the cost of drugs. The more of our health care dollars that could be directed to strengthen patient care and services, the better. We should be investigating the ability to lower costs so we can improve the well-being of all Canadians.

Another aspect that Motion No. 132 would have the health committee investigate is whether access to pharmaceuticals in Canada can be improved by federal research. Very little has been studied in terms of even knowing if there is equal access of medication to individuals based on province, urban versus rural groups, aboriginals, gender, and income. By knowing this, we could then work toward more equitable access to medicine.

Although the provinces take the lead in terms of actually administering health care, federal funding may be able to provide insight into inefficiencies or inequalities across Canada. It is only logical to find out if there are variations of access to medicine across provinces, and whether federally funded health research would be able to assist in minimizing any discrepancies. Have-not provinces, as well as the territories in the far north, may be especially vulnerable to reduced access, and research would be needed to address that.

Life for Canadians in urban versus rural areas is also very different. We know health care in cities can handle a great diversity of treatment for medical situations, and we need to ensure that those in rural areas have equal access to medications. We also need to do what we can to ensure that individuals in rural areas do not have to travel great distances to get simple medications, because that may not be possible for individuals with any kind of restrictions on their mobility. It would also be challenging for low-income Canadians. Research needs to be done on whether access is substantially different and, if it is, on ways in which it can be improved.

We need to make sure any study includes the most vulnerable populations, such as aboriginals. Research is required to determine if aboriginals are receiving equitable access to medications. This should not be limited to those living on reserves, either. The government needs the information provided through studies to determine if aboriginals are receiving equitable access, especially in the areas of mental health and addiction.

Gender variations in drug access is another area where more information is needed. Men and women have very diverse needs in terms of access to medications, and it would be beneficial to examine any possible inconsistencies. Differences may be in the medications frequently available in local pharmacies, as well as differences in the ability to afford the cost of medications.

Again, I spoke a little about this at the start of my speech today, but we really do need to have a better feel for the impact of income on access to prescription drugs. This may be considering the private insurance plans available as well as public plans for those who qualify. Research needs to be done on where costs can be lowered to assist low-income individuals in accessing their medications.

It is essential that the Standing Committee on Health study the ways of increasing benefits from federally funded health research, with the goals of lowering drug costs and increasing access to medicines, both in Canada and globally. Canadians and their families are concerned about keeping their families healthy, and increased access to medications at a lower cost will certainly go a long way to doing exactly that.

To conclude, I agree with Motion No. 132. We should be investigating the ability to lower costs so we can improve the well-being of all Canadians. I urge all members of Parliament to support this motion.

• (1800)

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, what happened with the Qs and As?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is private members' business, so the Qs and As are only for the first speaker.

Mr. David Christopherson: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Kitchener Centre for today's motion. His knowledge and his passion for health clearly came through in his remarks, and in his professional capacity as a pharmacist he is certainly well suited to bringing a motion of this sort to us.

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There is one thing I want to mention parenthetically. It is just a comment and it is not directly on the motion, so the hon. member has nothing to worry about. It is just an observation in terms of how we are doing our business here.

It seems to me that to an increasing extent, we are passing private members' motions that give direction to committees. That is all well and fine, because the House is the boss of all committees, but we also live under a rule that states that committees are masters of their own destiny, and it is hard for committees to have that kind of control if the House is forever sending things from here that tell a committee what its next priority is. I am just mentioning that in passing. There is no easy solution, but it is something we may want to keep an eye on as we continue to go forward.

I will certainly be supporting the motion, especially since it talks about funding and coordinating health research. The examples that the member gave were instructive and helpful, and I appreciate that.

The motion talks about increased benefits to the public resulting from federally funded health research with the goal of lowering drug costs and increasing access to medicines. It is interesting to note that this motion has come forward on the very day that the parliamentary budget officer has brought out a report talking about the benefits to Canada, her citizens, and the financial bottom line if we implemented a national pharmacare program. I have no doubt that as this idea continues to be looked at, more evidence will show how many Canadians are not taking their drugs because they cannot afford them.

I just make the point that doing research is really good and coming up with new treatments is fantastic, but at the end of the day, much of that treatment is pharmaceuticals. That is the reality. I am no health care professional, but it seems to me that if all this research that the public has paid for shows, for example, that a certain kind of treatment along with a certain pharmaceutical could improve a life, cure a problem, and make people well, but a growing number of Canadians cannot afford those drugs, then of what benefit is the research to them? Of what benefit is the research if they cannot use the final product, with the final product being the drugs that go with the treatment? In my humble opinion, moving at lightning speed to get a national pharmacare program is at least as important as increasing the funding for health research.

I would remind my hon. colleagues that Tommy Douglas was voted the greatest Canadian in large part because of his vision of universal health care, but Tommy is the one who also said that universal health care is not complete until we deal with pharmacare and ultimately dental care. That was the vision. Our greatest citizen, who made such a profound difference in our quality of life through our universal health care system, said "Keep in mind, my fellow Canadians, that this is only part of the job."

• (1805)

Then we link that with this fantastic report that was just tabled today from the parliamentary budget officer. It says:

The mandate of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) is to provide independent analysis to Parliament on the state of the nation's finances, the Government's estimates and trends in the Canadian economy; and, upon request from a committee or parliamentarian, to estimate the financial cost of any proposal for matters over which Parliament has jurisdiction.

The executive summary states:

In September 2016, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health asked the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) to provide a cost estimate of implementing a national Pharmacare program...This paper estimates the cost to the federal government of implementing this particular framework for Pharmacare. It incorporates PBO's assumptions of the potential savings resulting from a stronger position for drug price negotiations, consumption or behavioural responses of providing coverage, and potential changes in the drug market composition.

Under the executive summary, the PBO goes on to say:

After accounting for pricing and consumption changes, PBO estimates total drug spending under a national Pharmacare program would amount to \$20.4 billion, if implemented in 2015-16. This represents savings of roughly \$4.2 billion.

We have a world-class analysis from the parliamentary budget office, who is accepted by all of us as being non-partisan. It has said that Canadians would have access to the drugs and pharmaceuticals they need for their health. Access was part of the motion. It says access right in there.

This would be for everyone, all the time. There would be no one sitting down at the kitchen table anymore deciding if they are going to have to cut the pills in half, because that is the only way they can also afford food. That is gone. If they need drugs, they would be provided, the same way we approach health care. If they need hospital services, they go to the hospital and get the services. No one asks for a credit card. No one checks their bank account. If they are a Canadian, and need the health service, that is why the hospital is there.

Under Tommy Douglas's vision, and from the PBO report, every Canadian could have access to the drugs and pharmaceuticals they need, and we would save over \$4 billion. That is a motion I could get behind, to bring in national pharmacare. There is no longer a good argument of any sort to not do this.

As much as I support what the hon. member is doing, on the federal funding, if we do not have access to the drugs that are needed, that research will go to waste for those individuals who do not take the drugs they need.

I thank the member for the motion. I will be voting for it. However, a national pharmacare program is the answer to many of the issues the member is raising, and it is the priority for the health care of Canadians.

• (1810)

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Madam Speaker, before I begin, I would like to thank my colleague and friend the hon. member for Kitchener Centre for introducing Motion No. 132, requesting a parliamentary committee to study the use of federally funded research to lower drugs costs and increase access to medicines in Canada and around the world.

I am very pleased to speak about how the Government of Canada's investments have contributed to create new medicines and other innovations that have the potential to improve the lives of Canadians. As members may know, the Government of Canada is supporting health research, primarily through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, or CIHR, as we mostly know it. Each year, CIHR invests approximately \$1 billion to support more than 13,000 researchers across Canada and trainees from across the country working in all areas of health. Using a rigorous peer review system, CIHR is committed to investing and supporting the very best Canadian health research. CIHR plays a leading role in supporting new scientific knowledge and enabling its translation into improved health and more effective health services and products as well.

CIHR supports ideas across the spectrum of research and captures ideas with the greatest potential to advance health research, health care, health systems, and health outcomes. Specifically, the CIHR's project grant program supports projects with a specific purpose and a defined end point. Project grants also encourage the inclusion of partners, where appropriate, to help facilitate bringing discoveries to the Canadian public. Commercialization projects funded by CIHR are designed to advance discoveries toward technologies that would attract new investment, create new science-based business, organizations, and initiatives, and ultimately improve the health outcomes of Canadians.

Through CIHR, the Government of Canada is committed to facilitating the advancement of health research in our country and bringing academic research to a stage that becomes accessible to the Canadian public. For example, the Government of Canada, through these institutes, supports the research of Dr. Cheryl Arrowsmith at the University of Toronto, who is helping to develop new drug targets. Starting in 2003-04, Dr. Arrowsmith received \$2.8 million through the Canada research chairs program. This is a federal program that invests approximately \$265 million each year to attract and retain some of the world's most accomplished and promising minds.

As part of her research program, Dr. Arrowsmith studies special proteins that regulate which genes in the body are active during a cell's growth, which can cause certain diseases. The action of these proteins is reversible, making them excellent potential drug targets. However, in order for drug development to occur, it is necessary to identify ways to alter the action of these proteins. This is exactly where Dr. Arrowsmith's lab is a world leader.

Her research involves special imaging techniques to determine the precise 3-D structure of these proteins. With this information, pharmaceutical industry researchers are then able to develop drug-like chemical probes, which will bind to the protein to slow or accelerate its actions. Through its collaboration, Dr. Arrowsmith's lab has helped create potential new treatments for certain forms of cancer.

In my riding, CIHR has funded professors Elizabeth McGibbon, Elsa Arbuthnot, and Agnes Calliste, making it the very first time in Canada that researchers are going to be able to scope out the state of Canadian knowledge about inequities in access to health services for indigenous and African Canadians living in rural areas.

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A parliamentary committee study related to using federally funded research to improve access to medicines would help us understand the ways in which we could take research like this from bench to bedside at a lower cost to Canadians. Oftentimes, new discoveries are too expensive for Canadians to afford when they go market and are available for purchase.

For example, research conducted by Canada research chair Dr. Nabil Seidah and his team from l'Université de Montréal led to the development of a powerful but expensive new drug to treat high cholesterol. From 2003 to 2010, Dr. Seidah received \$1.4 million from CIHR through the Canada research chair program. During this time, his team discovered a new enzyme that plays a key role in regulating receptors of low-density lipoprotein, or LDL, commonly known as bad cholesterol. I am going back to my human kinetics degree. This was an important discovery in the fight against cardiovascular disease, because this particular enzyme inactivates the receptors on the liver cell surface that transport bad cholesterol for breakdown. Without these receptors, more bad cholesterol remains in the blood, which could lead to an increased risk of developing heart disease or having a heart attack.

Thanks to this important work, a new drug was created that reduces the activity of this enzyme, which helps the liver clean out bad cholesterol from the bloodstream. This new drug reduces bad cholesterol levels by 60% for those who have high cholesterol. What is especially important about this discovery is that everyone responds well to this new drug, even people who do not usually tolerate the common drugs that are used to treat high cholesterol.

● (1815)

This new drug has potential life-saving benefits for Canadians. It was approved for use in 2015. However, the drug costs \$7,500 a year. This cost makes it very difficult for Canadians who are at risk of developing cardiovascular disease to afford the medication that might save their lives.

This is why Motion No. 132 is such an important tool. It will help us examine the delicate balance between the economic gain of new discoveries and advancing federally funded innovations, and making them more accessible to Canadians in improving their health. In this regard, it is very important to note that advancements are made possible through widespread and barrier-free access to cutting-edge research and knowledge. Policies that facilitate access to the results of this research enable researchers, scholars, clinicians, policy-makers, private sector and not-for-profit organizations, and the public to use and build on this knowledge.

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For example, numerous agencies and institutions are implementing open access policies. In Canada, CIHR has been working closely with two federal research granting agencies, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, NSERC, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, SSHRC. For instance, the three federal agencies do not retain or claim any ownership of intellectual property, and no copyright or investments developed resulting from the research supported by its agency funds either. This gives academic institutions the opportunity to commercialize research results to make them more readily available to the public.

Moreover, the three agencies have a number of policies in place to ensure that the knowledge gained from federally funded research is made accessible. For example, in February 2015, CIHR along with NSERC and SSHRC released their tri-agency open access policy on publications, under which “Grant recipients are required to ensure that any peer-reviewed journal publications arising from Agency-supported research are freely accessible [online] within 12 months of publication.”

The objective of this important policy is to improve access to the results of federally funded research and increase dissemination and exchange of research results. In addition, in June 2016, the three federal research granting agencies released their tri-agency statement of principles on digital data management as an important step toward strengthening research data management in Canada and maintaining our country's research excellence.

When properly managed and responsibly shared, digital research data enables researchers to ask new questions, pursue novel research programs, and test alternative hypotheses. It has the potential to advance science and support innovative solutions in Canada. The agencies believe that research data collected with the use of public funds belong, to the fullest extent possible, in the public domain and available for reuse by others. Therefore, the statement outlines the agency's overarching expectations for research data management and the roles of researchers, research institutions, research communities, and research funders in supporting data management.

I have highlighted a few examples of innovations funded by the Government of Canada that can improve the lives of Canadians living in our communities. I will also emphasize that these discoveries are often commercialized for profit and may be financially inaccessible to many Canadians. While policies are in place to ensure open access to innovations funded by the federal government, it is still important to study new ways in which research investments can deliver returns for Canadians.

As I previously mentioned, it is essential to strike a balance between the economic gains of new discoveries and the accessibility of federally funded research. A parliamentary study to improve access to medicines through federally funded programs would help shed light on how new health research discoveries can be affordable and make a difference in the lives of Canadians. That is why I am so pleased that the Government of Canada will be supporting Motion No. 132.

● (1820)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Kitchener Centre for tabling Motion No. 132 so that we are able to have this debate.

I have had the honour of serving with the member on the foreign affairs committee. We have had conversations on the side, mostly related to foreign affairs, but he did bring up his past as a pharmacist many times.

Unfortunately, the member talked about physicians and not about pharmacists, but I have a Yiddish proverb: Time is the best physician. However, time is actually not the best physician. This Yiddish proverb is wrong, because it says that if someone with an ailment or disease just waits, eventually it will get better. Mostly this proverb is used for something like tripping stubbing a toe, and in that sense it is true that it will pass without medication or a physician's help.

A proverb that applies much better to this situation is “Health comes before making a livelihood.” We have seen it in the House before, and we just heard a member today speak about her health. Health comes first. It comes before everything else. It is the most important matter in our lives, both the health of our families and our personal health. It is the greatest determinant of whether we can pursue our dreams and our careers and take care of our families.

Time is also something that patients do not have. When we talk about health care, we are not talking about buildings or research; we are talking about patients, people with an illness or disease for which they need healing, treatment, or some type of therapy so that they can extend their lives or have a better quality of life.

The motion speaks about increasing benefits to the public from federally funded research, which is a laudable goal. As a Conservative, I like to think that we get value for our money, a bang for our buck. We should always try to maximize the return on investment. Therefore, absolutely, I support the motion, and the principle and the wording of it. Having to report back within a year with some solutions for Canadians is especially valuable.

I remember serving on the Kidney Foundation of Canada Southern Alberta Branch. Value for money is what the Kidney Foundation is all about, with 60% of the dollars raised going toward private sector research, and there it is always about what the best thing is for the patient. What do patients want? What can be achieved for patients with the dollars raised? This is how I feel and what federal government research should be about. It should not be about building a research empire or clusters or superclusters or hiring new university adjunct professors. It is really about what can be done for patients. This is what it should be all about. The goals of lowering drug costs and increasing access to medicines are all for patients, for their families. It is for a better quality of life and to extend lives.

I would like to focus most of my comments on rare diseases and the orphan drug framework, which was supposed to have been introduced and in action about two years ago. We are still waiting to see it.

I bring up rare diseases because this is one of the fastest-growing fields in medical research. There are many new rare diseases. Diseases that used to be considered one disease have been split into two or three or four as our knowledge has improved.

I say this as a father with kids and a wife who have a rare disease. My family has Alport syndrome. I do not have it, but all three of my kids do. There are 40,000 patients with Alport syndrome globally. However, out of six and a half or seven billion people, 40,000 is not very many. This is something that I have mentioned in the House before. There is no known cure for it, and eventually it leads to terminal failure of the kidneys. There are six other families in Calgary who have exactly the same condition as my kids and wife, but there are hundreds of Canadians—one in 12, and now they say it may be as high as one in 10—who have some type of rare disease, which varies between terminally lethal to something that might be more benign or something in between.

Sometimes there are therapies available to improve people's quality of life. Other times, there is simply nothing, because there is not enough knowledge, although public research is being directed toward discovering a better therapy or that first stepping stone toward creating an opportunity for a drug that might relieve or improve the condition of a patient.

Clinical trials, as I have come to learn over the past two years in learning about how the health system works, take a long time, and the length of time is getting longer. Every physician I have spoken to who is in the field of public and even private medical research say it is being delayed by longer clinical trials in phase I, II, and III.

• (1825)

Phase I, often called the “first-in-man studies”, is where healthy volunteers are used to determine the maximum dosage of a potential new drug or new therapy. It is a very expensive initial phase.

Phase II, consisting of a small number of patients over an extended period of time, is used to see whether there are health improvements and any safety issues.

Phase III, consisting of a larger group of patients with a control group, investigates whether there is some type of worth for clinical practice.

It is taking longer and longer as we try to develop therapies and to develop new drugs or to have a secondary use for a current drug that could find some new use in treating a condition that might not have been thought about before.

The private sector is pursuing all of those opportunities, but there is a very high cost. What the government brings with public funding, typically, is the opportunity to provide a large amount of financing to focus people on a very specific goal. Curing cancer has typically been one. Curing diabetes is another. It can pool resources.

All members of Parliament have the power to convene. Government has the power to convene resources and people to focus on a specific issue. We should be getting bang for our buck.

In the case of Alport syndrome, there is a private sector company, Reata Pharmaceuticals, that is developing a second-generation drug

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with bardoxolone methyl, which they are now testing to see whether it could provide some type of relief for sufferers of Alport syndrome.

There are many other rare diseases that could use public sector financing and/or private sector financing.

One thing I want to point out is that when we talk about national goals, do we want to be world leaders and do we want to have a supercluster of health research? National goals should be synonymous with patient goals, not with meeting some percentage or having Canada come first in an international ranking of G7 countries, or the OECD, or versus the European Union. I could not care less whether we are at the bottom or top of a list. If we are meeting the goals of patients in Canada, if we are actually developing real therapies and new drugs and new opportunities for people to get better or to extend their lives, that is what we should be doing. If we happen to wind up at the bottom of the list, then so be it. Therefore, when we talk about national goals, we should be talking about patient goals. The terms should be inverted.

All of this research has to be for patients. If it not for patients, then it is not meeting its goal. In this regard, I have gone through the websites of CIHR and a lot of public sector bodies, and they do a lot of good research. A lot of that research, though, is basic research, trying to understand the basic functioning of the human body, the basic functioning of different drugs that are being developed, and the secondary uses of drugs. Sometimes what is missing is that patient focus.

Have they actually gone to the patient community with that particular condition, with that particular illness, to ask them if that would be something they want pursued, if it is something that would be helpful, and how they could be reached to better understand what the families are going through.

I recognize that it is very difficult with rare diseases. Some rare diseases in Canada could have as few as 60 sufferers. That is one of the reasons the company that developed Soliris is facing so much opposition and anger, both from patients and provincial governments that are attempting to negotiate an agreement with them. That effort has failed so far. It is because there is a very particular drug that treats a very particular autoimmune disease.

Advancing the frontiers of knowledge is fine, but we have to do it for people, kids, and families. I feel that this motion is reaching that goal. We are trying to reach for the goal, trying to find an opportunity.

I will be supporting this motion. I think its intent is in the right place. Let us invert the terminology and never talk about national goals, but patient goals.

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

*Adjournment Proceedings***ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Madam Speaker, in 2014, the Mikisew Cree First Nation submitted a petition to the World Heritage Committee requesting a monitoring mission to assess the state of conservation in Wood Buffalo National Park and the Peace-Athabasca Delta. The Mikisew Cree, like many Canadians, were concerned by the impacts of the Site C hydro-electric dam in British Columbia and the Alberta oil sands on this environmentally sensitive region.

From September 25 to October 4 last year, UNESCO's World Heritage Centre undertook a monitoring mission at the site. What it found was extremely disturbing, which is why I asked the minister this important question regarding this issue last April.

First and foremost, the centre found there is a poor relationship between the federal government and the first nations and Métis who reside in the area. In particular, the local knowledge and culture have been ignored as have the concerns of residents about the impacts of development on their traditional territories.

The centre also found that conservation has been a low priority in the area, and that Parks Canada's legal obligation to maintain and restore the ecological integrity of Wood Buffalo National Park has not been met. Regarding the Alberta oil sands, there has been a lack of environmental assessment or risk assessment in developing facilities, such as mines and tailings ponds. In fact, overall, the lack of understanding of the flows of the rivers, the hydrological conditions, the complexity of the area, and the impacts of development is quite shocking.

This brings us to the Site C dam, a major British Columbia project that would have tremendous impacts on the Peace-Athabasca Delta and the people, flora, and fauna that reside there, and which received federal and provincial approvals without adequate assessments, according to international standards.

The new NDP B.C. government is taking steps to review Site C by sending it to the B.C. Utilities Commission. We have hope that future projects of this magnitude will be developed with appropriate environmental assessments and first nations consultation before receiving a green light.

UNESCO is treating the federal government's neglect of Wood Buffalo National Park very seriously. It offered Canada one chance, and only one chance, to correct the deficiencies in how we treat this incredible treasure.

Let me talk a little bit about this treasure. Wood Buffalo National Park is the largest park in Canada and the second-largest national park in the world. It is the 13th-largest-protected area in the world. It was established in 1922 to protect the world's largest herd of free roaming wood bison, and it is one of two known nesting sites for whooping cranes. It is also considered the world's largest dark sky

preserve, leading to significant populations of bats, nighthawks, and owls.

This amazing area was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1983 for the biological diversity of the Peace-Athabasca Delta and for the population of wild bison. It is a tragedy that the diversity of the area, the ecological integrity of the park, and the livelihoods of those who live there are all at risk, as is the park's UNESCO designation because of the neglect of successive governments.

Last April 13, I asked the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, what action will she take to protect Wood Buffalo National Park and when will she take it? A year after the study was conducted, and more than six months since the report was released, we have still heard nothing from the Liberals on any actions to protect wood buffalo, other than the work of the—

• (1835)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the member's four minutes are up, so I have to give the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change a chance to respond. The member has another minute after that.

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know the member is passionate about parks, ecological integrity, and other associated issues, and I am pleased to provide him with a response.

As the federal agency responsible for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in Canada, Parks Canada is committed to protecting and presenting Wood Buffalo National Park of Canada to Canadians and the world. The Government of Canada is committed to the ongoing protection of Wood Buffalo National Park as one of the treasures of Canada's national park system and as a UNESCO world heritage site.

The agency is working closely with 11 indigenous communities with an interest in the management of Wood Buffalo National Park through its co-operative management committee and also directly with these indigenous groups. Parks Canada also collaborates with other federal departments and with the governments of Alberta, British Columbia, and the Northwest Territories on conservation issues related to Wood Buffalo National Park.

The Government of Canada welcomed, and continues to welcome, the UNESCO mission report as well as the World Heritage Committee's recent decision this past July requesting that Canada develop an action plan for the site. The government will duly consider the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee in its ongoing efforts to improve its practices and to remain a global leader in conservation.

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The Government of Canada is committed to working with its federal, provincial, and territorial counterparts, indigenous partners, and other stakeholders to develop and implement an action plan that addresses the mission report's recommendations. A true response to this report requires collaboration, and that means time, at all levels with federal, provincial and territorial governments, our indigenous partners, and industry and other stakeholders.

By taking a unified and very collaborative approach, we will ensure that Wood Buffalo National Park remains a treasured place with outstanding universal value for generations to come.

Mr. Wayne Stetski: Madam Speaker, on July 5, 2017, just a few months ago, UNESCO's World Heritage Committee issued a decision giving Canada until the end of 2018, which is only 15 months away, to demonstrate that it has taken major new steps to protect the park. All 17 recommendations in that report must be met. I would like to know from my colleague across the floor whether a time frame has been established, whether discussions have begun, and whether he thinks the government is on track to meet that deadline at the end of 2018.

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, as I said, the government is working very hard and collaboratively with governments at all levels, the provinces and territories, indigenous partners, industry, and other stakeholders, to ensure that we actually have a collaborative approach. We are making progress. We are confident that we are moving in the right direction. We are hopeful that we will be in a position to respond to the UNESCO report within the time frame. We are committed to ensuring that we actually address all those recommendations and will report on progress as we move forward.

TAXATION

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberal government's tax change proposals will hurt the very people it says it wants to help. I have received hundreds and hundreds of letters from constituents who are opposed to this, and just a single letter in support of the changes.

Those writing have made it very clear that they are not the wealthy 1%, but mostly middle-class Canadians who have taken risks to start their own businesses and create their own jobs in the community. Many have laid bare the dire consequences these changes will have for their business and their families. These small business owners warn that they will have to reduce staff, which will raise unemployment at a time when we cannot afford to lose more jobs in Alberta. Others have spoken of their need to consider cutting back on their community support and charitable donations just to keep their business profitable.

It has not been lost on Canadians that the Liberal government chose the middle of the summer to conduct their consultations in an effort to pull a fast one on Canadians. It is clear that the Liberal government did not really want to hear from Canadians and remains determined to proceed with the changes no matter what. The Liberals' indignant attitude is both reckless and offensive to taxpayers.

A constituent, Joseph Klassen, wrote, "I am a small business owner. I employ 12 people and the annual payroll for this staff runs about \$1.25 million. This may appear small to others, but I feel we

employ these people giving them a reasonable living while making a positive contribution to the Canadian economy. Once you remove the incentive of being able to earn a reasonable financial return on my total business investment, I will have to consider the possibility of closing this business."

Dr. Peter Samuels wrote to me and said, "The government's proposed tax changes for private corporations will make it more difficult for physicians to provide the quality of care that their patients deserve. These proposed changes will harm patients, physicians and their families. Small business owners and their many employees will be harmed. Communities and the Canadian economy will suffer. I encourage the Finance Minister in the strongest terms not to implement the proposed tax changes for private corporations."

Brian, a constituent of mine, said, "I am a small business owner in Alberta, and have been since 2010. Last year my personal income was less than \$50,000. I have had to lay off 23 people due to the downturn in the economy, and the relentless increase in taxes directly affecting my company. Over the past 6 months, we have finally seen a bottom to the Alberta economy, yet with the backdrop of all the tax increases, I have little interest in increasing our staffing at this time."

Finally, a constituent, Linda Goode, wrote, "I voted Liberal in the last election. At a conceptual level, I support much of the liberal platform. However, I struggle with some of the tactics for achieving that platform. More specifically I am appalled by the proposed tax changes that will directly impact my partner and I as small business owners and as members of the middle class. My partner and I are both 63 years old. We have 'lived like students' for decades. We have sacrificed a great deal so that we could be financially independent in retirement and not be a burden on society. 'Changing the rules' on retained earnings, directly and dramatically impacts our financial security. At our age we have run out of time in terms of our earning capacity to offset the impacts of the proposed tax changes. The government's attempt to create greater fairness certainly has missed the mark for us."

I could go on. I have hundreds of letters like these, but like those who wrote to me, I do not think the Liberal government is listening anyway.

• (1840)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Alaina Lockhart (Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak about the government's proposals concerning tax strategies involving private corporations. As members know, we are currently conducting consultations on proposals to address tax benefits for private corporations.

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The government has asked stakeholders from across the country to provide their comments. It listened to what they had to say. The government found many of these comments to be helpful as they helped it better understand the impacts of its proposals. I can assure my colleague that we will report on what we heard and that, together, we will make decisions that will result in a fairer tax system.

[English]

It is important that we highlight some of the facts. To begin with, we are not increasing the small business tax rate. Canadian small businesses will continue to benefit from the lowest small business tax in the G7. Our proposals will have no impact on business's ability to save or invest for business. Our proposals will not affect individuals' ability to incorporate their businesses, nor will they prevent business owners from employing family members. It is also important to know that middle-class Canadians and small businesses are not the focus of our proposed changes.

We recognize that there are business owners and professionals who have saved and planned for their retirement under the existing rules. On this matter, I want to reassure everyone that our proposed changes to passive income taxation would only apply on a go-forward basis, not to existing savings, nor to investment income from those savings.

[Translation]

We will not introduce any measures that compromise this extraordinary advantage. That way, our businesses will continue to create jobs and to invest in their community. After all, Canada's corporate tax rates are among the most competitive in the world. For example, its small business tax rate is the lowest of all the G7 countries.

● (1845)

[English]

Mr. Len Webber: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the time my colleague took to respond to my comments, but none of what she says provides any comfort or assurances to me or to my community. The government's reckless spending has created a fiscal hole that will hurt Canadians today and in the future. The previous

Conservative government was able to balance the budget under the current rules. The current Liberal government, addicted to spending, is desperately grabbing more tax dollars from every Canadian.

These changes threaten the very services our communities need. We are risking losing people in some of the professions we need most: the doctors, the farmers, and others.

If changes to our tax system are warranted, then let us make sure we make them after fully considering the problem, our options, and the effects any proposed solutions would have. The consequences of rushing into these changes are too high. Canada cannot afford to destroy those who build our communities, create jobs, and take risks where others will not.

[Translation]

Mrs. Alaina Lockhart: Madam Speaker, we will carefully consider all the decisions we make. They will be guided by our main objective, which is to ensure fairness for the middle class and all those working hard to join it. We want to strike a balance, give everyone the chance to succeed, and put an end to certain injustices. That way, Canadians will be convinced that they have a fair tax system.

[English]

A fair tax system is pivotal in making sure our economy is really working for everyone, especially the middle class, and I am confident we are going to get this right.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill is not present to raise the matter for which adjournment notice has been given. Accordingly, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

[Translation]

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 6:47 p.m.)

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